1 The changing face of the lifelong learning sector

Chapter objectives
This chapter provides an overview of the sector and explains the changing role of the tutor. To support this it considers Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the Institute for Learning (IfL) and reflective practice. It also considers professionalism, dual professionalism and models of professionalism together with addressing issues of quality and accountability.

The changing role of the tutor
The lifelong learning sector (LLS) teacher workforce is wide and diverse and includes further education (FE) colleges, 6th forms, adult and community learning/personal and community development and learning, offender learning and work-based learning. There are a number of other terms that you may recognize, which include Learning and skills sector (LSS) and the FE sector. FE teachers, sometimes known as FE lecturers, teach students over the age of 16, and some 14–16-year-olds studying work-related subjects.

With the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act came the incorporation of FE colleges and the removal of them from local authority control. This shift brought a greater drive in the direction of a market-led approach with the emphasis on offering appropriate programmes and courses to meet the demands of the market. With the advent of these policies and reforms, the last decade has seen a rapid increase in the number of people attending FE colleges, particularly within the 16–18 age range. This has led to the delivery of subjects in colleges widening and learner cohorts becoming more diverse.

A national framework that Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) developed to support the development of teachers, from their initial training and development, through to enhancing their continuing personal and professional development profiles (CPD), was implemented across the LLS from September 2007. The shift that took place was a
result of governmental legislation that highlighted significant changes to be recognized within what was the sector for post-compulsory education and training (PCET). And the Education Act of 2002 saw the advent of regulations that prohibited anyone from teaching in FE colleges if they had not served a probationary period. The drive was to ensure that learners are only taught by teachers who have received the necessary induction training and who have completed a recognized teaching qualification to cover the essential induction, assessment, monitoring and observation requirements that are considered necessary to teach their specialist subject effectively.

Teachers are, arguably, the most important resource that a student can encounter. Indeed, tutors can influence whether learning is a positive or not so positive experience for the student. Part of the drive to ensure learners have positive experience can be located in the push towards raising the standards of teaching, this is reflected in legislation whereby teachers offered jobs in colleges and other publicly funded organizations are required to have gained an appropriate teaching qualification. This push was supported by the DfE's (2002) *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training – Our Vision for the Future* that set out to produce a qualified workforce by 2010. The DfE (2004) *Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* put forward a policy of reform of teacher development. While the DfE's (2006) White Paper *FE Reform: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* introduced further plans for the reprofessionalization of the FE workforce, including CPD for all teachers. The government sees a professional workforce as a key element in realizing its aim to get rid of poor performance in colleges and to enable colleges to respond more effectively to employers' needs. However, the notion of whether equipping teachers with qualifications makes them 'better teachers' is problematic. Questions you may want to consider include:

- Does more qualified mean better motivated?
- Do qualifications offer an indication that the teachers' understanding of the learners' cognitive and emotional needs is better?
- Does being more qualified equate to being more professional?

Some of you may say, yes, that better qualified means a better teacher; and others may argue, no: qualifications do not equate to a better teacher. Whatever your view there is no doubt that being highly competent in both your subject specialist knowledge and pedagogy can lead to best practice in the classroom. As teacher educators we have seen how critical reflection and engagement in key theories can underpin trainees' and qualified teachers' practice. This can empower them to be creative in the classroom and to take innovate approaches that raise the dynamics and promote learner engagement and learning. However, we have also witnessed how qualifications do not always equate to being motivated, driven by the learners' needs, caring, willing to go that extra distance to help learners reach their potential. How can we measure the *emotional capital* (Hochschild, 1983) that many teachers give in their lessons. Most of this is invisible and yet it is the reason why many learners achieve their goals, many in the face of adversity.
6 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Task: role and responsibilities

Consider the role of the professional tutor in the LLS. How might you define the different tasks that tutors are expected to perform?

You may have identified that the role of a professional in the LLS is extremely varied; you may be an assessor, an instructor, a work-based learning or apprentice supervisor, a learning manager, a prison education officer or a community co-ordinator. Most of you will have gained and honed your specialist skill through another trade or profession: for example, as a plumber, lawyer or hairdresser. It is likely that a number of your identities are closely bound in the occupation you have come from rather than in being a practitioner in the sector. Maintaining your professionalism in the sector will include taking responsibility for the education of young people and adults. As a teacher you will work across faculties and disciplines to meet the diverse needs of your learners. In order to do this effectively, communicating effectively is essential; this will include asking questions, seeking advice, and sharing your experiences with other practitioners. One way to support this is through professional networking. Some of you may have already begun to do this.

