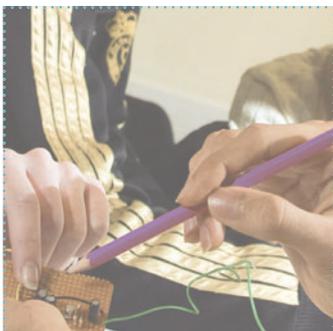
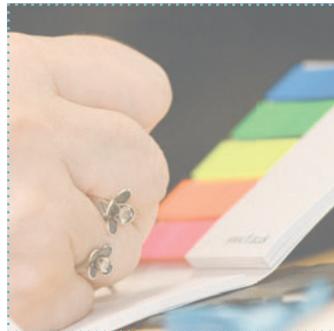


This publication accompanies *Brilliant teaching and training in FE and Skills: A guide to effective CPD for teachers, trainers and leaders.* www.ifl.ac.uk

Brilliant teaching and training in FE and skills

Sources of evidence

More than 5,000 voices from the sector



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- **The voices of 5,189 IfL members – teachers and trainers across further education and skills.**
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Terminology

Throughout this document, we use the term 'teachers and trainers' or 'teachers' to cover all those who directly support learning in further education and skills, including lecturers, teachers, trainers, assessors, instructors, tutors and trainee teachers. We use the term 'FE and skills' to cover the range of publicly funded learning outside schools and higher education.

About the Institute for Learning (IfL)

The Institute for Learning (IfL) was formed in 2002 by further education teachers and others, and is the professional body for teachers, tutors, trainers and student teachers in the further education and skills sector, including adult and community learning, emergency and public services, FE colleges, the armed services, sixth-form colleges, the voluntary and community sector and work-based learning. An independent professional body, IfL is governed by an elected Advisory Council and works closely with learning and skills organisations, unions and employer bodies. www.ifl.ac.uk

About the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is the sector-owned body supporting the development of excellent and sustainable FE provision across the learning and skills sector. Its aim is to accelerate the drive for excellence and, working in partnership with all parts of the sector, build on the sector's own capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change. www.lsis.org.uk

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Guide for teachers, trainers and leaders

This publication is an appendix to *Brilliant teaching and training in FE and skills: A guide to effective CPD for teachers, trainers and leaders*, which is available to download from the IfL website: www.ifl.ac.uk

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Introduction

This document sets out in more detail the sources of evidence on which the Institute for Learning's report, *Brilliant teaching and training in FE and skills*¹, is based and suggests where readers might look for further information. It describes the findings from a specially commissioned review of the literature, a series of consultations with stakeholder groups, an expert seminar for leaders across the sector and an online survey of IfL's own membership. We hope that you might find some of this detail useful in planning your own CPD or in planning support for colleagues.

There is a full reference list on page 37 that may help you access CPD resources or find more background information on priorities for improvement in the FE and skills sector.

¹ Institute for Learning (IfL), 2010. *Brilliant teaching and training in FE and skills: A guide to effective CPD for teachers, trainers and leaders*. London: IfL. Available to download in PDF format from the IfL website at www.ifl.ac.uk

Findings from existing literature

A literature review, specially commissioned by IfL as part of this research funded by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), was undertaken in early 2010 to identify what had been written about priorities for improving teaching and learning. It looked at all sorts of written material, including published inspection reports, project evaluations and academic research. The review looked for research evidence and also included authoritative advice.

The advice and evidence available from the literature falls into the following broad categories:

Improving teaching and learning and CPD

- There are some documents, including Ofsted reports and the LSIS corporate plan, that describe areas of learning or learning activities where practice appears generally to be less effective than in others. They point therefore to areas where there may be a need to increase the skills of the current workforce to improve the quality. Academic research focuses on these areas too.

Identification of priorities

- There are other reports, including government papers and committee reports, that identify subjects and sectors that will become more important in the future – they point to a need to re-skill current employees or recruit and train new ones.

Technology in teaching and learning

- A large body of literature, led by Becta, focuses on the impact of ICT and offers evidence as to how it can improve learning; the extent to which teachers are familiar with specific applications; and effective ways of delivering CPD using technology that can lead to improved outcomes for learners.

This assessment does not pretend to have accessed all the possible literature under each of these categories but it has analysed a sample that includes all of them.

Ofsted

The annual report of the Ofsted chief inspector for 2008/09 paints a generally healthy picture of the further education sector, but highlights several areas needing improvement. In further education, it identifies a number of curriculum areas where teaching and learning is less effective than in others – construction, leisure, travel and tourism, ICT and preparation for work and life. In work-based learning it also identifies travel and tourism and leisure alongside business administration. The report does not identify any specific weaknesses that are associated with these areas, so it is assumed that there is a greater incidence of more generic issues.

Ofsted raises general concerns about the ability of many teachers to personalise their learning and provide adequate differentiation in their approaches. It also finds weaknesses in the use of formative assessment to enable learners to monitor their own progress and understand where and what they need to do to improve.

It finds that there are often weaknesses in the use of target setting and the development of individual learning plans, particularly among entry-to-employment (E2E) providers, while in sixth-form colleges there is a need to improve the links with work experience. In the adult and community learning (ACL) sector, there is a need to increase the number of skilled teachers of literacy and numeracy. It is not always clear whether it is saying that many of those teaching numeracy, for example, need to improve their skills, or that the sector needs to recruit and train more teachers in that subject.

Ofsted has recently reported on progress in implementing workforce reforms in the sector², finding that:

“The reforms had led to a considerable extension of the range of approaches to continuing professional development. There were signs that, increasingly, staff were reflecting on its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. However, at the time of the visits very few of the providers were using the national professional standards to plan and evaluate their continuing professional development, even though these standards now form an integral part of initial teacher training in the sector.”

IfL has promoted a diversity of CPD, tailored to bring about improvements.

The key findings of the report relating to teaching and CPD are summarised as follows:

- There was widespread welcome for the reforms because of their contribution to improving the professional status of teachers and trainers, leading to an extension of the range of approaches to professional development.
- Initial progress has been slow in ensuring that all further education teachers meet similar levels of skills in literacy and numeracy as set out in the reforms for new teachers.
- Too many managers, teachers and trainers were unclear about the statutory requirements relating to the need for some teachers of literacy and numeracy to hold a specialist qualification in teaching Skills for Life.
- Teachers' literacy and numeracy skills were not always assessed at interview; concerns were more likely to be identified once they were in post.
- Uncertainty existed about the comparability of qualifications and progression from one type of qualification and awarding body to another.
- Only two of the providers visited were using the Lifelong Learning UK professional standards to inform the planning and evaluation of continuing professional development and to build on the experiences of newly qualified teachers.

2 www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Progress-in-implementing-reforms-in-the-accreditation-and-continuing-professional-development-of-teachers-in-further-education

Summary of Ofsted findings from the last round of inspections:

However, since the 2008/09 report and the commentary on the workforce reforms, Ofsted has indicated in IfL's expert group that there is:

Improved teaching and learning characterised by:

- Teachers and trainers are skilled, know their students' abilities and plan interesting and relevant lessons that motivate and engage them.
- Teachers and trainers set challenging targets for learners of all abilities and monitor their progress.
- Learners in need of additional help are identified early and support is provided promptly.
- Teachers and trainers have good classroom management skills and plan lessons thoroughly. They focus on learners' understanding as well as tasks completed and use open and targeted questions to assess this.
- Effective work-based learning providers ensure learners receive well-planned training in the workplace.
- Work-based assessors monitor learners' progress thoroughly. They set suitable targets so that learners are clear about what tasks they should complete before the next visit, and what will be assessed next.
- Observations of teaching and learning are carefully evaluated and can demonstrate direct and sustained impact.

Poor teaching and learning characterised by:

- Teachers and trainers check that tasks have been completed, but do not assess the learner's understanding. Lessons are ineffective where teaching staff have low expectations of learners' capabilities and learners are not stretched sufficiently.
- Staff do not share best practice to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently effective throughout the provision.
- In the less effective lessons, planning is insufficient and the emphasis is on teaching rather than learning. Lesson plans lack clear learning objectives or sufficient focus on an individual learner's needs.
- Teachers and trainers provide insufficient challenge to encourage individualised learning and fail to challenge more able learners.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The LSIS corporate plan identifies improving the quality of teaching and learning as one of 10 priorities and describes a series of actions that will be taken to drive forward improvements. It describes its approach as follows:

Raising the quality of teaching and learning – the key sector performance indicator will be relative percentage of learning activities graded as outstanding, good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory by Ofsted in its inspections.

LSIS will:

- Create communities of practice, building on the Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTS) and IfL models of collaboration and sharing
- Deliver engagement workshops, including e-learning, through events that identify current issues and solve problems
- Continue to work closely with Ofsted to identify and support the sector in addressing teaching and learning themes
- Continue the development of resource materials, including case studies relating to a range of subject-based priorities and cross-cutting themes
- Increase the amount of continuing professional development to improve teaching and learning in, and across, STEM subjects, working in partnership with the Royal Academy for Engineering, the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics and the National Science Learning Centre.

LSIS has also refreshed and updated a previous review of over 200 papers, which offered evidence on effective practice in a range of contexts. Common themes emerging are summarised below, organised according to the target group.

There are consistent messages across the key themes³ around which the work was focused. Senior managers need to lead a cultural change across the whole organisation so that new priorities – such as employer engagement – are not just tacked on but embedded in policies and practice. Middle managers need to use evidence from a range of sources to support and challenge staff to improve their performance; and teachers need to extend the range of settings in which they can work, while at the same time working to improve their skills.

In headline terms, the LSIS research identified a need to support:

Strategic managers to:

- **Review strategic plans** to ensure that they reflect the insights received from listening closely to learners and to employers. The plans also need to identify ways to embed learner involvement and employer engagement practices across the organisation rather than just ‘bolt them on’.
- **Develop and maintain productive relationships**, both with other providers and with strategic partners. Effective collaboration is seen as key to both the 14–19 agenda and to the effective articulation of priority demands for skill, or ‘skills activism’.

³ Themes covered in the review include Learner Voice and Involvement; Meeting Employers’ Needs; Reviewing Performance and Managing Improvement; Workforce Development; the 14-19 Agenda; Skills for Life; Quality Issues; Success Rate Disparities and Progression Issues for Different Groups; Barriers and Enablers to More Effective Self Improvement.

- **Promote a self-critical culture** in which staff actively seek evidence about their own performance and use it to improve. There needs to be a whole-organisation approach to the development and use of targets, underpinned by a clear focus on the learner experience.
- **Review the way the organisation engages with different groups** in the community through both the recruitment and training of staff and the programmes that it offers. Attention should be paid to the provision of role models for black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, including through representation on the governing body.

Middle managers to:

- **Model good practice in respect of personalisation** in order to help embed effective approaches across the organisation. Staff need to ‘own’ personalisation to take it forward.
- **Use feedback, coaching and peer review** mechanisms to help staff develop their skills; this should include helping integrate information and learning technologies (ILT) wherever appropriate.
- **Analyse data to identify priority areas for improvement.** This should include participation and success rates for different ethnic groups and specific ‘hard-to-reach’ categories.
- **Identify sustainable approaches to new forms of delivery.** This should include delivery at or near the workplace and partnership working on the 14–19 agenda, as well as the appropriate use of ILT.

