

**'Assessing the Cross- Curricular Skills'
In Service Training**

An Evaluation of the Pilot

April – June 2011

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1.0 Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the pilot of a whole-school In Service Training (INSET) on the incoming statutory assessment delivered to primary schools in Northern Ireland. This training, 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' (initially for Communication and Using Mathematics)', was delivered through three modules: Module 1: 'Preparing for Training'; Module 2: Online Training; and Module 3: 'Agreement Trials' between April and June 2011. The aim of this evaluation was to obtain feedback from a pilot cohort of 125 primary schools regarding how effective this blended model of training was in developing stakeholders' understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements for Communication and Using Mathematics. The findings collected in this evaluation will be used to inform the rollout of this INSET and future training provisions.

Summary of Findings

Blended Approach to Training

This INSET blended both face-to-face training and an online training component which the majority of participants found to be useful or very useful (96.4%, n = 1326). Qualitative data indicated that participants found that this blended approach facilitated greater flexibility for individual learning and an opportunity to revisit information through the online component while the 'Preparing for Training' and 'Agreement Trials' events provided opportunities for interaction with others. However, it is important to highlight that 130 participants (9.2%) regarded the face-to-face training to be more beneficial and a preferable way to receive training. Furthermore, fifty participants (3.6%) reported that they did not find this blended approach useful. These respondents reported that they preferred face-to-face training or that they did not favour the online training component.

Module 1: 'Preparing for Training' days

Overall, respondents rated the 'Preparing for Training' events highly. Over 98.0% (n = 165) of participants evaluated each of the five sessions on the day as useful or very useful in terms of developing understanding of the model of delivery. All respondents reported that they were clear regarding their roles and responsibilities for facilitating

online training in their school (100.0%, n = 169) and the actions required for facilitating the online training (100.0%, n = 169). However, 28 participants (16.6%) commented that they would have liked additional support or information during the training session they attended.

Results showed that the majority of participants felt that the information given regarding the online component was clear (96.4%, n = 163). Nearly 90 percent of respondents (89.3%, n = 151) indicated that they would consider using the 'Tour of Course' video to introduce their colleagues to the course. However, a notable number of participants (42.0%, n = 71) reported experiencing some form of technical difficulty during this training at the training centres. The four main areas reported by these participants were: broken links (33.8%, n = 24); log in problems (39.4%, n = 28); video slow to download (23.9%, n = 17); and speed of the Internet connection (21.1%, n = 15).

Module 2: Online Training

Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the online course overall (96.9%, n = 1197). Results demonstrated that respondents found the online course easy or very easy to navigate (99.2%, n = 1226) and reported it to be beneficial in terms of offering flexibility for individual users and increasing accessibility to information. Participants highlighted the samples of children's work, the videos and the accompanying Teachers' Support ring binder to be particularly helpful.

The online course showed samples of pupils' work to exemplify the new standards at Levels of Progression 2, 4 and 5. However, participants emphasised the need for exemplification materials to be made available for every Level (1–5) for both Communication and Using Mathematics. While it is important to note that pupils at Foundation Stage are not statutorily assessed using the Levels of Progression, the absence of Foundation Stage material was specifically highlighted as an area of concern by participants. Some participants also expressed concern about how Module 2 training had been timetabled at their school, the format this training took and the need to incorporate further interaction with colleagues.

A number of participants experienced some technical difficulties throughout the online course (19.0%, n=235). Viewing videos and logging into the course caused participants most problems. Despite these concerns, the majority of users (89.6%, n = 1245) rated the online training module as a useful way to learn and reported that they would recommend this online course to other teachers (95.6%, n = 1181).

Module 3: 'Agreement Trials' Days

Results demonstrated that most respondents had no experience of participating in agreement trials in the past five years (81.4%, n = 1136). However, subsequent to participating in this training, 71.2% (n = 938) of participants rated their understanding of agreement trials to be good or very good, while a quarter of respondents rated it to be fair (26.3%, n = 346). Furthermore, results show that most participants (94.5%, n =1323) reported that the training they received equipped them to take part in an agreement trial using the incoming Levels of Progression while 4.9% (n = 68) of participants were unsure. In addition, most participants (93.6%, n =1308) reported that the training they received equipped them to take forward internal standardisation using the incoming Levels of Progression in their school.

In terms of applying the incoming Levels of Progression, most participants reported that they understood how to make a judgement on a piece of pupil's work in Communication (97.6%, n = 1371). Similarly, the majority of participants reported that they understood how to make a judgement on a piece of pupil's work in Using Mathematics (97.7%, n = 1372). Overall, most participants reported that the 'Agreement Trials' training session was very useful or useful in planning and preparing for the incoming assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills in (i) Communication (98.9%, n = 1378) and; (ii) Using Mathematics (98.8%, n = 1377).

Readiness for Incoming Assessment Arrangements

Following completion of the 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' INSET for Communication and Using Mathematics most participants rated their understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements to be good (57.3%, n = 795), very good (30.1%, n = 414) and fair (11.5%, n = 158). Seventy percent of respondents reported that

they were prepared (70.7%, n = 960) to implement the incoming statutory assessment arrangements after participating in this training. A further 21.0% (n = 285) of participants reported that they felt well prepared in this area. In contrast, 8.3% (n = 113) of participants felt that they were not really prepared or not at all prepared. The qualitative data from these respondents indicated concerns regarding the need for more time to prepare and further training and guidance. These respondents also requested more information on the assessment of both pupils at Foundation Stage and pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Limitations of Study

While the 308 schools that were originally sampled to participate in the pilot study were randomly stratified by ELB, location, size and school type, the final 125 participating schools were not representative of the population. For example, primary schools which were invited to participate in the pilot from Southern Education and Library Board were consistently underrepresented through all three training modules. This places a limitation on how far the findings of this evaluation may be generalised.