In the following case study, Cherry, an art specialist, describes her experiences as a new tutor in an extract taken from her reflective journal.

Case study: the experience of a new tutor

When I first started out as a new teacher I felt isolated. This was probably my fault. What with lesson planning at night and delivering in the day I felt I was on a constant roller coaster. After a while this took its toll on my energy levels and motivations. I even stopped making the space to reflect on my practice. This had an impact on my performance in the classroom. How once I had strived for Best Practice – I began to adopt ‘it’ll do attitude’. I’m ashamed of this and indeed looking back I now realise I was totally burnt out. It was a colleague who introduced me to a network of practitioners who all shared a similar interest in art. Initially I exchanged emails and then I went to the meetings. It was like a breath of fresh air – we’d all share our stories of teaching – good and bad – and support each other in strategies not only to improve teaching and learning but how to cope with demanding workloads. We also began to get involved in action research. For the first time I was taking ownership of my professional development and it was very empowering. What’s more I was working with a group of like minded people who like me were looking for a critical space to support their professional growth. Although I still occasionally feel overwhelmed by the workload, no longer isolated I now feel much more positive knowing I have a support structure of like minded practitioners.
Continuing professional development (CPD)

With an increasing move towards performativity via target setting and results and accountability, many tutors often feel that a great deal of their time and energy is governed by a managerial-driven system based on close scrutiny of their paperwork rather than on their practice in the classroom. Avis (2005: 212) identifies how this shift towards performance management is at odds with the rhetoric of the knowledge economy, which places an onus on a non-hierarchical approach based on trusting and respectful relationships between teams. With the managerialist discourse where managers claim the right to manage and where professional judgements are under intense surveillance, notions of ‘trust’ can be something of an illusion. A blame culture can be the result of such approaches whereby accountability becomes a means by which the institution can call staff to account. In an age of insecure employment and redundancies, the pressure to conform to a management agenda can work to erode a practitioner’s autonomy and undermine their professionalism. A way to maintain your professionalism is to keep up to date with your CPD. You may want to consider how you can take ownership of this, rather than it being something that is imposed on you. Some common strategies include:

- getting involved in practitioner research
- becoming a subject specialist coach
- subscribing to a subject specific journal
- attending conferences
- keeping up to date with your reflections
- speaking to your mentor
- planning your CPD for the year so it can be costed into the institution’s budget
- registering on a CPD module at a college or university.

However, in order to meet the needs of the learners, there does need to be a consideration of the administration involved that includes assessing their learning styles and considering learners’ motivations and previous experiences. This is a means to identifying various teaching methods that could be utilized meaningfully on the programme and offers the opportunity to adopt a more personalized approach to teaching and learning.

Changes to the teacher’s role

Rather than the amount of time a tutor spent teaching determining the teaching qualification they took, from September 2007, it shifted to the teaching responsibilities within the practitioner’s role being the driver. So let us consider how the roles differ.

The associate teacher role

The associate teacher role is defined as having fewer teaching responsibilities than the full role. Importantly, the quality of teaching and learning is expected to be of an equally...
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN LIFELONG LEARNING

high standard. Someone is deemed to be in an associate teacher role if their role and responsibilities are to teach predominantly in at least one of the following ways:

- on a one-to-one basis: for example, tutorial
- from preprepared materials rather than designing the curriculum and materials used
- with a narrow teaching timetable: for example, related to a particular level/subject/type of learner/short course.

An associate teacher would also be someone whose main occupation is not teaching, but who does deliver learning on a regular or more than occasional basis. This, for example, could be a hairdresser whose main job is hairdressing, but who shares up-to-date skills in the industry. As such an associate tutor will be required to know the learner group. This process will be informed by the initial assessments carried out on learners at the start of their course or programme of study. As an associate teacher a part of your role may include carrying out the initial assessment in your specialist area.

Task

Consider how initial screening and diagnostic results (e.g. in literacy and numeracy) can be used in teaching and learning.

You may have considered:

- course can be set at the right level for the learner
- they can inform an individualized approach
- prepare a lesson that meets the individual needs of learners
- embed literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) into the vocational area at the appropriate level
- negotiate individual and meaningful learning goals with learners.