Teachers and tutors to:

- **Take responsibility for their own professional development**, using feedback and outcomes data to identify areas for improvement.
- **Use assessment effectively** to improve learners’ performance; this should include initial and diagnostic assessment and formative assessment with rapid and clear feedback.
- **Focus on progression** to ensure that learners get maximum value from participation. A clear understanding of progression opportunities can underpin learner motivation and success.
- **Develop the skills to work in new contexts.** The adult skills agenda looks to delivery in or near the workplace; the 14–19 agenda highlights closer working with schools.

Evidence from LSIS concerning the positive contribution of ILT can be found in the report of the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which looked at the use of the teaching and learning frameworks developed by LSIS under the National Teaching and Learning Change Programme. They found:

“Some of the best use of the frameworks in teaching is in contexts where teachers and trainers have a good awareness of ILT and use it effectively in their teaching. For learners, there is a close and effective relationship between active participation in lessons and being prepared to engage and ask questions when learning materials are delivered and exploited through the use of IT. In contrast, insufficient use of ILT in lessons, such as using overhead projection to show text on a screen, reinforces learners’ resistance to learning. Learners declare their preference for the teaching in subject areas where developed ILT is used, over those areas where it is not.”

The capacity to exploit the framework materials and to improve standards of teaching and learning is further increased through the development of IT-based virtual learning environments (VLEs).

Technology in teaching and learning

Becta

On the basis of its own research and that undertaken by others, Becta is convinced that the appropriate use of technology can be a major means of improving the quality of teaching and learning in all settings. It states:

“Using technology can directly affect standards. It supports good practice in teaching and learning. It can also help with managing data held about learners and so enable more informed decision-making.”

To help guide its development programmes, Becta has developed the concept of e-maturity for institutions and e-confidence for employees. It sees a steady development of e-maturity in the sector but still identifies considerable room for improvement. A recent report⁴ states:

“Across a range of areas there has been a considerable increase in the integration of technology to support learning, teaching and management. For example, there have been significant increases in the use of technology to support assessment and big improvements to the integration of management information and learner systems. This and many more examples offer evidence of a genuine change in the approach to technology within colleges and learning providers. There is related evidence of increased benefits from technology, particularly the proportion of practitioners reporting time-saving benefits. FE colleges have continued to progress, with around one third now being classed as mature in their use of technology, a steady increase since 2003. E-maturity in WBL providers remains steady at about the same as the previous year. There remains, however, a core of ‘beginners’ – around a quarter of both types of provider – where progress is slow. In adult and community learning (ACL) there is considerable variation in the application of technology. This is due in large part to the nature of the sub-sector. The wide variety of locations in which ACL is delivered, the staff profile, and the multiple policy contexts which influence ACL all impact on the extent to which e-maturity can be developed. It is interesting to observe variations within the sub-sectors which make up FE and skills. So, for example, in colleges there are concerns about leadership and innovation in relation to technology, with even the most advanced colleges feeling that they could do better. Work-based learning providers, on the other hand, felt strong in terms of management and staff development but reported concerns about their support for learners. There are also observable differences in the use of learning platforms and other technologies.

“The use of learning platforms in FE colleges has risen steadily since 2003–04, when 58 per cent of colleges had them, to 92 per cent in 2008–09. This is in contrast to the WBL sub-sector, where 36 per cent report that they support a learning platform. In ACL, many providers now make learning platforms available to their staff, but these are at an early stage of development. Learner and staff access to computers varies between type of provider. In colleges, the mean number of FTE students per networked computer is 4.5 and the median is 3.8, but this contrasts strongly with access outside teaching hours where the mean rises to 28.7. Nearly all work-based learning providers have computers on their premises for their learners, but of course most of the actual training is done in the workplace and the numbers of computers available varies considerably. The median of work-based learners per on-site computer is 7.2:1. In ACL, almost all staff seem to have some access to computers but this is often shared. Finally, there are differences in the use of other technologies. FE colleges are much more likely to have data projectors (83 per cent) and electronic whiteboards (81 per cent) than other types of providers, though in work-based learning the proportions are increasing encouragingly – for example, over half (54 per cent) have electronic whiteboards, in contrast with 2005 when the figure stood at only 30 per cent. And around two thirds of work-based learning providers have data projectors (69 per cent) and digital cameras (61 per cent).”

4 <http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=41523&page=1835>

It continues, in a passage that is particularly relevant to IfL:

“One of the most notable findings in this review is the evidence of some stark differences in the use of technology to support learning and teaching. Put in the context of young people’s transitions from school into FE, there are interesting patterns. In the context of what young people tell us about how they learn and how they prefer to learn, this is significant. We know, for example, that young people increasingly cite using computers as a preferred way of learning. Yet practice within and between sectors is highly variable. In secondary schools, fewer than 10 per cent of students are offered the opportunity to use technology in core subjects at least once a week. Access in FE colleges seems to vary according to subject studied, but on the whole the experience is generally one of improvement for the learner in terms of access to online information and resources, given that the use of learning platforms is relatively mature in FE. Work-based learning is a mixed bag, but in general also offers increased opportunities for online learning. Overall there is an increasing need to reflect on and address learners’ experience of technology in the context of transition between stages and sectors.”

Priorities for improvements in teaching and learning

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

The white paper, *Skills for Growth*⁵, represents an updating of the national skills strategy to reflect a new emphasis on 'skills activism' whereby the government seeks to direct investment towards the industries and sectors seen as critical for national competitiveness in the future. It highlights, for example, '**Priorities for increased funding include life sciences, digital media and technology, advanced manufacturing, engineering construction and low carbon energy.**' The paper also suggests a number of priority areas that pose potential challenges to the capacity of the sector to deliver. They include:

- Working with employers in the context of priority skills areas, the expansion of apprenticeships and progression to HE.
- Employability skills and the capacity of the sector to deliver the skills for life numeracy requirements.
- Facilitating informed customer choice through skills accounts, better information, advice and guidance (IAG) and 'food labelling' for courses.
- Place working with new and different partners at regional, subregional and local level.
- Value for money and efficiency through fee income and shared services, removing duplication and demonstrating added value.

House of Commons, Children, Schools and Families Committee – Training of Teachers

The House of Commons Select Committee has highlighted the need for increased attention to be paid to the development of vocational pedagogy for teachers and tutors in both schools and colleges. In its report of the 4th session it states:

“ 41. In order to enhance collaboration between schools and further education in the development of the 14–19 curriculum, we support the establishment of a centre that would provide joint professional development for school and further education teachers in the neglected area of pedagogy and assessment in vocational education. ”

Skills Commission into ITT in Vocational Education

Similarly, the Skills Commission has looked at the issue of initial teacher training (ITT) in vocational subjects and focused on pedagogy. Its report states:

“ One of the most significant issues that emerged in the Inquiry was the importance of pedagogy. Although necessary, subject-specific knowledge is not sufficient for excellent teaching. Teachers must be adept in how they teach and communicate that knowledge. And yet, this Inquiry has found that vocational pedagogies remain in their infancy and relatively little research has been undertaken into these pedagogies. The growth of vocational and applied curricula – and the related situated and experiential learning – necessitates that a new strategic focus should be placed on vocational pedagogy. The Commission recommends it becomes a research priority for the sector. ”

The Commission also recommended that the Institute for Learning's sound framework for CPD – based on the notion of the 'reflective practitioner' – should be explored for schools.

5 www.bis.gov.uk/policies/skills-for-growth

NEF – Emerging Technologies; Emerging Markets

Among the recommendations made in the New Engineering Foundation (NEF) report, *Emerging technologies: Emerging Markets*, was the following that related to CPD:

- “The LSIS should support, with additional funding from BIS, the implementation of a specialist and dedicated ‘emerging technology’ staff development programme to ensure the FE sector has the capacity and capability to respond to skills needs of economic sectors reliant on the exploitation of emerging technologies.
- “The programme should include joint staff development involving both FE and industry, based on, and extending the reach of, the New Engineering Foundation Industrial Fellowship Scheme, and should build on other existing initiatives like the Principal and Senior Management programmes and the Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training programme.”

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP)

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) has published 39 research briefings outlining findings relevant to post-compulsory education, of which 18 are particularly relevant to an improvement strategy for the further education system⁶. The findings are also summarised in two books in the *Improving Learning* series looking at workplace learning and learning cultures.⁷ The findings from the series are congruent with other sources and particularly emphasise the importance of:

- **Personalisation**; the series highlights (in different reports) the need to apply the principles of personalisation to workplace learning, working with older learners and working with students from different backgrounds. Understanding what learners want and what they bring to the learning experience is seen as central and suggests that a focus on **learner voice** is also relevant.
- **A learning culture** in which teaching and learning is central to the mission of the organisation and a culture of self-improvement is embedded. The TLRP sees this as closely bound up with the professional autonomy of staff, and there are clear links with the **self-regulation** agenda.
- **Progression**. A focus on progression is linked to personalisation by using learners’ aspirations to design and shape individual programmes rather than offering ‘off-the-peg’ solutions. This applies to work-based and community based programmes as well as traditional settings.
- **Building capacity**. The TLRP report focuses on helping employers to extend their capacity to support employees develop basic skills, rather than just delivering courses. Similar messages, however, could apply to all workplace learning and are equally relevant to the 14–19 agenda where providers have a shared responsibility to deliver an entitlement across an area.

⁶ They are available at www.tlrp.org/findings/post_comp_findings/post_comp_findings.htm

⁷ Evans, K et al, *Improving Workplace Learning* and James, D and Biesta, G, *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education*.

Reviews of research into effective teaching and learning

A small number of studies provide secure research-based evidence on what works in terms of delivering effective teaching and learning. Geoff Petty has summarised two large scale systematic reviews, which identify the features of effective professional development as follows:

“Helen Timperley⁸ reviewed 97 studies of attempts to improve student learning through the Professional Development of teachers.

She found six characteristics of staff training that were **necessary**, but not **sufficient** for CPD to work exceptionally well. These were:

- An outside expert delivers the training. (Interestingly another influential research review (Joyce and Showers) does not agree experts are necessary as long as the materials and activities are expertly devised.)
- All teachers in the school or college should take part, not just volunteers.
- The content of the training should be from policies, or authorities on what is best practice, rather than based on the whims of the trainer.
- The leaders in the institution should actively lead the learning opportunities, monitoring the implementation of the training by their teachers, and monitoring any improvement in student outcomes. They should develop a learning culture among teachers.
- Teachers’ ‘prevailing theories of practice’ (Theory In Use) should be challenged, especially if they suggest that some students can’t or won’t learn as well as others. Timperley calls this ‘problematical discourse’.
- There should be opportunities for the teachers being trained to talk about the implementation of the training over time. She calls this ‘to engage with a community of practice’ and ‘professional dialogue’. This should last for at least six months to two years, or even more. ”

8 Timperley et al (2007) “Teacher Professional Learning and Development” available at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/15341

Other relevant observations in the report include:

- The aim of the training should be to help teachers self-regulate their own learning. This requires that teachers self-monitor, that is they must identify and diagnose problems with student learning. They must look at student work and other outcomes to see if teaching methods or learning strategies are working, whether these strategies are old or new.
- While dialogue in ‘communities of practice’ is necessary, this **can** work against the training. For example, it might confirm and defend the status quo against the training. Timperley thinks expertise from outside the group is needed to challenge the ‘communities’ assumptions and provide the necessary new perspectives.
- The process of learning to teach differently is a trial and error or iterative process where new approaches are used repeatedly with reviews. There is a deliberate attempt to learn from these trials, and to improve the use of the unfamiliar teaching method. Higher expectations will develop slowly as teaching methods are mastered and learning is seen to improve.