A second limitation of this study is that the number of responses in each section of the evaluation of the online training was not consistent. The number of responses ranged from 827 to 1236. This resulted in missing data which was a limitation in terms of the statistical analysis that could be carried out.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Model of Delivery

The majority of participants responded positively to the blended approach of training. Participants reported that they found the online module beneficial in terms of flexibility and accessibility. However, a theme throughout the qualitative data indicated that respondents regarded face-to-face training as an essential aspect of this INSET. This was explained as participants enjoyed the interaction with other colleagues both within and across schools. Face-to-face training was also stated as a preferred learning style by some participants.

Content

Overall, the content in each module of the training course was positively received by participants. Respondents rated that they had received enough information on the course and that this was effective in developing their understanding of the incoming Levels of Progression, internal standardisation and agreement trials. The multimedia content of videos, exemplification materials and the Teachers' Support ring binder were highlighted as useful ways to inform teachers about the incoming statutory assessment arrangements.

However, participants expressed the need for further exemplification materials to be made available for every assessment level for both Communication and Using Mathematics. Feedback also indicated that some participants found exemplification materials at Level 4 and Level 5 in Communication difficult to differentiate between.

While it should be noted that pupils at Foundation Stage and pupils with profound or severe learning difficulties are not statutorily assessed using the Levels of Progression, the absence of Foundation Stage and SEN material was repeatedly highlighted by participants throughout the training.

Online Aspects of Training

Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with each of the six sections of the online course. Results demonstrated that respondents found the online course easy to navigate and reported it to be beneficial in terms of offering flexibility for individual users and increasing accessibility to information and guidance. Participants highlighted the exemplification materials, the videos and the drag and drop activity as being elements that were particularly helpful.

As shown throughout this report, a number of participants experienced some technical difficulties during the 'Preparing for Training' events and the online course. Logging into the course and viewing videos caused participants most problems. While the videos were widely praised throughout the course, suggestions for improvements included ensuring quicker download time, having the option to maximise the video on screen and creating more realistic classroom scenarios.

Some participants also expressed concern regarding the scheduling and format of Module 2 training in their schools and the need to incorporate further interaction with colleagues.

Despite these concerns, participant feedback suggested that the use of online training was an appropriate and useful way to inform staff on the incoming assessment arrangements.

Face-to-face Aspects of Training

Face-to-face training was regarded by participants as valuable. This may be illustrated through feedback from the 'Agreement Trials' events which were rated by participants to be the most useful component of the training course in establishing the understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements. Participants highlighted that having time on the course to plan and share ideas with other colleagues and ask questions of CCEA and ELB officers was a particularly beneficial aspect of the training.

Results demonstrated that while most respondents had little experience of participating in agreement trials, participants reported that the face-to-face training received was effective in improving their understanding of agreement trials. Similarly, participants also rated that the face-to-face training on internal standardisation and using the incoming Levels of Progression contributed in their understanding.

The findings of this evaluation on the 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' INSET indicated that participants showed high levels of satisfaction with the blended approach to training and the course content. Areas of lower satisfaction included the limited range of exemplification materials available particularly regarding Foundation Stage and Special Educational Needs, insufficient time to become familiar with the incoming assessment arrangements and a number of technical difficulties with the online course. In order to improve this INSET before roll out to all primary schools, the following recommendations based on the evidence of these evaluations should be considered:

Recommendations for Module 1

This evaluation suggests:

- Further training during the 'Preparing for Training' day could be given on dealing with potential technical difficulties that may arise during the online component of the course and how these may be resolved.
- More emphasis should be placed on the preparation required for the 'Reflection' session during the 'Agreement Trials' day in order to aid clarification.

Recommendations for Module 2

This evaluation suggests:

- Exemplification materials, videos and interactive tasks should be made available for every Level of Progression for Communication and Using Mathematics including samples produced by pupils in Foundation Stage.
- Further consideration by schools should be given regarding how the online training is timetabled within school and the format that this should take.

- Greater awareness of items in the 'Toolbox' of the online course should be raised to facilitate further learning and gain more engagement amongst participants.
- Opportunities and activities for offline discussion amongst colleagues should be clearer and made more explicit within the online training component.
- Due to the number of technical difficulties in the pilot, the capacity of all participating schools and training centres regarding internet speed and network power should be reassessed to ensure download times are reasonable.

Recommendations for Module 3

This evaluation suggests:

- There is confusion between 'Preparing for Training' as a training module and preparation for training as a process that takes place within the schools' individual settings. Consideration should be given to creating a clear differentiation between the module and the overall process in the introduction of each training component.
- Greater clarification of how the 'Reflection' session may be used within the training course is needed.

Recommendations for Future Evaluation

- The icon used to signpost an evaluation in the online course should be changed with text clearly stating 'Click here to complete evaluation'.
- In order to maximise data collection through the online evaluation, demographic information such as ELB, school type and role should be combined with another part of the questionnaire in order to prevent this loss of data.
- Consideration should be given to collecting the date when each of the online evaluations was completed.
- Elements of the questionnaire should be combined in order to reduce the size of future evaluation tools.