The full teacher role

The role is wider and often comes with more responsibilities. Part of this role will involve using materials and resources that you have designed, implemented and evaluated across a range of levels, subjects and learner types. You may also contribute to other programmes. For example, you may teach law primarily but also input into the business programme.

Task

Consider those aspects of practice that contribute to the full teacher role
You may have considered:

- carry out initial assessment with learners
- identify key theories of teaching and learning relevant to your own specialist area
- develop and reflect on practice through reference to relevant theories of learning
- prepare session plans and schemes of work to meet the individual needs of learners
- work as a member of a team; this may be your own specialist team, an inter-agency team, a multidisciplinary team
- work with learners to develop individual learning goals
- develop the curriculum at more than one level to more than one target audience and on more than one programme
- develop teaching and learning materials that are inclusive: e.g. promote readability for learners with dyslexia
- deliver session plans to meet the individual needs of learners, for example, differentiating the aim, objectives and assessment strategies
- provide opportunities for learners to understand how their specialist area relates to a wider social, economic and environmental context, for example, this can be linked to Every Child Matters.

You may also have considered:

- monitoring the learners’ progress
- keeping accurate records of learner progress; for example, tracking progress in individual learning plans (ILPs)
- contributing to the organizational quality procedures, for example, self-assessment records
- Partake in CPD.

**CPD, the IfL and reflective practice**

As a trainee teacher or qualified teacher, you can register with the Institute for Learning (IfL). This is a professional body for teachers, trainers, tutors and student teachers in the LLS. Its aim is to support the needs of its members and, importantly, raise the status of teaching practitioners across the sector. The IfL is the body responsible for the regulation of teachers’ professional formation. It has a clear set of standards that need to be evidenced in order to achieve a licence to practice. As with other professional bodies, tutors must work within the boundaries of the law and professional values. There are numerous laws and professional ethics that are constantly changing or being updated. Your organization will have its own policies and procedures relating to these legal requirements.

All staff employed as teachers in the LLS must be professionally registered and all new staff must also be licensed to practise by the IfL. As described above, to be licensed, all teachers must be trained to a standard that allows them to achieve either
Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status, depending on their role. All full-time teachers, which includes those who are new and existing, should undertake at least 30 hours of CPD per year and keep a record reflecting on the CPD activities they have undertaken to maintain their status with the IfL. Those in part-time employment will undertake CPD on a pro rata basis, with a minimum of six hours a year.

Reflective practice

Learning from experience is one of the aims of critical reflection. It is known as experiential learning. For a number of teachers the best part of teaching is the learning and growth they get from it. This can have a profound impact that challenges and changes your previously held values, beliefs and assumptions.

In order to begin the reflecting, you may want to place the learner at the centre of the cycle and consider:

- Where are my learners coming from: for example, are they school leavers, are they adult returnees, are you working in an economically deprived or an affluent area?
- What do they need to know and how can I help facilitate the access to this knowledge to keep them growing and reaching their potential?
- How can I best support them on their learning journey?
- Do I need to work with other professionals, for example, a counsellor?
- Do I need to signpost them to specialists, for example, a dyslexia specialist?

Part of the excitement and the challenge of being a tutor is getting to know each student. In order to do this you will need to understand how education fits into their lives, for example, what are their goals and aspirations? You may also want to consider how their assumptions, beliefs and values inhibit or enhance their personal/professional growth. Helping learners realize their potential may mean creating an environment where you can both reflect and challenge long-held beliefs in order for you and your learners to move forward.

Models of reflection

The importance of reflecting on what you are doing, as part of the learning process, has been explored by a number of people. David Kolb (1984) asserts that knowledge results from the interaction between theory and experience. He states that learning takes place in four stages in a cycle that continues the more one learns (see Fig. 1.1).

According to Kolb, learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. It is worth thinking of his model as you analyse, reflect and write about your practice. This will help you to demonstrate where and how you have created knowledge through the experiences you have gone through. You may
THE CHANGING FACE OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING SECTOR

Concrete experience
Abstract conceptualization
Active experimentation
Reflective observation

Source: Kolb (1984)
Figure 1.1 The four stages of the adult learning process

want to share your experiences and the cycle these take with your mentor, specialist subject coach or manager. Following the Kolb model can be the basis for a meaningful dialogue on:

- discussion of concrete experience
- analysis of experience
- conceptual learning
- application of learning
- additionally, you will be rated in areas of documentation and writing skills.