Joyce and Showers⁹ suggest that there is one broad approach that works in respect of improving teaching and learning. The model is collaborative action research, structured as follows:

- **Training needs are identified.** This is done democratically. The team of teachers asks itself: “What do we feel are our most pressing needs? What do our results tell us?”
- **A list of ideas for improvement is drawn up**, 10 to 20 items probably. These are combined, compromised and prioritised down to one common goal to change curriculum, teaching methodology, or student culture etc so as to raise attainment.
- **Staff training is devised.** This is a process designed to achieve the common goal. Training outcomes are agreed for knowledge, attitudes, skills, and (the hardest part) transfer to the classroom.
- **Training is delivered** on the following pattern. It is extensive, e.g. a dozen days:
 - **Knowledge:** explaining theory and rationale etc using lectures, reading, video etc.
 - **Demonstration and modelling:** showing how, giving examples, seeing it done on video or live, watching simulations etc.
 - **Practice:** this is usually simulated practice.
 - **Peer coaching:** This is collaborative work by teachers and managers to solve the problems or questions that arise during implementation, and to plan responses. It is **not** lesson observation with expert feedback. The coaching teams are formed at the training event. All the teaching and management staff agrees to take part in a peer coaching team. Coaching skills may be taught in training. If lessons are observed, the teacher is the coach, the observer the learner.
 - **Organisational support** is vital for peer coaching to take place. The organisation and the individuals in it must value this collaborative planning and learning, and make time for it.

9 Joyce and Showers (2002). *Student Achievement through Staff Development*. 3rd ed. ASCD www.ascd.org

Learning to learn

A report produced by the Campaign for Learning and CfBT, *Learning to Learn in Further Education*¹⁰, provides a review of effective practice, which informed the guide. In its summary, the report notes that recent policy changes are likely to further extend the range of learners the sector works with and, within this context, the potential importance to the FE sector of *learning to learn* becomes clear:

- Learners who have not learned effectively will find themselves limited in their future learning.
- Individuals who have been least successful in their earlier education are the most likely to miss out on learning-to-learn skills.
- These learners are also increasingly the cohort that FE is being asked to address.
- So, learning-to-learn skills, which can improve performance, achievement and retention, can be a key to success for FE colleges.

Yet, learning-to-learn approaches have not so far gained the attention in FE that they have in both schools and HE, although elements of effective learning-to-learn practice are well embedded in the sector.

Among the conclusions and recommendations made in the report are the following paragraphs:

“The report found evidence of effective practices that could improve individuals’ capacity to learn. These might not be delivered explicitly under the banner of ‘learning to learn’ but addressed several key components of learning to learn approaches. They included practices that sought to:

- Develop a variety of thinking skills, in particular, critical skills
- Develop ICT skills, which underpin effective use of e-learning and RBL
- Develop language for learning and communication to improve peer interaction and interaction between teacher and learner
- Encourage learner feedback and use it to shape teaching and learning

Tools and approaches that were used to encourage learners to be independent and flexible included:

- Blended learning
- e-learning
- learning logs ”

The report consequently recommended that:

“The benefits that ‘learning to learn’ approaches have brought in schools should be promoted to policy makers and FE practitioners, and strategies identified to highlight the links between these and existing successful practices in FE that form part of learning to learn approaches in other sectors. Cooperation, collaboration and coherence should be encouraged across all phases of learning for the benefit of both learners and teachers.”

¹⁰ Learning to Learn in Further Education: A literature review of effective practice in England and abroad, Evangeline Amalathas, Campaign for Learning/CfBT (2010).

IfL evidence – new findings

Thousands of IfL members' views on CPD

IfL review of CPD

IfL produces an annual review of CPD. In 2008–09, based on more than 117,000 teachers' CPD declarations and an in-depth sampling of more than 500 pieces of evidence, the aim was to provide evidence of the nature and extent of effective practice in the sector. Noting that a growing body of research indicates that the kinds of professional development that make the most difference to practice are based on professional dialogue about teaching and learning, the review seeks to identify how well this approach has become embedded. In particular, the report looks for:

- A broad interpretation of CPD beyond attendance at formal courses, workshops etc
- Examples of challenging and critical reflection on learning experiences that improve practice
- Greater and more innovative use of technology
- A personalised approach to CPD, with practitioners taking responsibility for their own development.

The evidence is mixed. Although there are many examples of good practice, there still seems to be an over-emphasis on formal courses and less evidence of personalised CPD. Activities known to be effective, such as peer coaching, were not widely practised. The least frequent activities undertaken were research and contributions to journals and conferences.

IfL has surveyed its members about their experience and use of ICT including REfLECT – IfL's online tool for planning, reviewing and recording CPD. About half the respondents (51%) had used it to record their CPD or complete Professional Formation and about half (46%) had not. Currently, more than 97,000 teachers and trainers use REfLECT.

This study suggested that although there is a large variety of media and technologies through which members can gain new skills or develop their practice, as part of CPD, in general more members either had not used or heard of 'new' technologies, than had.

Younger members were more likely than older members to use new technologies – such as virtual learning environments, REfLECT and mobile devices – to gain new skills and develop their practice; however, even if members did not use the new technologies listed, the majority had heard of them. Only the concept 'blended learning' was not recognised by a significant proportion of each age group.

Video, digital photography and interactive tools were the most commonly used technologies in the past year, but fewer than 20% of members are planning to use these again in the forthcoming year.

When asked how confident they felt about using new technologies, 60% of respondents were either 'confident' or 'extremely confident'; however, 38% said they were not confident. A large proportion of respondents (54%) said the thing that would be most useful to them with regard to new technologies is training in how to make best use of them.

Percentage of members who have used technology in the past year to gain new skills and develop practice, by age group

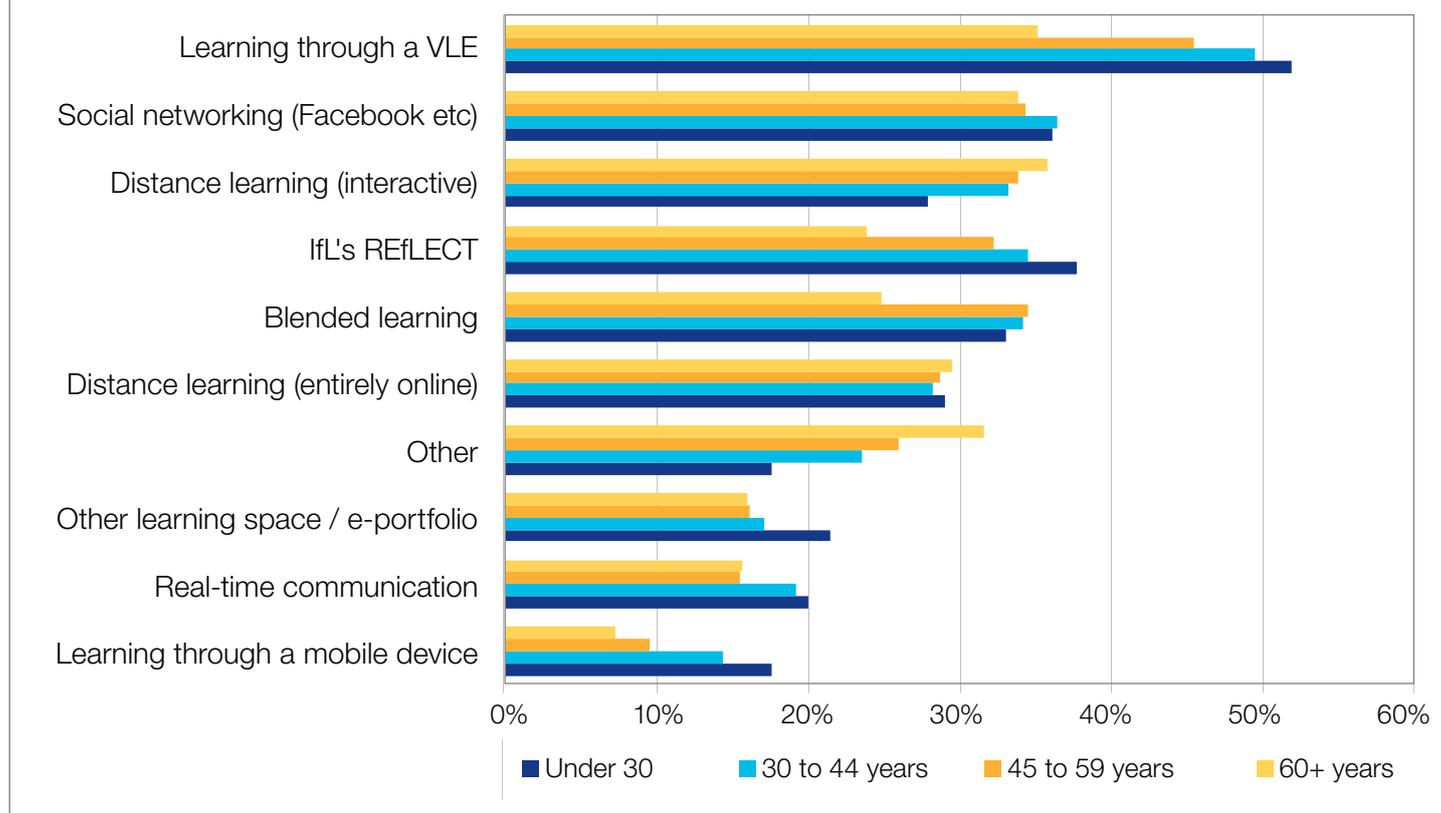


Figure 1

IfL has identified eight key areas where members have asked it to focus its activities in 2010. They are:

1. Seeking more CPD support for teachers and trainers in partnership with other agencies, including support in the use of new technologies.
2. Campaigning for mutual recognition of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), allowing qualified teachers and trainers to have their status recognised alongside colleagues working in schools and leading to greater flexibility of movement between the sectors for the benefit of young people.
3. Developing communities of practice and special interest groups, offering members a variety of ways to share their practice and professional discourse through online communities and groups, and by strengthening IfL's regional presence through IfL Connections and networking opportunities.
4. Highlighting the many pressures that teachers and trainers face in their work, and campaigning for professionals to have the time and resources needed to keep up to date with their vocational or subject area and teaching and training methods, to provide the very best experience for learners.
5. Continuing to develop its communication with members, using their feedback to extend the resources and services IfL provides, and ensuring that all members are aware of the benefits of belonging to IfL and the ways in which it is working with them to raise the status of the profession.
6. Developing resources that provide information and guidance on the equality and diversity issues faced by professional teachers and trainers, using their experiences and views to advance IfL's single equality strategy.

7. Finding new and different ways to engage members in shaping the future of IfL through revised governance arrangements, as well as organising regional and local focus groups and workshops to provide members with more opportunities to have their voice heard and influence key areas of work.
8. Raising the public profile and status of professional teachers and trainers, including with policymakers.

Using technology to support learning

IfL evidence demonstrates that harnessing technology effectively can have a positive impact on teaching and learning. It enables learners to access information outside a conventional classroom setting and allows teachers to experiment with a variety of new tools and techniques to support innovative professional practice.

The majority of our survey respondents confirmed they are becoming more confident in using technology, with the highest percentage identifying virtual learning environments (VLEs) as the most used tool for sharing good practice, information and ideas with colleagues, peers and learners.