2.0 Introduction

This In Service Training (INSET) focuses on the incoming statutory assessment arrangements for the Cross-Curricular Skills. The purpose of this evaluation was to gain feedback from both primary school teachers and school management teams regarding how effectively this model of whole-school, blended training developed their understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements for Communication and Using Mathematics. From the school year 2012/13, the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication and Using Mathematics must be assessed and reported on using Levels of Progression as a framework. Statutory assessment of Using ICT will begin in 2013/2014. In this evaluation, reference to the 'Levels of Progression' indicates the incoming Levels of Progression unless stated otherwise. The training on the incoming assessment arrangements consisted of three modules as described below.

Module 1: 'Preparing for Training' Day

Up to two representatives from each primary school participating in the pilot were invited to attend a training event, delivered by CCEA and ELB trainers, to prepare schools for the INSET on the incoming assessment arrangements. The aim of the 'Preparing for Training' day was to introduce and prepare participants for each module of training. This included outlining the legislative context for the incoming statutory assessment arrangements, addressing responsibilities for schools to ensure successful management of INSET components within their settings and to provide guidance for users in how to access and navigate through the online component of the training course.

Module 2: Online Training

The second module in the INSET on the incoming assessment arrangements was conducted through an online training course. The aim of this module of training was to inform primary teachers of the legislative requirements for the assessment of both the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication and Using Mathematics and to familiarise them with the layout and content of the Levels of Progression grids. This training was divided into six sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) The Levels; (iii) Assessment; (iv) Communication; (v) Using Mathematics and; (vi) Next Steps. Participants were able to view videos and samples of pupils' work online, access support and guidance materials and engage with online activities.

Module 3: 'Agreement Trial' Day

The third component in the INSET on the incoming assessment arrangements focused on application of the Levels of Progression through agreements trials and training on the processes involved in internal standardisation. This training was facilitated by CCEA and ELB trainers with the purpose of assisting schools in levelling samples of pupils' work in Communication and Using Mathematics. Participation in 'Agreement Trials' training could only be undertaken *after* the online training component was completed.

Training Timeline

In total, the three training modules for this INSET ran for 10 weeks from April to June 2011. The 'Preparing for Training' events ran sequentially with the online training. The online training and the 'Agreement Trial' events ran concurrently for a time as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Timeline for INSET pilot on 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills'

Training Module		April 2011				May 2011					June 2011
		Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10
M 1	'Preparation for Training'	→									
M 2	Online Training		→								
M 3	'Agreement Trials'								→		

Each module of the pilot was evaluated by CCEA's Research and Statistics Unit. The findings collected in this evaluation will be used to inform future training.

3.0 Methods

This section of the report outlines the methods used in the pilot study to evaluate each stage of the training in 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' INSET. Each component of training was evaluated through a questionnaire which collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation design incorporated both online and paper based questionnaires. This section details the administration and analysis of each aspect of the training for this INSET.

Sample

Initially, 308 schools were approached to participate in piloting the training for the incoming assessment arrangements. This number was selected randomly according to variables such as ELB, rural/urban, size and school type. While 189 from these schools originally agreed to take part, the total number of schools participating in the pilot was 125. The population participating in the evaluation of each training module varies and will be highlighted at the beginning of each section of the results.

Module 1: 'Preparing for Training' Day

This face-to-face training was facilitated by CCEA and ELB trainers from the 4th - 7th April 2011. At the end of each training day, participants were invited to complete an online evaluation at the event on the training they had received. A total of 169 out of 183 attendees completed a questionnaire (a response rate of 92.3%). The quantitative data was statistically analysed using SPSS and the qualitative data was thematically analysed.

Module 2: Online Training

Data was gathered between 6th April 2011 and 3rd June 2011 via an online questionnaire which was embedded at the end of each section of the online course. Participation in the questionnaires after each section was optional. The evaluation of the online training was divided into six parts which accounts for the variation in responses between 827 and 1236 as illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Number of completed evaluation questionnaires in Module 2 by section

Evaluation Sections in Module 2	Number of Completed Evaluations
Introduction	827
Levels	1102
Assessment	1144
Communication	1070
Using Mathematics	1064
Next Steps	1236

The data collected from the online questionnaire was analysed statistically and thematically.

Module 3: 'Agreement Trial' Day

The final component was face-to-face training facilitated by CCEA and ELB trainers on agreement trials and the processes for internal standardisation. The questionnaire was designed to assess this aspect of training and to provide an overview of the training for this INSET as a whole. This evaluation was administered to attendees of the training and completed on paper. A total of 1411 participants completed the evaluation between 16th May and 2nd June 2011. As with the previous two evaluations, the quantitative data collected was statistically analysed and the qualitative data was thematically analysed.

The next section of this report will present the results of this evaluation. The results of each of the training components will be presented in three separate sections.

4.0 Results

4.1 Module 1: 'Preparing for Training' Events

Background

In April 2011, up to two representatives from the primary schools participating in the pilot were invited to attend a CCEA training event to prepare schools for the INSET on 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills'. This module was held from 4th April - 7th April 2011 in Education and Library Board centres. The aim of the 'Preparing for Training' day was to introduce and prepare participants for each module of training and to provide guidance for users in how to access and navigate through the online training course. A total of 183 people attended these training events with 169 completing the evaluation questionnaire. This section of the report outlines the feedback from the 169 attendees who responded to the evaluation questionnaires. Percentages relate to the number of responses to each question, which may be fewer than the overall total of 169.

Demographic Information

Schools from all five Education and Library Boards were represented by the 169 participants as illustrated in Table 2.