By using Kolb’s model, you can reflect on past learning experiences and form a strong structure for future learning. This will be vital in continuing to gain their licence to practise and future CPD.

In this extract from her reflective journal, Catherine explores her recent experience of being observed in her teaching practice, drawing on Kolb’s experiential learning model to aid her writing.

Case study: reflecting on experience

Yesterday I completed my first observed lesson, observed by my mentor and tutor. It was also the first time I had taught a class on my own, as previous experiences have involved observations and team teaches.

The class I was taking is considered a difficult cohort with some students requesting a transfer to another class. It is a diverse cohort with diverse needs. Due to the labelling of my cohort (which I don’t agree with) I had spent time observing learners
in class and reviewing Individual Learning Plans to develop my own conclusions. I also discussed with fellow teachers.

I had planned and prepared well for the session. I was pleased with my preparation and organisation and benefited from making reference back to a key handout provided and an exercise completed in one of our sessions. I think at this early stage in my learning journey, such documents are extremely useful resources and tools to lean on until I begin to develop my own way of doing things. In some ways I found the planning process a challenge as there are many levels on which you are planning. For example, I was planning for my observation and wanted to tick X amount of boxes for that. I was also planning for my cohort and wanted to tick certain boxes for them as individuals and then there is the curriculum, I had certain boxes to tick for that. It did beg the question who/what am I really planning for? Does it all lead to the same thing? And if not, there are professional challenges to that. As such I am looking forward to the next semester when we will explore this debate in more detail.

Having researched behaviour and classroom management theories I felt confident and having observed right and wrong approaches during previous observations I felt confident in managing the class. For example when Alexandras came in late I paused while he sat down and used a stare that prompted an apology. I felt on the whole the group were engaged and really made an effort to participate. I felt respected and trusted and feel confident the rapport will continue to grow my cohort.

Using positive reinforcement and feedback strategies really worked and the class really responded to specific comments I made about ‘when they get a job/go to university’. How mature their questions were and how well they completed the numeracy exercise! It felt really satisfying to see them smile proudly to themselves.

I did find quieter learners more difficult to bring in. And knowing their personal circumstances I didn’t want to pick on them by name, but at the same time knew I should have done more to bring them in more. It makes me feel like I’ve failed. But at the end of the day I need to find the balance that is right for them, not what makes me feel good. This is something to work on.

In my rationale, my teaching and learning strategies were varied to reach all learners needs and allow for scaffolding. However, on reflection I let myself down by relying on myself being able to pose questions and assess understanding across different levels off my own back. I think because I did this in my previous role so well I set myself a trap. In my old role I was working with a different level and was an expert deliverer at that level. I found it challenging to come up with suitable links and examples for my learners during the session and it affected my confidence. I realised immediately that in future I need to plan for questioning, pre-prepare questions at a higher and lower order where possible to help me develop my practice until I become more experienced at it. I definitely feel that questioning skills are crucial to be effective in class assessment and something that is learned and practised to achieve skill and will endeavour to do this.

I was disappointed with the Grade 3 grade. On reflection, I think it is because I don’t like the term ‘satisfactory’ and it is too near to a Grade 4. So I’m getting hung
up on numbers and words. (Another debate for assessment!) However, ultimately it is the quality of the feedback, experience and my learning from it that matters and considering this was my first solo teach and first observation to start at a 3 is a reasonable starting point. I do feel that there were some elements that would have scored a 2 and so I need to focus on moving those elements at a 3 up to a 2 also.

In summary I would have definitely sought out more examples to bring to the learners’ level. The response to the Who am I? Exercise was evidence that speaking their language really engaged the learners and the buzz in the room during that exercise is what I want to create. I also need to develop my skills in questioning to improve my assessment in class. On one level I know everyone has completed exercises, answered questions etc. But I want to be able to apply strategies that let me know understanding is there and can be applied otherwise the learning will be lost. Connecting my teaching, learning and assessment strategies together will definitely help me to achieve more success (see Table 1.1).