Technology is also being used by over 77% of our respondents to support their CPD, with a significant number using online systems such as IfL's REfLECT to store resources, share and collaborate with others.

The findings from a recent research project carried out by IfL (*Supporting the Workforce*, March 2010) demonstrated a clear relationship between the time spent on improving ICT skills and the e-confidence levels of members using technology to support CPD. The opportunities to experience and experiment with new approaches and the planning tools within REfLECT led to 39% stating it had increased their knowledge of ICT and e-learning.

For technology to have a real impact, support for teaching, learning and CPD needs to be central to the organisation. When our members were asked if they felt supported by their employer and managers, 35% of the survey respondents said they felt unsupported and lacked the confidence to explore new methods in the classroom. When opportunities are provided, such as training on how to use mobile devices to record CPD, significant impact can be achieved at all levels.

“ These days, I use REfLECT Mobile to enter the CPD details as I go, and then use the PC and internet just to reflect on and tag the activities, all in one go. This takes about an hour.

Nick Marshall, IT curriculum team leader Dover Immigration Removal Centre

“ I am really pleased that my staff have a quick method of initially recording their CPD by using REfLECT Mobile. As we have very limited access to the internet at work, any method that encourages and enables them to record their CPD using work computers is appreciated. ”

Janet Defrémont, education manager, Dover Immigration Removal Centre

“ Attendance at particular events should not be mandatory so that staff can manage their own learning and development. CPD should mirror excellent teaching not lecturing. The value of CPD needs to be spelled out at the start so that people can decide to go to events that they might not otherwise have seen as helpful. ”

IfL practitioner member

Findings from the IfL member survey

A specially developed online survey was emailed to IfL members on 16 February 2010 with a request that it be returned by 26 March 2010. A total of 5,189 responses were received. The responses are broadly representative of the composition of the sector in terms of gender (female 61% as opposed to 60% of the sector) but skewed a little towards older age groups – 68 % were aged 45+.

Just under a third (32%) of those responding categorised themselves as lecturers and over a third (36%) as tutors, trainers or teachers. The remainder were evenly spread across managerial and non-teaching roles with 6.5% identifying themselves as 'other'. Just over half (55%) of the responses were from permanent, full-time staff. A small majority (56%) were from FE colleges, followed by adult and community learning (21%), work-based learning (16 %) and the remainder from sixth-form colleges, the voluntary sector, offender learning, the armed forces and 'other'.

CPD themes

Members were asked about the **theme** of any CPD they had undertaken in the past year and how helpful they had found it (Q7, see figures 2a and 2b). The responses were uniformly positive, with in all cases more people finding their experience very helpful than unhelpful. However, there were a number of instances where over 10% of those having engaged with a theme found the experience unhelpful – policy updating was the theme with the most negative response but equality and diversity training and functional skills embedding were also in this category.

The most highly rated category was vocational or subject updating where 59% reported that it had been 'very helpful' as opposed to 4% 'not helpful'; it was also the topic most likely to be recommended to a colleague (Q9, see figures 3a and 3b). Action research and research was the next most highly valued theme with 46% finding it 'very helpful' and 47% 'quite helpful'. Support with assessment and safeguarding came next, with 46% and 40% respectively rating their experience as 'very helpful' (Q7, see figures 2a and 2b).

Q7. If you have participated in any of the following topics as part of your CPD in the past 12 months, how helpful did you find it?

	Very helpful	Quite helpful	Not helpful
	%	%	%
Vocational / subject updating	58.92	37.04	4.04
Action research / research	45.53	47.07	7.40
Assessment	45.49	48.39	6.12
Safeguarding	40.03	48.26	11.71
Numeracy / literacy	38.55	49.69	11.76
Equality and diversity	36.89	50.60	12.51
Engaging the learner voice	34.71	53.26	12.03
Embedding of functional skills	33.57	51.54	14.89
Policy updating	32.38	52.24	15.38
Total number who responded to this question:	4,455	Responses from those who selected 'Not applicable' are not included in the percentage analysis above.	
Total number who skipped this question:	734		
Total:	5,189		

Figure 2a

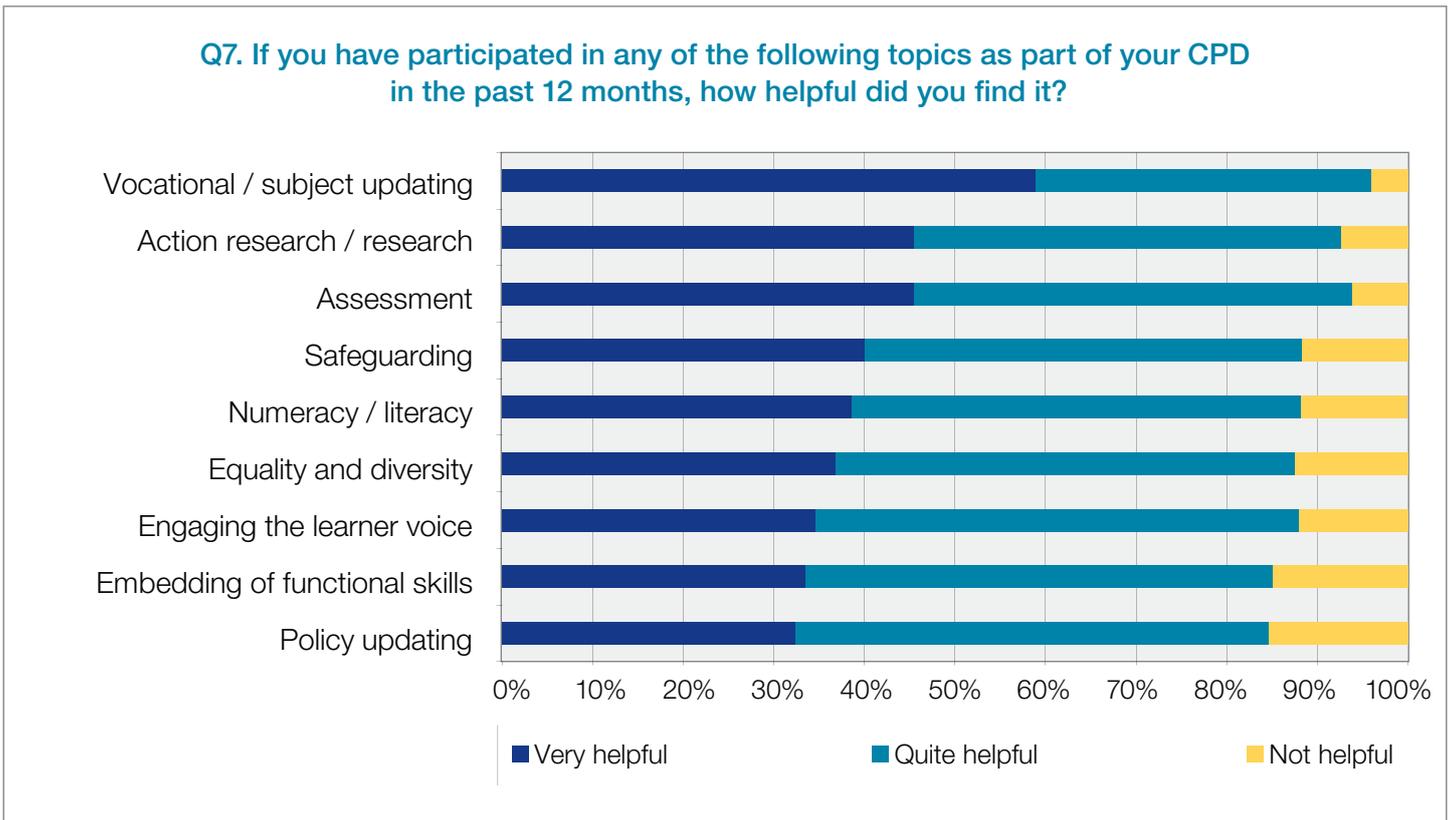


Figure 2b

Q9. Which of these would you recommend to others?	
	Positive responses
	%
Vocational / subject updating	51.63
Equality and diversity	41.33
Assessment	38.41
Safeguarding	37.67
Embedding of functional skills	33.61
Numeracy / literacy	26.09
Action research / research	25.28
Engaging the learner voice	22.66
Policy updating	17.01
Other	5.37
Total who responded to this question:	3,963
Total who skipped this question:	1,215
Total:	5,178

The percentage analysis above excludes those who skipped the the question.

Figure 3a

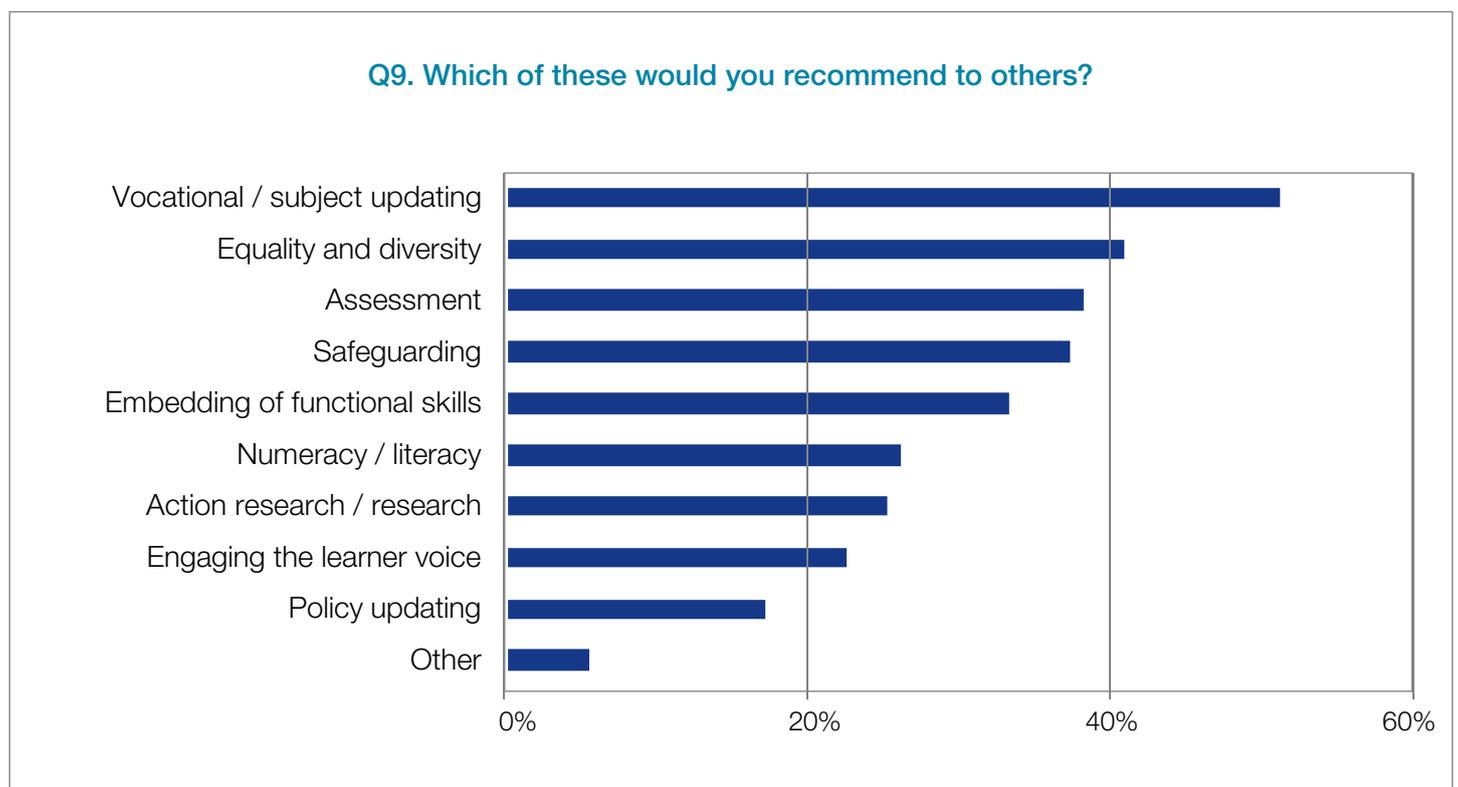


Figure 3b

A large majority (78%) of participants had engaged with technology as part of their CPD (Q10, see figures 4a and 4b) with the most frequently mentioned item being 'Learning through VLEs' (Q11, see figures 5a and 5b).