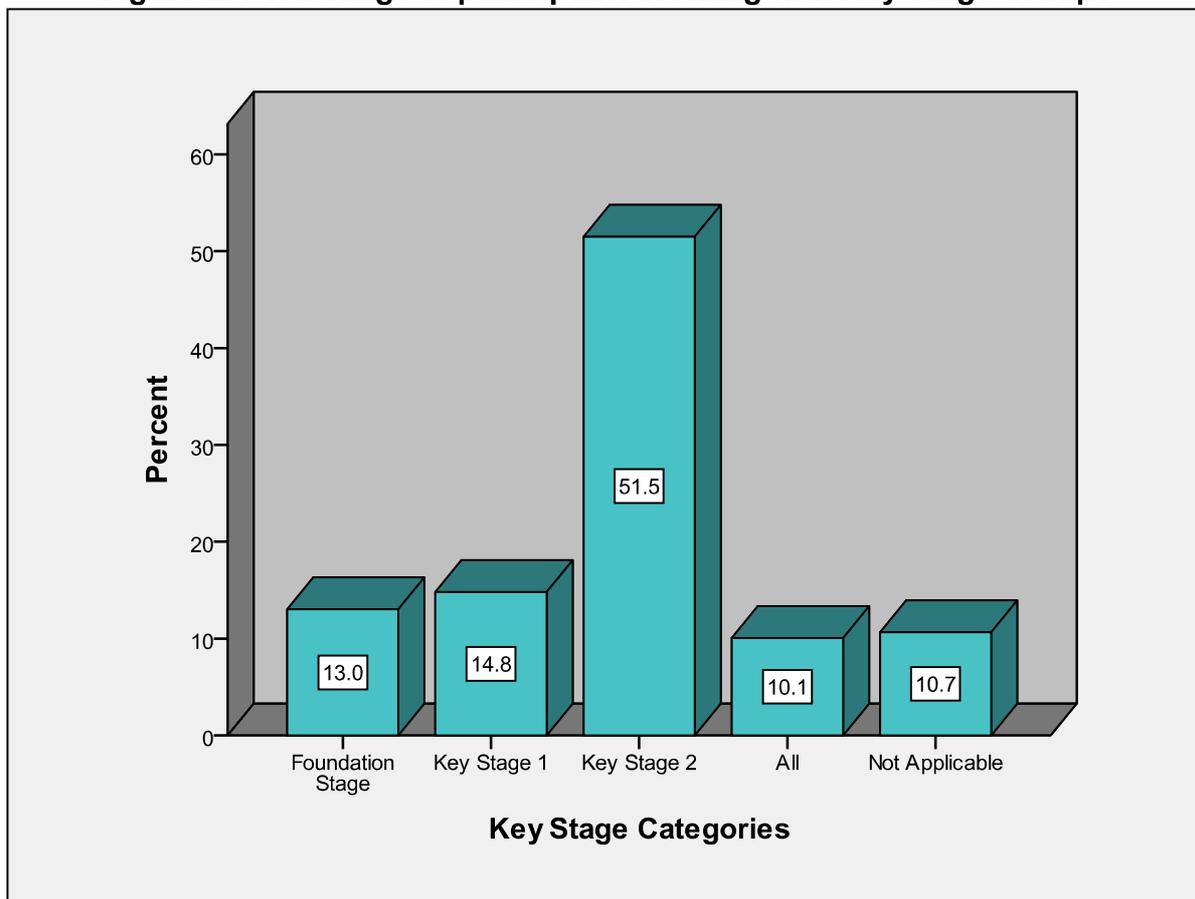
Table 2: Number of Module 1 participants by Education and Library Board

Education and Library Board (ELB)	Number of Participants	% of participants
Belfast ELB	39	23.1
North Eastern ELB	32	18.9
South Eastern ELB	33	19.5
Southern ELB	19	11.2
Western ELB	46	27.2
Total	169	100

The majority of participants were drawn from primary schools (n = 139). Of the remaining participants, fourteen represented primary schools with a special educational needs unit, four represented preparatory schools, eight represented special schools, two represented Irish Medium schools and two participants described their school as 'Other'.

Respondents had a range of roles in the school including Principal (n = 50), Coordinator (n =48), Vice Principal (n =41) and Teacher (n =29). Participants also worked with a range of Key Stage groups as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Percentage of participants working with Key Stage Groups



Cluster Information

The majority of schools represented were not part of a cluster for this INSET (51.5%, n = 87). A large number of the total respondents also had no previous experience of training in cluster groups (58.6%, n = 99). Of the 68 respondents that had never been part of a cluster and were not part of a cluster for this INSET, 23 indicated that they planned to participate in a cluster in the future.

‘Tour of Course’ video

Participants were asked to evaluate how useful the ‘Tour of Course’ video was as an introduction to the online course. Overall, 96.4% (n = 163) of participants reported that they found the video useful or very useful, while 3.6% (n = 6) did not find the video useful.

Nearly 90 percent of respondents (89.3%, n = 151) also indicated that they would consider using the 'Tour of Course' video to introduce their colleagues to the course. This positive reaction was reinforced by qualitative data that described the course as a useful introduction and overview to familiarise staff with the online training (43 comments):

"It gives a good background to what is involved, preparing staff for what they have to do, providing information they will need to move around the programme."

"The tour video should be very useful to use to introduce training to staff. The entire website is very easy to navigate and is clearly and coherently laid out."

A small number of respondents (7.1%, n = 12) were unsure if they would use the video as an introduction to colleagues. Furthermore, 3.6% (n = 6) said they would not use the video to introduce the course. Reasons given for this included:

"Think it would more useful to actually briefly disseminate today's training and then let staff make a start on the actual online training course."

Structure of 'Preparing for Training' Course

Overall, findings from the evaluation indicated that participants found all the sessions in the training to be useful. Participants were asked to evaluate each of the five sessions in terms of usefulness in understanding the model of delivery and access to online training. The results for each section are presented below.