### Table 1.1 Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>How will it I know I’ve achieved it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop my questioning skills</td>
<td>Research theories and look for ways to apply them in the next lesson. Build in a questioning assessment strategy for my next lesson</td>
<td>Next observed session TBC</td>
<td>Stronger questioning skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More confident delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More learner responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater validity and reliability of assessment of learning that has taken place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate clearer links between learning objectives, teaching and assessment strategies</td>
<td>Develop a mind-map approach to planning a lesson that can be used ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>More clarity to see what was planned, delivered and how it was assessed. Improved reliability of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop wider examples and experiences for subject content</td>
<td>For each topic I introduce I will prepare an example in advance, whether from own experience or specifically chosen to appeal to learners’ experiences</td>
<td>Next observed session TBC</td>
<td>Resource file started which includes stored examples and experiences that can be shared and stored for future use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other perspectives: Gibbs’ reflective cycle

Gibbs (2007) identified a series of six steps to aid reflective practice; these elements make up a cycle that can be applied over and over.

- Description – what happened?
- Feelings – what were you thinking and feeling?
- Evaluation – what was good and bad about the experience?
- Analysis – what sense can you make of the situation?
- Conclusion – what else could you have done?
- Action plan – what will you do next time?

In this session, Catherine shares her reflection following the Gibb model.

Case study: reflecting on a difficult session

I had planned well and had prepared a variety of resources and activities. The class I was taking is considered a difficult cohort and I have managed to maintain a good learning environment with them in previous sessions. Despite this I was apprehensive about how it would go. Earlier in the day I was made aware that this group were behind on their assignments and their behaviour was noted across a number of classes as being challenging.

I was concerned that no matter how good the resources and content may have been, if their minds are elsewhere then learning will not take place. I reflected on how I would deliver the session and considered running a revision session. I was advised by my mentor and the course leader to continue as planned. I tried hard to show them how the content would help them complete their assignment and give it value and went in with the belief that if I delivered a good session it would ‘snap them out of it’.

That didn’t happen, at every opportunity a group of girls persisted with complaints and questions regarding assignment work. They refused to engage in the session. This interrupted the session flow and disengaged those who were ready to learn and had completed the assignment already.

But the session was exhausting, and did not feel like a good session at all. Certainly one I wouldn’t want to repeat. My mentor came in half way through and he agreed ‘not a great session’.

We acknowledged the difficult cohort and the challenges that were outside of my control. Rather than dwell on those we discussed how I could handle the situation better next time round. I could, for example, agree to finish the session early to review the assignment again, next time I will take time at the beginning of the session to do this to get rid of as much baggage as possible before the session starts and then
agree steps forward that will settle learners and allow us to continue. I also allowed the staffroom comments and advice to affect my own judgement.

In delivering the session I felt I overcompensated in trying to show learners the value of the content. This resulted in me directing a lot of information and resources at the learners, rather than engaging them and the session needed to be more student-led and I should have focused my time and energy on getting them involved.

I agreed with my mentor that these learners do need to take more responsibility for their learning, and expressed my belief that with future assignments we need to build in strategies to support them do this as they are really struggling. Race and Pickford’s (2007: 6) Ten-point Plan for retaining your students includes Point 3, ‘Build in Study Skills Guidance in to Your Sessions as “Many argue that short, localised bursts of study skills advice have more impact than larger, generic study skills sessions”’.

At the end of the session I asked for feedback from my learners as to the value of the session. My mentor was surprised by this and he acknowledged my ‘bravery’ as it could have been negative under the circumstances.

We were both genuinely surprised with the feedback on the learning that was achieved. It highlighted to me how important it is to include assessment and feedback strategies, even when you may fear the results will not be as you hoped. Had I not done what I did at the end of the session I would have assumed it was a complete disaster.

In future I will respond to learner anxieties before commencing a lesson. I will plan some ‘plan B’ activities in readiness. I also need to recognise my own response and my tendency to ‘do all the work in difficult situations, and facilitate more student-centred activities’. Not only will this benefit and engage learners more, it will be less exhausting for me too.

What initially felt like the session from hell, on reflection has become one of real learning and development for me. I feel more confident to manage this situation again. I have seen the value in feedback and assessment in the hardest of sessions and have challenged my own practice more than in previous sessions. I guess it really is a case of what doesn’t break you only makes you stronger.

It is important to add that this reflection was only realised after several days of reflecting on the session. If I wrote this the same day or even the following day, my experience would be a different one. Petty’s (200: 319) advises caution on coming to any fixed conclusions straight away and suggests making some immediate notes, as you will probably ‘think more clearly after you have “slept on it”.’ That appears to be the case for me (see Table 1.2).