Only 20% reported using it 'not at all' compared with around two-thirds for real time messaging systems and mobile devices. Distance learning was the second, and then IfL's REFLECT was the third most frequently used technology, having been accessed by 68% of the sample. The use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) was the technology respondents found to have been most helpful to their teaching and learning with a quarter using it 'a lot' and a third rating it as having been 'very helpful' (Q13, see figures 6a and 6b). By contrast, 40% of the smaller number who had used social networking reported it as being 'not helpful'.

Q10. Has the use of technology been part of your CPD in the past 12 months?	
	%
Yes	77.70
No	22.30
Total who responded to this question:	4,687
Total who skipped this question:	491
Total:	5,178
The percentage analysis above excludes those who skipped the the question.	

Figure 4a

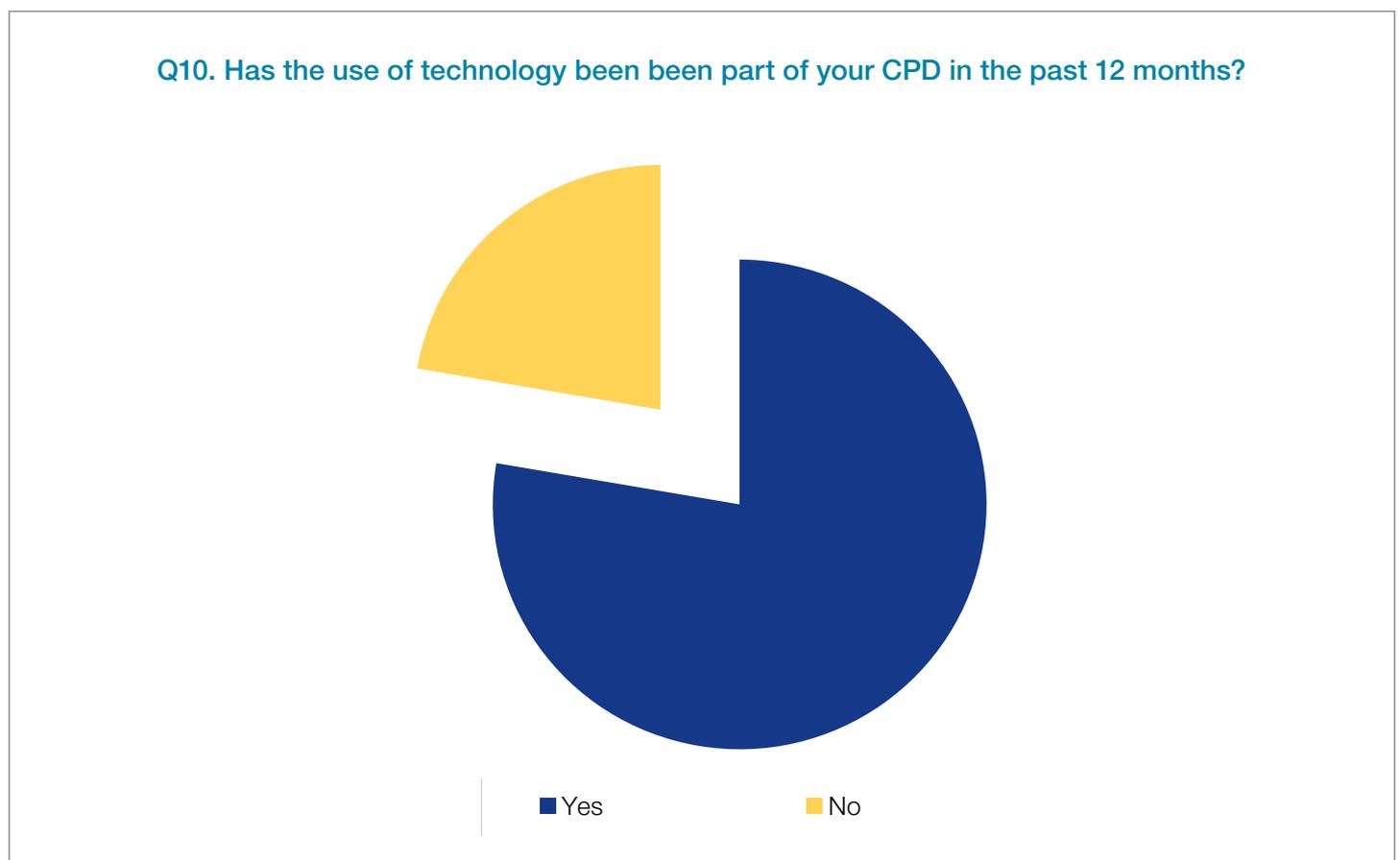


Figure 4b

11. How often have you used the following technologies for your work on CPD?

	A lot	Quite a lot	Some	Not often	Not at all
	%	%	%	%	%
Learning through virtual learning environments (VLEs)	25.40	18.75	24.89	11.46	19.50
Distance learning (through interactive materials such as CD-ROM)	9.59	14.30	28.77	14.92	32.42
IfL's REfLECT	9.53	13.20	25.58	19.87	31.82
Blended learning	9.43	14.85	24.75	11.30	39.67
Distance learning (entirely online)	9.02	10.82	19.36	12.58	48.22
Skype, MSN Messenger or other real-time communication	6.65	8.75	13.88	9.96	60.76
Using an alternative personal learning space and e-portfolio	6.54	9.15	14.33	11.53	58.45
Social networking through Facebook, Twitter and Myspace	6.42	6.35	16.23	13.27	57.73
Learning through a mobile device (ipod, PDA)	4.12	5.13	9.56	10.26	70.93
Other	11.82	7.82	7.94	4.25	68.17
Total who responded to this question:	3,445	The percentage analysis above excludes those who skipped the specific technology listed in the question.			
Total who skipped this question:	1,744				
Total:	5,189				

Figure 5a

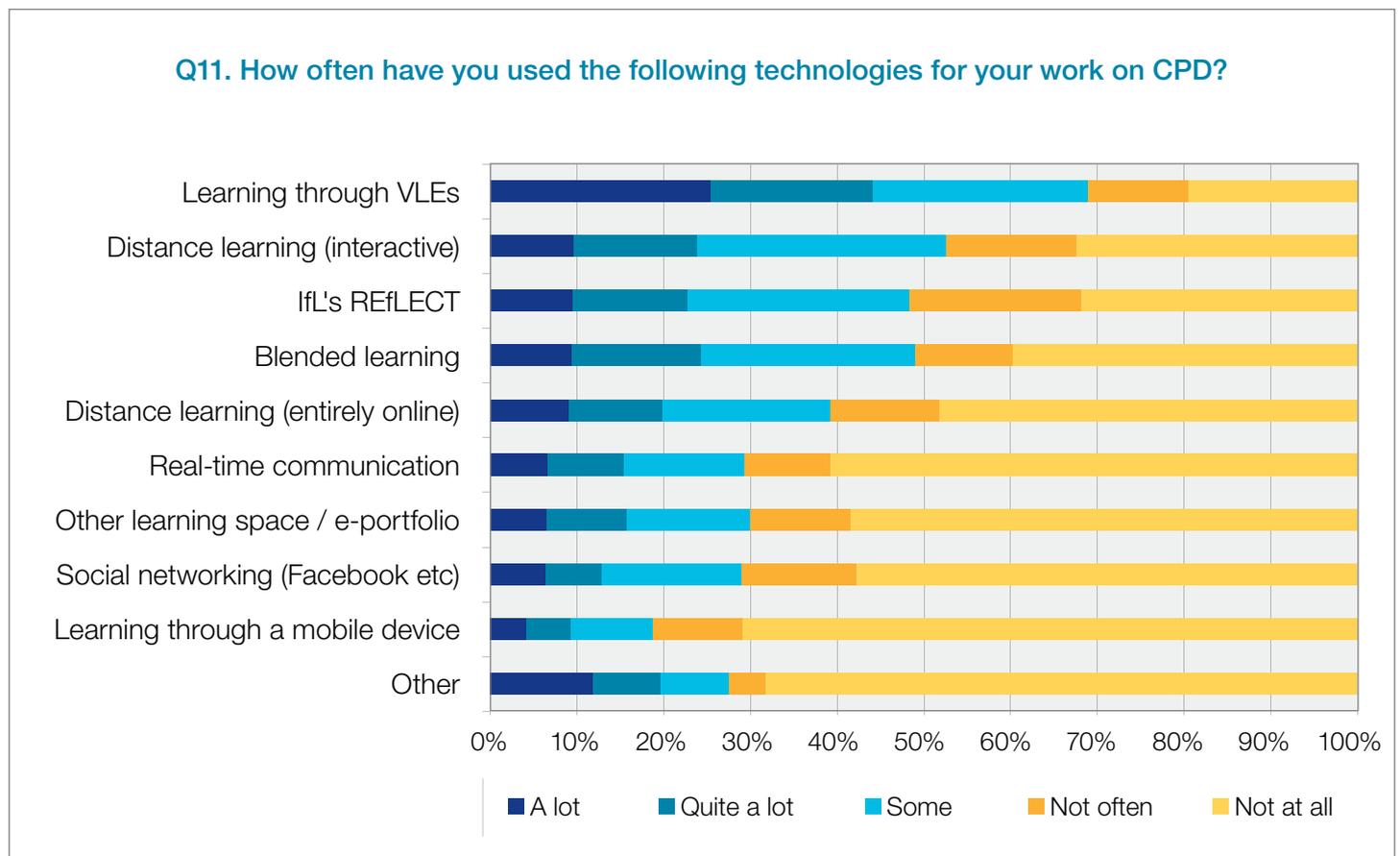


Figure 5b

13. To what extent do you feel the following technologies have been helpful to your teaching and learning?

		Very helpful	Quite helpful	Not helpful
		%	%	%
Learning through virtual learning environments (VLEs)		39.68	51.31	9.01
Distance learning (through interactive materials such as CD-ROM)		21.39	66.94	11.67
Blended learning		28.13	59.49	12.38
Other		45.54	41.29	13.17
Distance learning (entirely online)		27.25	54.58	18.17
Using an alternative personal learning space and e-portfolio		20.77	52.55	26.68
IfL's REfLECT		14.82	56.90	28.28
Skype, MSN Messenger or other real-time communication		17.67	52.80	29.53
Learning through a mobile device (ipod, PDA)		19.28	49.94	30.78
Social networking through Facebook, Twitter and Myspace		14.68	45.12	40.20
Total who responded to this question	3,338	Responses from those who selected 'Not applicable' are not included in the percentage analysis above.		
Total who skipped this question	1,840			
Total	5,178			