Session 1: Setting the Context

In this session, the incoming statutory assessment and reporting requirements were outlined for Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3. Feedback for this session was positive with respondents rating the session to be useful or very useful (99.4%, n = 168). Participants commented that Session 1 was clearly explained and provided a good overview of the course (16 comments). Some suggestions were also made to increase the usefulness of this session such as staff should read the folder before attending the

course (2 comments); the pace was too quick (2 comments); and more information should be provided on the changes when using Levels of Progression (2 comments).

Session 2: Model of Delivery

Session 2 outlined the three modules in which the training would be delivered: (1) face-to-face 'Preparing for Training' day for up to two representatives of the school; (2) online training course for all participants and; (3) face-to-face training on agreement trials for all participants. Respondents reported finding Session 2 helpful, rating it as useful or very useful (99.5%, n = 168). The qualitative data collected on this session included:

- The session was well presented with clear guidance provided (13 comments);
- Participants particularly appreciated the time allocated to experience online training (7 comments);
- There was a level of repetition (2 comments).

Session 3: Planning for managing the online and face-to-face training

The third session outlined participants' responsibilities to ensure both the online course and face-to-face training was successfully delivered in school. Participants assessed Session 3 as useful or very useful (98.2%, n =166). Similar to earlier findings, participants expressed that this session was clear in providing an overview of what was expected (14 comments). Comments also included participants' appreciation of time given for planning (12 comments) and their enjoyment of sharing experiences with others (3 comments). While the overall feedback was positive, a small number of participants made some suggestions for improvements. These included less repetition of information (2 comments) and further explanation of reasons why the training is taking place (1 comment).

Session 4: Accessing the Online Training

Session 4 provided time for participants to access the online course. Results showed that the majority of respondents found Session 4 to be useful or very useful (98.8%, n = 167). Eighteen respondents highlighted that it was beneficial to access and become familiar with the online training course:

“it was invaluable to access the online training so that i know what to expect when i go back to school and so that i have a better understanding of it when i am talking about it with my colleagues”

“This was the most useful part of the day - more time should be given to this”.

While three participants alluded to the potential for technical difficulties, ten participants also commented that the online training provided straight forward instructions and was generally easy to navigate.

Session 5: Preparation/ Planning Time

This session highlighted practicalities of organising the online course such as considering technical requirements, available resources and planning to incorporate offline activities. This session also outlined preparation needed for the ‘Agreement Trial’ day such as ensuring the online course was completed, organisation of a suitable location and planning for the ‘Reflection’ session. The response from participants regarding this final session was again positive. Respondents rated Session 5 to be useful or very useful (99.4%, n = 168). The general view was that this session was valuable in terms of planning for future training in school (16 comments). Eight participants commented on the benefits of talking with other staff while planning training. Six participants highlighted the benefits of receiving practical advice and guidance from the CCEA and ELB facilitators. Furthermore, two respondents suggested that it would be beneficial to have more colleagues from their school at the ‘Preparing for Training’ day in order to share ideas and plan in detail. Although overall positive, some changes were suggested by respondents such as more structure to training, and further samples of work.

Technical Difficulties

A notable number of participants (42.0%, n = 71) reported experiencing some form of technical difficulty during the training. The four main areas reported by these participants were:

- Broken links (33.8%, n = 24);
- Log In problems (39.4%, n = 28);
- Video slow to download (23.9%, n = 17);

- Speed of the Internet connection (21.1%, n = 15).

Seven participants from the WELB area were unable to access the online questionnaire during training.

Content of ‘Preparing for Training’ Course

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate if they had received enough information in the training to be clear about planning and managing both the online and face-to-face training. Results show that the majority of participants felt that the information given regarding the online component was clear (96.4%, n = 163). While the majority of participants (94.1%, n = 159) also assessed the face-to-face training to be clear, the qualitative data indicated the need for further information regarding the logistics and structure of this training:

“I think I will need time to organise what areas to reflect on with the rest of the staff. Format of the logistics for the day especially with the large number of staff at various key stages!!”

Other areas highlighted by participants included more guidance on the reflection activities (2 comments), information regarding the type of evidence individual teachers should keep (1 comment) and examples of assessment tasks (1 comment).

Overall, the majority of participants felt that the training provided a clear understanding of the model of delivery for training (97.0%, n = 164). All respondents also reported that they were clear regarding their roles and responsibilities for facilitating online training in their school (100.0%, n = 169) and the actions required for facilitating the online training (100.0%, n = 169). However, 28 participants (16.6%) reported that they would have liked additional support or information in the training session. Comments included more information on:

“How can this assessment become integrated into planning and should specific tasks be set after a period of time or unit of work to assess pupils cross curricular skills”

“a clearer understanding of the main differences between past and new assessment arrangements the difference between the expected outcomes between primary and post primary eg level 4 at key stage 2 & level 5 at key stage 3”

“Would liked to have looked at examples of level 1 and 3 work - as i feel it gives the impression that its only appropriate for P4/P7 teachers even though its not!!! More time spent on examining the reflection activity.”

Module 1 Summary

Overall, feedback from the questionnaires demonstrated that respondents were satisfied with the ‘Preparing for Training’ module. Results showed that participants found both the ‘Tour of Course’ video and structure of the training course to be useful in providing a comprehensive overview of the incoming assessment arrangements. Participants highlighted that having time on the course to plan and share ideas with other colleagues was a particularly beneficial aspect of the training.

Most participants reported that they found the online training useful and easy to navigate. However, some participants had experience of technical problems such as log in problems, broken links and the ‘Tour of Course’ video being slow to download.