Writing reflections can vary

A way to reflect is to keep a diary of your thoughts, feelings and experiences. The chances are you will be writing them down in a number of places. This will often depend on
Table 1.2  Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>How will I know I’ve achieved it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collate a series of revision activities to address assignment concerns</td>
<td>Speak to mentor and peers for suggestions and existing resources Research web/further reading</td>
<td>End of February</td>
<td>Collection of activities ready to use Assessment of activity when used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research study skills activities to build into sessions</td>
<td>Speak to mentor and peers for suggestions and existing resources Research web/further reading</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Included in assignment I am designing for BND Unit 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where you are and what is the most accessible. For example, you may make notes after a lesson and then word-process them later. They may be written in:

- learning journals, a diary and so on
- reflection on work experiences
- reflection on placement experiences, for example, communication with a mentor, subject specialist coach or manager
- lesson evaluations
- professional development portfolio.

Reflections are not just for when you are trainee teacher, they are something you will need to produce throughout your career. Indeed, it is an integral part of your CPD. It can offer you a deeper understanding of a number of areas in both your personal and public life.

**Tips for good reflection**

- Keep a journal with you so you can note your reflections at any time. It is surprising how ideas can pop up when least expected!
- Remember, you do not have to show anyone your reflections, so be honest. If you need to, ask your tutor or mentor for input.
- Listen to the voice of your learners, include their ideas and feelings in your reflections.
- Do not be too hard on yourself. Celebrate what you can do as well as what you would like to develop.
- Reflections do not need to be in word form, you may want to draw your reflections, take photographs and so on. Find a medium that allows you to express yourself and your feelings.
Dual professionalism

The distinctive model of initial teacher training for LLS recognizes that teachers and trainers are recruited for their vocational and subject skills and knowledge and that they bring to the sector substantial expertise from their background, in business, industry, commerce or careers in the public or voluntary sectors. Indeed, for the majority of teachers and trainers, teaching in LLS is a second or third career. As such they are often professionals in their own field before they start their teaching career. For example, you could be a nurse working in a hospital or perhaps a bricklayer working in construction, before considering teaching your subject. There are two components of your professionalism: your subject specialism and the pedagogy related to that area. This is what is referred to as ‘dual professionalism’ and both are equally important in your role as a tutor or trainer. It is therefore essential that both these area are considered when you address your CPD.

Quality assurance and administration

As a teacher in the LLS, you have a responsibility to ensure that you behave in an appropriate way. To ensure a unified expectation of behaviour and conduct across the sector, the IfL developed a ‘Code of Professional Practice’, which all its members need to adhere to. A responsibility of the trainee and qualified teacher is to continually reflect and move towards best practice. As your understanding of the sector and your learners changes so will your needs. This will be reflected in continual reassessment. A way to move forward is to evaluate and improve the quality and impact of your practice and in doing so take into account your learners’ changing needs. Part of your role will also be keeping up-to-date and accurate records; failure to so can be classed as gross misconduct in some organizations. The array of paperwork encountered by tutors can be bewildering:

- Health and Safety – risk assessments, accident reports, fire evacuation procedures and so on.
- Teaching records – attendance registers, syllabuses, schemes of work, session plans, assessments, including initial assessments (ILPs).
- Auditing and accountability – enrolment forms, learner satisfaction questionnaires (evaluation forms), data-gathering for funding bodies (attendance/completion/achievement stats/progression routes).

Conclusion

The drive in the learning and skills sector is to upskill the sector’s workforce and turn what was (and many think still is) the Cinderella profession into the profession of choice. However, there remain issues of contention. Teachers in FE, including those who gain
QTLS professional status for teaching in FE and skills sector, are not able to teach in a school’s context unless they are qualified schoolteachers. Schoolteachers, on the other hand, are allowed to teach in FE settings, because Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is recognized as meeting the qualification threshold. With their distinctive and up-to-date vocational expertise, and their ability to contribute more fully to the 14–19 curriculum, tutors in the LLS play an increasingly important role in the delivery of vocational qualifications. Yet parity of pay and conditions with schoolteachers continues to elude them. This clearly needs to be addressed if the LLS is to become the career of choice and vocational skills are to be valued as much in reality as the rhetorics of politicians.

References