Figure 6a

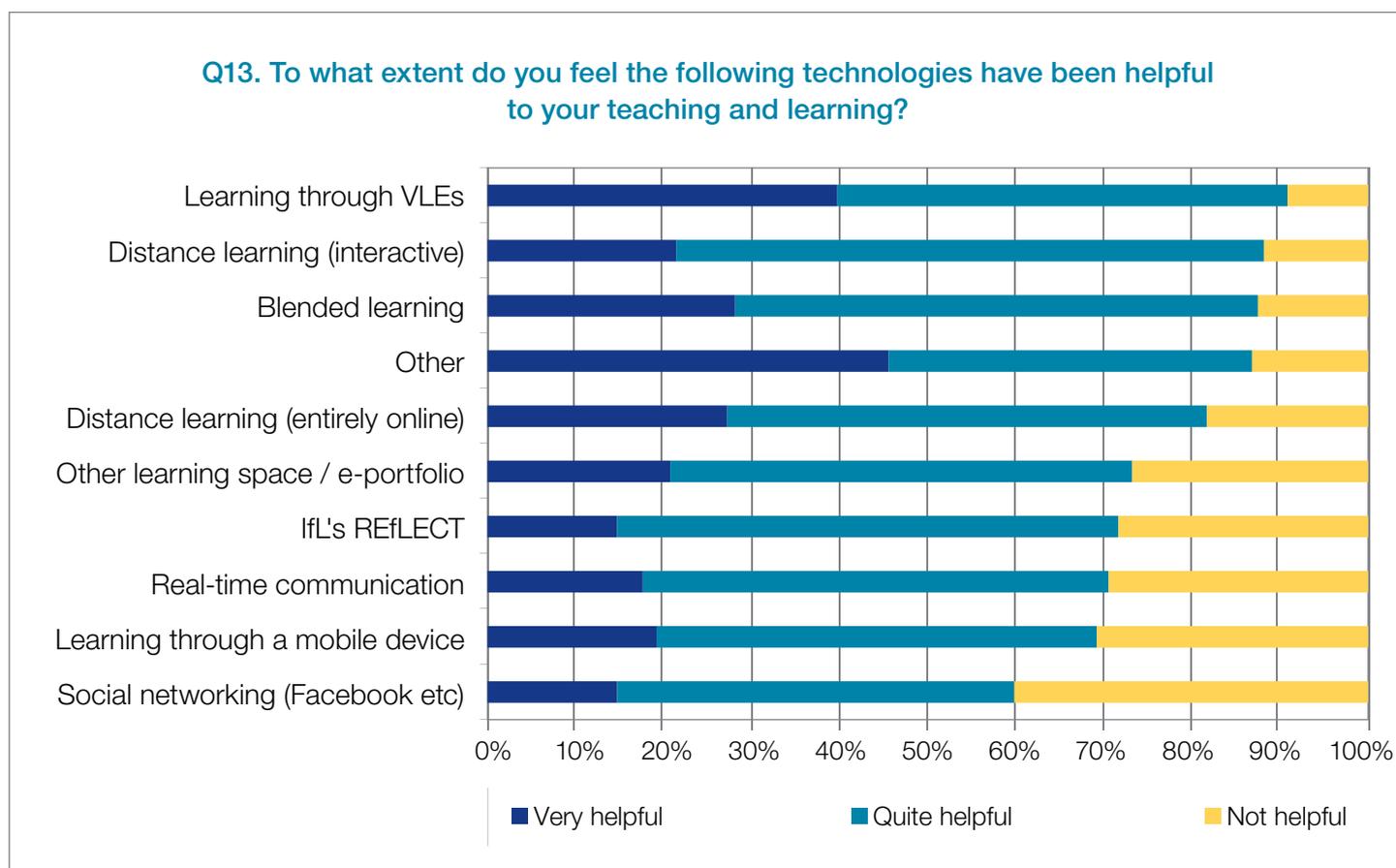


Figure 6b

Types of CPD

Members were also asked about the **type** of CPD activities with which they had engaged (Q14, see figures 7a and 7b). Almost all those responding (96%) had accessed online resources and, a similar proportion (94%) had engaged in reflection on their practice. On the other hand, nearly 85% had not engaged in a secondment and nearly 75% had not engaged in an industrial placement in the past 12 months. More surprisingly, perhaps, over 40% had not engaged in any research, whether action research (53%) or academic research (42%). Not a great deal of use had been made of work shadowing, with two-thirds saying that they used it 'not often' or 'not at all'.

When asked to what extent the CPD activities they had engaged in had had a positive effect on teaching and learning (Q16, see figures 8a and 8b), there was strong endorsement for reflective practice, with 30% reporting 'a lot' and over two-thirds (68%) stating 'a lot' or 'quite a lot'. Of those responding, 62% rated peer observation; 69% rated online resources; 56% rated e-learning approaches; and 46% rated in-house development activities for whole staff as having 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' of impact.

14. To what extent have you used the following activities to improve teaching and learning?					
	A lot	Quite a lot	Some	Not often	Not at all
	%	%	%	%	%
Online resources	35.24	36.03	21.62	3.23	3.88
Reflective practice	30.69	33.82	24.14	5.44	5.91
In-house team development	21.78	28.27	27.01	8.86	14.08
Accredited programmes	19.68	19.77	22.22	11.94	26.39
E-learning approaches	19.64	23.87	27.78	11.73	16.98
In-house whole staff development	18.52	21.95	28.69	12.98	17.86
Peer observation	17.24	29.68	34.00	10.01	9.07
Academic research	14.43	15.68	18.03	9.44	42.42
Mentoring	13.74	21.00	23.70	11.82	29.74
Interactive workshops	12.69	18.39	24.21	14.26	30.45
Coaching	10.27	15.87	19.93	11.72	42.21
Subject networks	9.74	20.64	28.04	15.80	25.78
Online communities and forums	8.76	12.82	21.74	21.98	34.70
Action research	8.08	12.25	15.65	11.23	52.79
Skills For Life events and workshops	7.49	11.80	19.27	13.08	48.36
Work shadowing	5.31	10.36	17.15	14.00	53.18
Industrial placement	4.14	5.74	8.47	6.96	74.69
Regional CPD networks	3.85	8.90	17.13	14.30	55.82
14–19 networks	3.49	6.47	11.47	11.47	67.10
STEM events and workshops	2.21	4.77	8.76	9.48	74.78
Secondment	1.74	2.66	4.69	6.26	84.65
Total who responded to this question	4,276	The percentage analysis above excludes those who skipped the specific activity listed in the question.			
Total who skipped this question	913				
Total	5,189				

Figure 7a

Q14. To what extent have you used the following activities to improve teaching and learning?

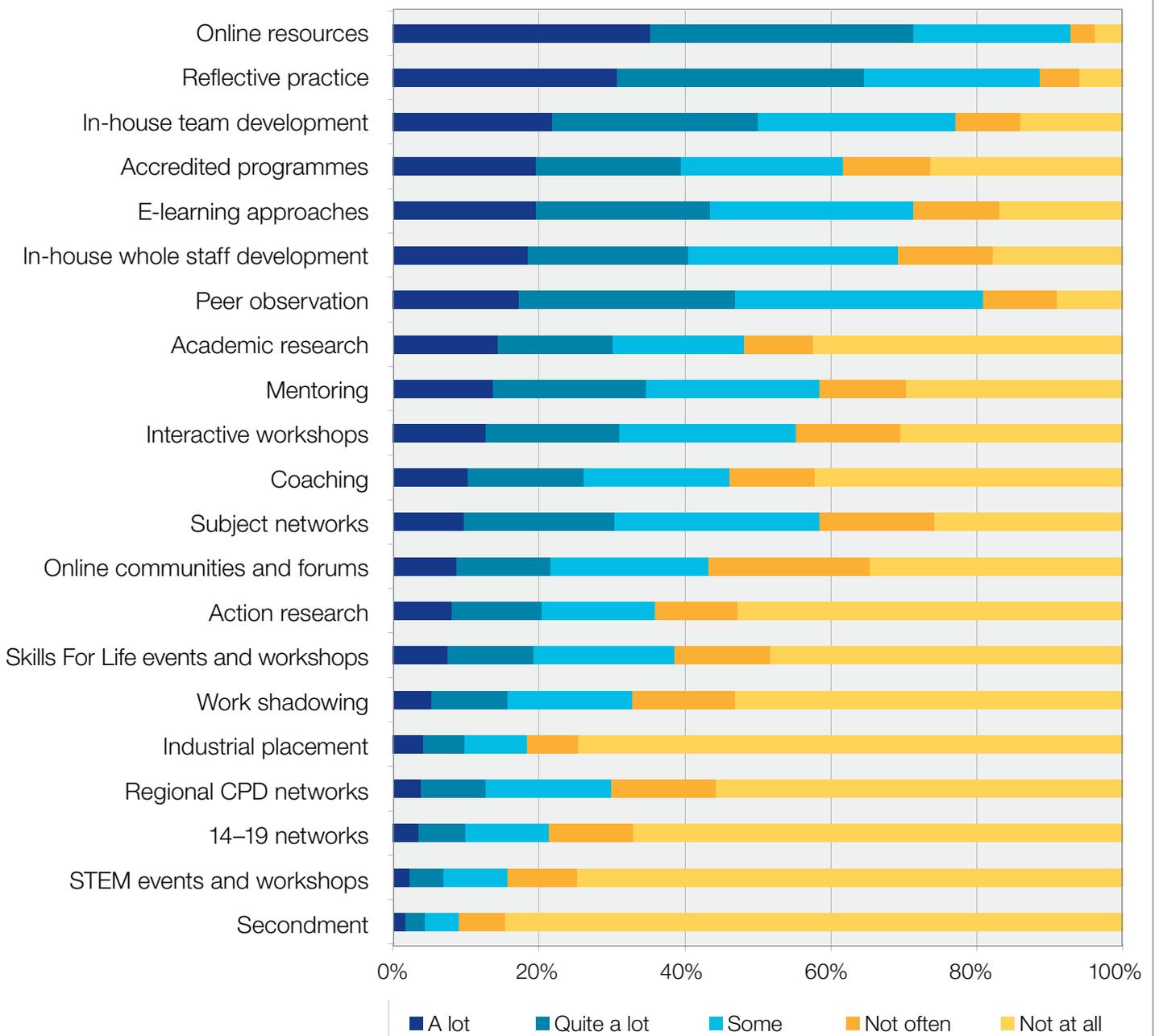


Figure 7b

“I feel it is important that the tutor, trainer, teacher can project and instil enthusiasm in their delivery using whatever means are available. Enthusiasm to succeed is infectious and without it the learner will not engage. The use of modern technology is important also to engage the young learner as their world is based around use of IT / PlayStation®.”