The data would indicate that most respondents felt satisfied that they had received enough information on the day regarding both online and face-to-face training. Participants reported they were clear regarding their own role, responsibilities and the actions needed to facilitate the next stage of the training.

4.2 Module 2: Online Training

Introduction

The second component in the INSET on the incoming assessment arrangements was conducted online. The aim of this module of training was to inform teachers of the legislative requirements for the assessment of both the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication and Using Mathematics and to familiarise them with the layout and content of the Levels of Progression grids. The evaluation of this training is divided into six sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) The Levels; (iii) Assessment; (iv) Communication; (v) Using Mathematics and; (vi) Next Steps. These results are based on feedback received from participants that completed each section of the online training from 6th April to 3rd June 2011. The number of responses for each session varies and is noted within each section.

Demographic Information

A total of 827 respondents completed information concerning their Education and Library Board, role and school type. Schools from all five Education and Library Boards (ELB) were represented as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of Module 2 participants by Education and Library Board

Education and Library Board(ELB)	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Belfast ELB	181	21.9
North Eastern ELB	181	21.9
South Eastern ELB	210	25.4
Southern ELB	70	8.5
Western ELB	185	22.4
Total	827	100.0

Respondents had a range of roles in the school including Teacher (n = 583), Coordinator (n = 141), Principal (n = 49) and Vice Principal (n = 39). Respondents were also asked to indicate their school type. The majority of participants were drawn from primary schools

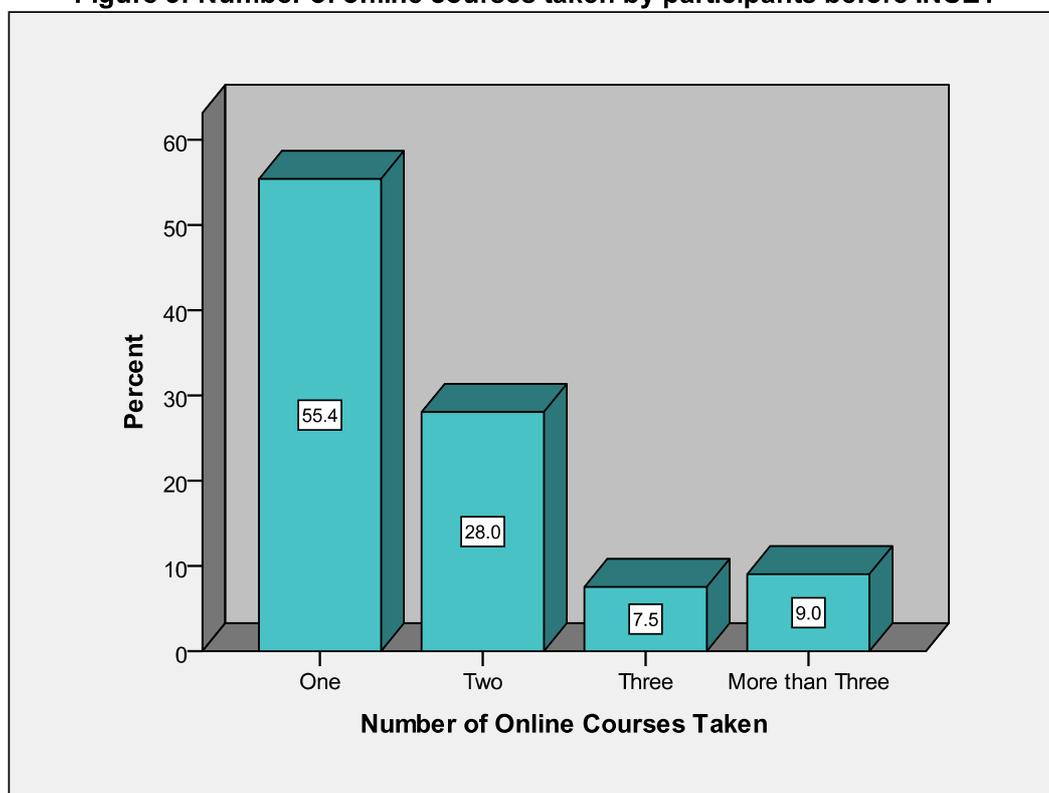
(n = 679). Of the remaining respondents, 59 were from primary schools with a special educational needs unit, 37 represented special schools, 32 described themselves as 'Other' and seven were from an Irish Medium School.

Just under half of the respondents indicated that they were not part of a cluster for this INSET training (45.5%, n =376).

Participants' Previous Online Experience

Nearly sixty percent of respondents reported having previous experience of using an online training course (59.1%, n = 731). The majority of participants approached this course feeling confident or very confident (68.7%, n = 849) concerning the online format of training. These participants were more likely to have previous experience of online training (70.2%, n = 596). Those respondents who were not confident were less likely to have participated in an online training course (31.3%, n = 387). Figure 3 illustrates the number of online courses participants with previous online training experience had taken before this online training module.

Figure 3: Number of online courses taken by participants before INSET



Participants reported that they mainly took part in the online training in school (88.0%, n = 1088) rather than in another place such as home or an ELB Centre (12.0%, n = 148).

'Preparing for Training' Day

The majority of participants of the online training course had not attended the 'Preparing for Training' day (76.7%, n = 634), while 193 respondents had¹. From the participants that did attend, three quarters (75.6%, n = 146) were satisfied that this training provided sufficient support for the management of the online training in their school. However, nearly a fifth of participants indicated that they were not satisfied that this training provided sufficient support (19.7%, n = 38), while 4.7% (n = 9) of the respondents reported being partly satisfied. Comments from this group of participants who were partly or not satisfied included:

"I felt the training was not cohesive enough and was much more confident having gone through the programme at home."

"Quite basic training don't know if there was any real need for it. Might have been handier to give out simple instructions with the folder."

Section 1 of the Online Course: Introduction

Responses: 827

Overall, respondents evaluated the introductory section to be useful or very useful (96.7%, n = 800) in providing information about the purpose of the online training course. Findings indicated that respondents found this section of training to be clear and straightforward (119 comments):

"Clear structure via the grid within the introduction. I found this easy to manage and understand at first glance."

"Introductory section was clear, concise and all information was delivered well."

¹ **NB:** The total number of participants who reported attending the 'Preparing for Training' day differs from the numbers registered during the events as reported on page 5 as 183. Please note that this figure has been inconsistent throughout each training component and the results presented in this section should be treated with caution.

Eleven participants also commented that they enjoyed the introductory video. Of the participants who watched the video, the majority (97.6%, n = 744) believed that it informed them about the functions and structure of the training course. Sixty five respondents did not watch the video (7.9%). The qualitative data indicated a small number of participants experienced problems with viewing the video.

Section 2 of the Online Course: The Levels

Responses: 1102

There were 1102 responses to the evaluation questionnaire of 'The Levels' section. The aim of this section of the course was to illustrate the structure of the Levels of Progression grids. The majority of participants (99.3%, n = 1094) agreed that this section of training on the Levels of Progression related to the statutory requirements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Participants conveyed through the qualitative data that they appreciated the clear overview (142 comments); the colour coding within the Levels of Progression (31 comments); and visual aids used in this section (34 comments).

Similarly, most participants deemed this section of training to be useful or very useful (98.8%, n = 1089) in informing them about the layout and terminology of the grids for the Cross-Curricular Skills.

Section 3 of the Online Course: Assessment

Responses: 1144

The questionnaire on the 'Assessment' section of training was completed by 1144 participants. The aim of this section was to outline the legislative requirements, highlight potential opportunities for assessing skills and to convey the importance of planning, timing and personal judgement when using Levels of Progression for assessment. Results indicated that participants found this section to be useful or very useful (97.9%, n = 1120) in providing information about the Levels of Progression for statutory assessment purposes. The positive feedback was corroborated further through the qualitative data in which users expressed that the guidance was clear:

"This section clearly stated that assessment is based on levels of progression and based on assessment throughout the year. It was good to highlight the need for planning for assessment."

“Good advice about teacher professional judgement of the whole child. It is useful to think about the process the child is going through not just the end product and a one off assessment.”

Fifteen participants suggested that this session may be further enhanced by adding visual aids such as videos and samples of pupil’s work. Five participants across three ELB areas reported that the GTCNI link would not work for them.

Section 4 of the Online Course: Communication

Sample: 1070

The evaluation questionnaire of the Communication section of the online training course was completed by 1070 respondents. The learning objectives of this part of the course were to inform teachers about the Levels of Progression for Communication and to provide exemplification of the expected standards at Levels 2, 4 and 5. This session was rated to be useful and very useful in helping participants familiarise themselves with this skill (99.5%, n=1065). The qualitative data highlighted the following areas that participants specified as useful in this section:

- Samples of children’s work (82 comments);
- Videos (29 comments) including the commentary (7 comments);
- Drag and Drop activity (26 comments).

Tools

Respondents were asked to assess how useful the following training items were in assisting their understanding of the requirements for Levels of Progression in Communication as illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4: Usefulness of Tools in online training in Communication

Tools	% rating Useful	% rating Not Useful
Sorting the Levels Drag and Drop Activity	99.3	0.7
Online Requirements Scenario Activity	98.0	2.1
Levels of Progression Video	96.8	3.3
Expanded Guidance	95.7	4.3
Offline Requirements Reflection Activity	92.0	8.0

Base N = 1070

Levels

Findings also demonstrated respondents' positive feedback in relation to the exemplification materials used to illustrate assessment standards for Communications:

- Level 2: 98.7% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1056);
- Level 4: 98.1% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1049);
- Level 5: 97.2% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1040).

However, the qualitative data indicated that some participants found distinguishing between Levels 4 and 5 in Communication to be problematic (14 comments). Reasons for this expressed by participants are provided below:

"I found that levels 4 and 5 for talking and listening, reading and writing can at times be similar and it can be quite difficult to distinguish between."

"Video to illustrate level 4 would be good. Writing samples at level 4 and 5 would have been easier to compare if they has been the same genre of writing."

"Unsure how much teacher input was given in the level 4 and 5 scenarios."

Participants also specified that exemplification materials need to be provided for every level (39 comments). Other areas participants reported regarding this section of the course included:

- Emphasising the importance of offline discussion (19 comments);
- Time concerns (10 comments);
- A lot of information to take in (9 comments);
- Unrealistic classroom scenarios used in the video (7 comments).

Section 5 of the Online Course: Using Mathematics

Responses: 1064

There were 1064 responses to the evaluation questionnaire on 'Using Mathematics'. The purpose of this part of the course was to inform teachers about the Levels of Progression for Using Mathematics and to provide exemplification of the expected standards at Levels 2, 4 and 5.

Tools

This session was evaluated to be useful or very useful in helping participants familiarise themselves with this skill (98.9%, n=1049). Comparable to findings in the Communication Section respondents highlighted that they found the samples of children's work (30 comments) and the Drag and Drop activity (15 comments) to be particularly useful.