IfL practitioner member

16. To what extent did the CPD activities have a positive impact on teaching and learning?

	A lot	Quite a lot	Some	Not at all
	%	%	%	%
Online resources	30.41	38.73	27.98	2.88
Reflective practice	30.32	37.38	27.64	4.66
E-learning approaches	25.08	31.18	35.74	8.00
Academic research	25.06	30.41	31.14	13.39
Peer observation	23.69	37.91	32.64	5.76
Accredited programmes	23.47	30.11	34.67	11.75
Mentoring	21.02	32.32	35.08	11.58
Action research	19.31	27.63	34.62	18.44
In-house team development	19.17	34.48	37.44	8.91
Coaching	18.80	30.54	34.61	16.05
Industrial placement	18.73	24.20	27.64	29.43
Interactive workshops	17.60	30.30	38.57	13.53
Skills For Life events and workshops	17.22	27.64	37.64	17.50
In-house whole staff development	17.07	29.18	39.85	13.90
Work shadowing	15.22	26.23	37.70	20.85
Subject networks	14.52	31.60	41.07	12.81
Online communities and forums	10.66	20.90	45.21	23.23
Secondment	10.63	18.85	27.61	42.91
STEM events and workshops	9.40	20.03	35.42	35.15
Regional CPD networks	8.58	22.80	41.96	26.66
14–19 networks	8.24	17.33	41.07	33.36
Total who responded to this question	3,946	Responses from those who selected 'Not applicable' are not included in the percentage analysis above.		
Total who skipped this question	1,243			
Total	5,189			

Figure 8a

“If teaching is to become brilliant it must be based on evidence-based practices, but it must involve teachers experimenting with these evidence-based approaches and talking about what has worked in their own classroom and what has not.”

IfL practitioner member

Q16. To what extent did the CPD activities have a positive impact on teaching and learning?

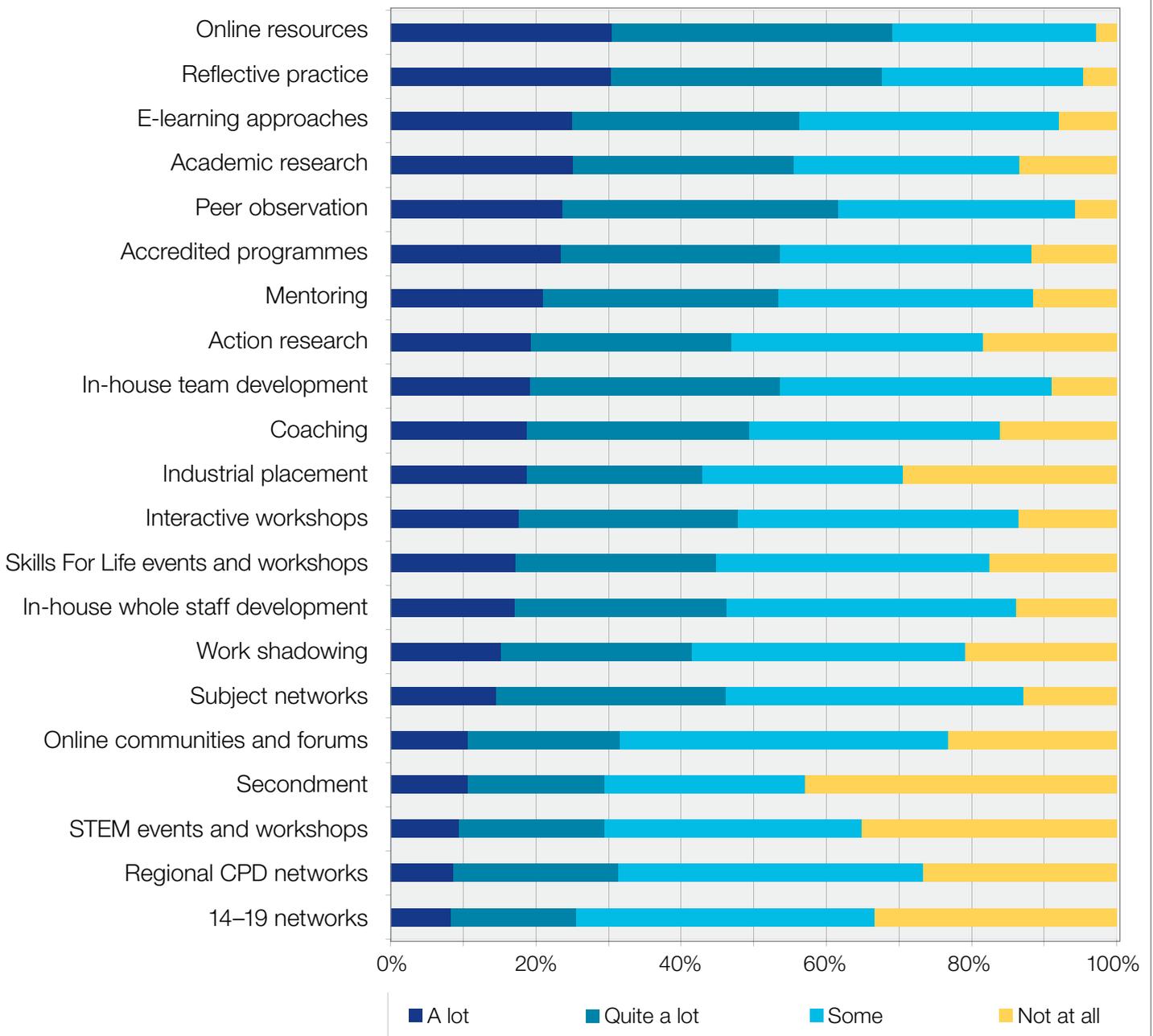


Figure 8b

“I attend NCETM network meetings, summer schools etc. These are absolutely brilliant and an invaluable resource for sharing best practices. They have a great impact on teaching, learning and staff morale.”

IfL practitioner member

A further question asked respondents about the activities they thought would lead to brilliant teaching and learning (Q17, see figures 9a and 9b). In part, the answers reflected those to earlier questions, with reflective practice the most highly rated activity (41% giving it the highest score) followed by the use of online resources, in-house team development, peer observation and mentoring. Some activities, such as 14-19 networks and STEM events, did not score well, probably because they are minority interests. Surprisingly, though, industrial placements and secondments were well down the list. They were rated as least important by 21% and 22% respectively.

Q17. Which activities do you think would lead to brilliant teaching, training and learning? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being what you would like to see most)					
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Reflective practice	41.30	31.65	16.43	6.06	4.56
Online resources	40.21	35.31	16.07	5.07	3.34
In-house development team	35.42	33.54	19.42	6.14	5.48
Peer observation	30.49	35.82	22.81	6.68	4.20
Mentoring	30.45	32.27	21.59	8.58	7.11
Interactive workshops	30.07	35.24	20.98	7.27	6.44
E-learning approaches	28.92	27.33	27.33	9.29	7.13
In-house whole staff development	28.04	29.53	24.66	9.55	8.22
Accredited programmes	26.43	30.39	25.44	10.32	7.42
Coaching	25.96	28.8	24.76	10.42	10.06
Subject networks	23.59	33.89	26.85	9.42	6.25
Skills for Life events and workshops	22.69	24.9	23.78	11.35	17.28
Academic research	21.70	26.58	26.25	13.14	12.33
Work shadowing	21.32	28.65	25.48	12.37	12.18
Industrial placement	19.23	23.18	22.47	13.73	21.39
Action research	18.90	25.50	27.34	12.73	15.53
Online communities and forums	14.81	24.46	32.69	16.92	11.12
Regional CPD networks	14.21	25.77	29.65	15.10	15.27
Secondment	13.31	22.61	25.37	16.83	21.88
14–19 networks	9.46	17.87	27.75	17.34	27.58
STEM events and workshops	8.86	17.64	29.70	16.27	27.53
Total number who responded to this question:	3,188	Not all respondents rated every activity. The percentages above relate only to those who did rate the specific activity.			
Total number who skipped this question:	1,301				
Total:	5,189				

Figure 9a

Q17. Which activities do you think would lead to brilliant teaching, training and learning?
 (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being what you would like to see most.)

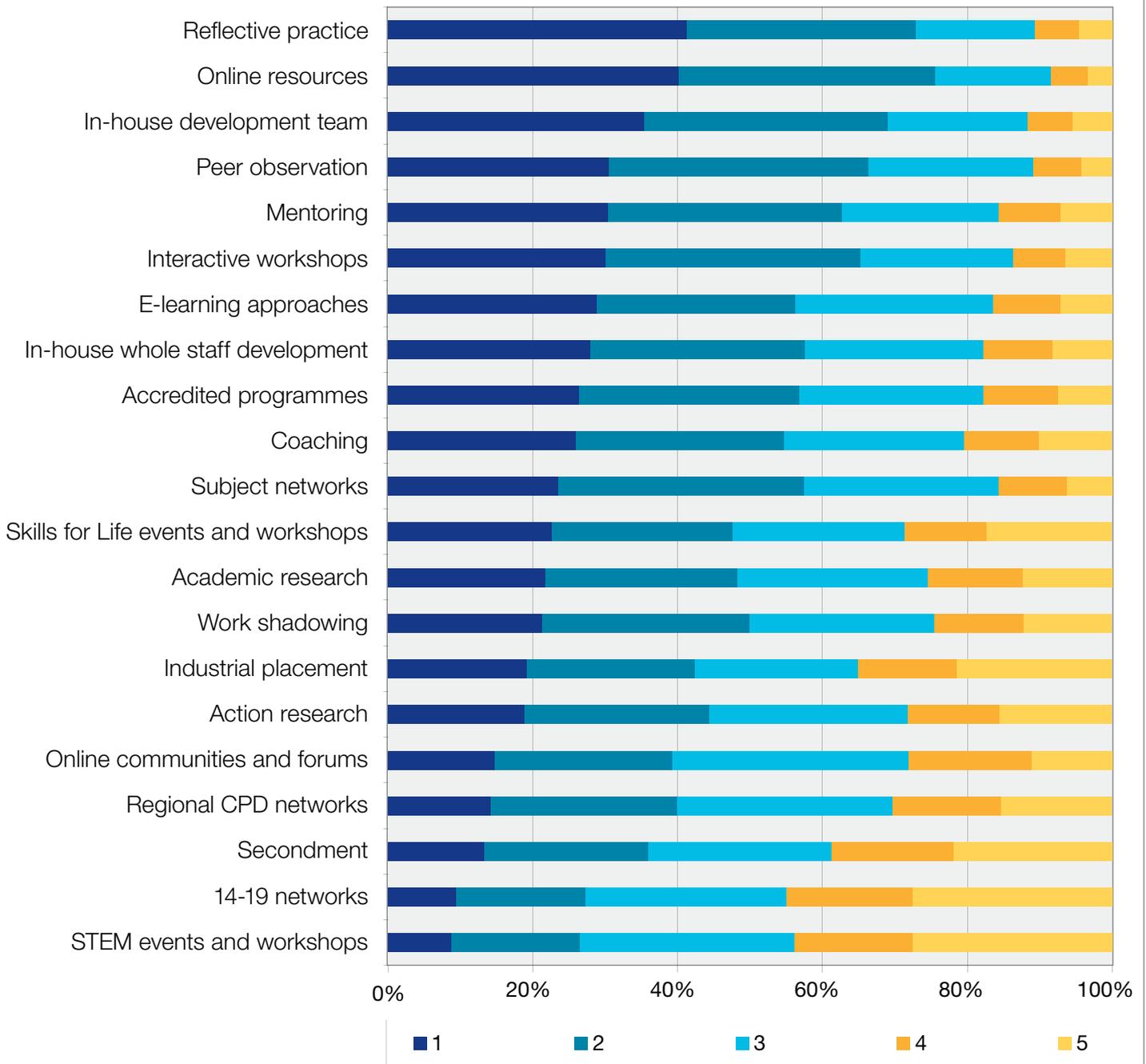


Figure 9b

“I think with constructive and critical reflection almost any situation can lend itself to an opportunity to learn from. From my experience as an ITT teacher, the key is having the skills and tools to be able to critically reflect.”

IfL practitioner member

Expert feedback

The expert seminar

As part of its research for this publication, IfL hosted an invitation seminar on 4 March 2010 for experts in teaching and learning. Senior figures representing key bodies in the sector, such as Ofsted and LSIS, met to discuss what makes for ‘brilliant teaching and training’ and to comment on the findings from the members’ survey. While supportive of the findings quoted in the draft report, participants emphasised that what the sector needed most was a ‘skilled and professional workforce that can apply pedagogy to a subject area’.

Priority wants

The group commented on the ‘wants’ identified by practitioners. They stated:

- Vocational updating could just mean compliance with awarding body requirements. IfL should stress the need to go further and promote a wider engagement with this aspect of CPD.
- The language used by teacher educators and others involved in scholarly activity or research can be misunderstood by FE professionals. There is a need to spell out what it can mean and the benefits it can have for teaching and learning.
- Although secondments are rare, Lifelong Learning UK’s Business Interchange programme, for example, has been very successful – there is, however, not always a follow-through and assessment of impact; the structure and cascading is important.

“Excellence in teaching is not the focus of colleges, in my experience. The more CPD I do, the more dissatisfied I become with the ongoing methods. College management need training in how people think and thrive.”

IfL practitioner member

What works?

The seminar participants endorsed the main findings from the literature concerning what constitutes effective CPD. They underlined that:

- There was a need for effective cascading of CPD and other sharing mechanisms – but felt that it was important for teachers and trainers to do this themselves.
- Teachers and trainers need to critically analyse their own objectives and take decisions about CPD themselves.
- Managers need to give permission for teachers and trainers to engage in dialogue about CPD and offer opportunities (see Training and Development Agency CPD database modelled on TripAdvisor).
- REfLECT works well. It would be good if it could integrate how the evidence base for CPD impact became validated by peers, shows what contribution is being made to professional knowledge and how learners might validate the change to practice.

- We should make a distinction between designed, formal CPD programmes and naturally occurring CPD (e.g. professional and peer observations and feedback, assessment groups, moderation, meetings, quality review and professional bodies' work) and make these rich, smart and valuable.

Findings from expert interviews

As with the literature review, feedback from individual stakeholders tended to emphasise varying approaches to setting priorities. Some, particularly those from a subject or vocational background, tended to stress the importance of themes such as the need to support emerging technologies or STEM subjects. Others focused on the evidence that related to the most effective ways of delivering CPD. A significant number highlighted the challenges and opportunities presented by new technology both as a focus for CPD and a tool for delivering it.

Approaches to CPD

A minority of those interviewed confined their comments to describing what they believed were the most effective approaches to delivering CPD designed to improve teaching and learning. There was a shared view that active learning approaches, where teachers took responsibility for their own development, were significantly more effective than more traditional models of conferences, workshops and dissemination events. Those interviewed often backed their assertions with reference to research literature such as the reviews carried out by Hattie or Timperley. One interviewee spoke of the need for 'supported experiments' and another of action research.

There was unprompted support for the strategies being adopted by IfL, including the development of the REfLECT online tool and support for its implementation. The promotion of opportunities for teachers and trainers to work together in 'communities of practice', whether in a face-to-face or online setting, was also commended.

Interviewees identified the lack of time for teachers to engage in professional development as a major issue. Sometimes, the only time available for CPD was taken up pursuing other institutional priorities – often in responding to the latest government initiative.

One respondent very assertively argued that senior managers in the sector understood very little about learning or about how to deliver effective CPD. Others drew attention to the difficulty that part-time staff had in accessing CPD opportunities.

Priority themes

Some interviewees tended to confine their comments to priority themes for CPD rather than commenting on how it ought to be delivered. One senior official, for example, spoke at length about the challenges and opportunities for the sector that would be brought about by the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). He thought that it would allow providers to have greater freedom to tailor provision to the individual needs of students and employers, but felt that in recent years there had been little opportunity to practise that skill.

Another interviewee spoke almost entirely about the importance of STEM subjects and the need both to extend the cadre of teachers capable of delivering them and the quality of those already engaged. In all, several interviewees mentioned some aspect of this debate, often linking it to the revised skills strategy set out in *Skills for Growth*. In some conversations, the imminent need for the sector to respond to a growth in demand for particular types of training was envisaged rather than demonstrated: and the link between such increases in demand and a need to improve teaching and learning was similarly not joined up and referenced.

Some interviewees highlighted the need for priorities in teaching and learning to reflect the priorities set by government for the sector. Several, for example, suggested lists of priorities that often included:

- The Foundation Learning Tier
- Functional Skills
- Young people who are not in employment, education or training (Neet)
- The 14–19 reforms
- Employability skills
- Safeguarding
- Offender learning
- Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD).

Assessment

A couple of interviewees spoke of the need to improve the skills of teachers in using formative assessment. One, from an ACL context, asserted that it was by far and away the single most important challenge faced in that sector. He quoted research evidence showing the importance of letting learners know what was expected of them and how far they were achieving their goals.

The use of technology

Several interviewees highlighted the need for staff to become more skilled and more confident in the use of technology as an important priority for CPD. One identified the familiarity of young people with mobile technology and their enthusiasm for its application as a potential challenge for older teachers. CPD should support them to turn this challenge into an opportunity. Another raised the question of resources, suggesting that reluctance to invest time in developing IT skills was linked to the unreliability of access to equipment and a feeling that it would not work when needed.

IfL and Edexcel consultation events: Improving teaching and learning

A total of 40 participants came to the consultations and they represented a cross-section of different constituent parts of the sector across England and different levels of practitioner involvement. Roles varied from assessors to staff development managers, from directors of companies to teacher trainers in HE. The events were held on 8, 11 and 12 March 2010.

The consultation was organised around three broad themes:

1. **Needs** – what are our stakeholders telling us about the sector-specific areas where FE currently faces the greatest challenges and where demands are likely to change or grow in the future?
2. **Wants** – what do practitioners do and value in terms of subject-specific and generic professional needs in CPD and what do they say they want to see in the future?
3. **Priorities** – how can IfL and Edexcel support CPD, and what approaches are the most effective and have the most impact?

1. Needs

- With reductions in budgets and staff, in many organisations the picture of CPD is mixed. Some organisations are investing in their staff in what they consider to be priority areas (safeguarding; changes to the QCF) and delivery has often largely shifted to in-house activity that is then disseminated: needs have been constrained to some extent by cuts in budgets.
- Different models of entitlement to CPD operate across the sector, from a set number of days variously centralised or personalised by teams to an allocated CPD budget for every member of staff. There was general agreement that some kind of overarching policy on entitlement would help.
- The majority of participants agreed that a priority need was initial teacher training (ITT); a proportion of the participants suggested that support to gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) was considered important and a priority, but that more promotion of this professional status is needed across the sector.
- The need to make the journey from ITT to CPD coherent was identified by all groups, and analysis on the potential statistical trends (i.e. more males, a growth in under-35s) was needed to allocate resources. This was linked to a need to track the teacher's or trainer's journey, i.e. from induction by the employer, to ITT and through a mentor to CPD.
- Mentoring training and recognition of responsibility was identified by two of the three groups as appropriate accredited CPD that could build towards a degree or MA.
- Leadership and management teams need to understand the importance of CPD to the individual teacher or trainer and integrate support into the organisational priorities through appraisal or review (or more seamlessly if they already do this); a whole-organisational approach is needed rather than CPD managed by the quality and HR departments.

2. Wants

- Peer support for professional status and CPD: regional (Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs)), localised and in-house support.
- Reflection days and reflection time through course team meetings, individual time for work on CPD, embedded time in CPD opportunities, reciprocal peer review and observations.
- Time to experiment and help with impact assessment.
- Clear and unambiguous guidance and information that would support CPD and career progression, including on REfLECT and how to get the best from it.
- Information on how to access external funds for CPD and where they are.
- More on assessment practice: use of formative assessment, innovations in assessment and use of digital media in assessment.

3. Priorities

■ Resources

All three groups discussed a range of resources to support CPD: from appropriate programmes on the lines of Teachers' TV; subject-specific how-to guides for teachers and trainers; generic guides on pedagogy, i.e. how to put together a CPD programme and plan; videos and podcasts of good practice. All three wanted some kind of directory to help access resources and a commentary on use and application.

■ Work-shadowing, industrial placements and professional visits

All three groups saw this as the ideal professional development but rarely available as costly and difficult to arrange and time needed to engage. Subject-specific observation of peers or experts (i.e. through Subject Learning Coaches or e-PD advisers) was effective; the model needs to be sustained and adapted by individual organisations – teaching others was the best kind of professional development that any teacher or trainer can do.

■ Teacher education

ITT needs more optional modules that can be tailored to area of expertise or area of sector work experience. This would support vocational pedagogy and could then be expanded into relevant CPD. Also, competence in ICT should be a requirement along with numeracy and literacy. Mentoring in ITT should be taken forward as a model into CPD.

■ Support with technology

Integrating REfLECT with organisational systems would be helpful to bring coherence to a national system of CPD; technical teams in organisations should lead the training and support; some kind of 'teachers' desktop' which could open up as a menu of opportunities would be a good idea.

■ Regional and localised support

IfL volunteer Connections and CETT Connections have been really helpful, and there is an enthusiasm to expand the model from using REfLECT to general IAG and career development, sector updates etc.

In summary, the responses supported these five key recommendations:

1. **Improve CPD resources;** the tangible 'take-away' value of CPD is important in stimulating brilliance in teaching and training.
2. **Improve opportunities for peer review through work shadowing or placements;** peer conversations are vital for brilliant teaching and training.
3. **Make the links between career stages explicit** for teachers and trainers, so that they can aspire to 'brilliance', building out from ITT to seasoned professional.
4. **Improve the support for CPD in technology;** in the current economic climate, e-learning will spread brilliant teaching and training to the many instead of the few.
5. **Improve regional and local support systems;** a blend of face-to-face accessible support is essential to promote confidence in teaching and training.

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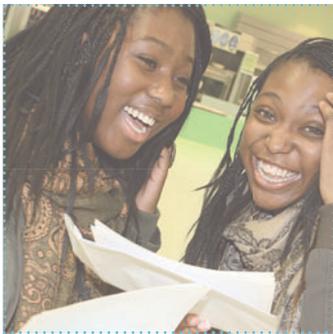
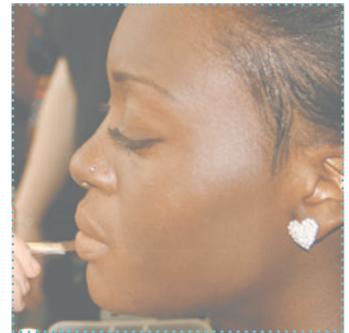
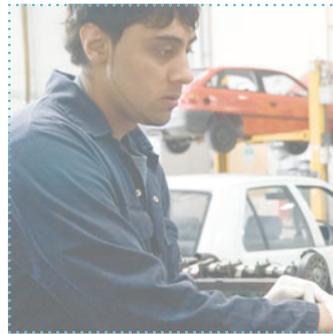
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