Participants also reported that they found the videos useful (89 comments). However, in contrast to findings of the Communication section, users of this part of the course seemed to experience greater technical difficulties regarding the videos (21 comments) and a larger number of respondents reported finding the classroom scenarios 'unrealistic' (18 comments):

"In the level 2 video, though the practice was excellent, I have many questions. What exactly are the rest of the class working on while the teacher is working with one group? Will the teacher do the exact activity with the rest of the class? How long will this take, a week or so to ensure everyone has had the practical experience? By this time a group may have told the other children the measurements which means the teacher may have to plan different activities for each group. There are also concerns for big classes of children with no classroom assistants. It would be much more valuable for us to be able to see how a teacher would manage these activities with a whole class and to show us exactly what the rest of the class is doing when a teacher works with one group."

Respondents were asked to rate how useful the following items were in assisting their understanding of the requirements for Levels of Progression in Using Mathematics as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Usefulness of Tools in online training in Using Mathematics

Tools	% rating Useful	% rating Not Useful
Tracking Progression Statements	97.7	2.4
Sorting the Levels Drag and Drop Activity	97.5	2.4
Online Requirements Scenario Activity	97.1	2.9
Levels of Progression Video	97.0	3.0
Expanded Guidance	96.1	3.9
Offline Requirements Reflection Activity	91.8	8.3

Base N =1064

Levels

Results also showed positive feedback in terms of the pupil samples used to illustrate the standards for Using Mathematics:

- Level 2: 98.5% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1048);
- Level 4: 97.1% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1033);
- Level 5: 94.3% of participants found it useful or very useful (n = 1003).

As highlighted in the Communication section, participants also reported that more samples are needed for each level in Using Mathematics (23 comments). Participants commented that they would like more videos for all levels in this section (8 comments).

Section 6: Next Steps

Sample: 1236

This final questionnaire sought to evaluate aspects of the online course overall and was completed by 1236 participants.

Characteristics of Online Training

Respondents were asked to evaluate how useful the online course was in supporting their learning of the new assessment arrangements. Overall, most participants responded positively and rated the characteristics of the online training as useful or very useful as illustrated in Table 6:

Table 6: Characteristics of online training which supported learning

Characteristics	% rating as Useful
Accessibility	99.4
Professional Development	98.7
Flexibility	97.5
Individual engagement	97.4
Collaboration with colleagues	94.3
Preferred learning style	92.3

Base N= 1236

Content

Results demonstrated that the majority of participants reported that the information in the course was useful or very useful regarding the following areas:

- Teachers' Support ring binder (98.9%, n = 1223);
- Reporting (97.6%, n = 1206);
- Resources (97.4%, n = 1204);
- Using the Data, (97.1%, n = 1200).

The qualitative responses further conveyed the positive reaction from participants towards the Teacher Support ring binder (69 comments):

"I particularly like the teacher support ring binder - a very useful tool to have all materials ready for use in planning"

"The ring binder is very clearly set out and will be an excellent an[d] supportive resource in the future."

However, a small number of respondents did express frustration at missing exemplification materials in some levels of the course (8 comments) while other concerns were raised:

"We have viewed several group work scenarios in which pupils work together on a common theme with the intention that they are levelled. In some cases some pupils contributed more than others - some contributed little. For those pupils

what level do we assign to them? Are they working at the same level as the others or not?"

"There doesn't seem to be a clear picture developing from this training and leading into the next day of training there is little back up. Overall this course does not adequately prepare teachers and schools to start assessing cross curricular skills. there is a lot of direction in terms of what is and isn't legislative but very little on the practical application of these new standards into a school and how the data will be collected from them. There is a huge focus on effective use of data but there is no reference or direction on how this data can be stored - will sims package be adapted to store the info from these assessments?"

Toolbox

The online course 'toolbox' consisted of interactive features participants may use to facilitate their learning. These tools included: Discussion Forum; Reflective Journal; Chat; Glossary and Tour of Course video. The data indicated that a number of participants did not use some of these tools:

- 60.3% of participants did not use the Discussion Forum (n = 745);
- 51.5% of participants did not use the Reflective Journal (n = 636);
- 48.9% of participants did not use Chat (n = 605);
- 26.1% of participants did not use the Glossary (n = 322).

However, the participants that did use these tools responded positively with over 97.0% of respondents rating the tools as easy or very easy to use. Possible improvements to the toolbox items suggested by participants through the qualitative data included encouraging offline group discussion (6 comments) and increasing text size (3 comments).

Technical Difficulties

Logging In

While 98.2% (n = 1214) of respondents agreed that the instructions for logging in were clear or very clear, 128 participants reported experiencing problems logging into the online course. In addition to general difficulties in accessing the course (39 comments),

users highlighted issues regarding logging in from home (8 comments), password issues (8 comments) and email addresses (4 comments). Comments included:

“Although logging in was described fully in the ring binder, if you timed out the process did not allow you to quickly log back in and you had to restart from scratch.”

“Password was not accepted numerous times-very frustrating.”

Other Technical Issues

Overall, 235 respondents (19.0%) reported experiencing a range of technical difficulties during the online training. The main areas reported by these participants to have caused difficulties were:

- Video slow to download (35.7%, n =84);
- Screen Froze (20.9%, n = 49);
- Speed of the Internet connection (16.2%, n = 38);
- Broken Links (16.2%, n = 38).

Additional comments made by participants concerning technical difficulties included problems viewing videos (14 comments), problems with the access route to the website (10 comments), confusion around the ‘Description Box’ (5 comments) and problems with the Shibboleth login webpage (3 comments).

Reaction to Online Training

By the end of the online training, nearly all participants rated the navigation of the site to be very easy or easy (99.2%, n = 1226). Most participants indicated that they were satisfied with the online training course overall (96.9%, n = 1197) and had a good understanding of the incoming statutory arrangements (96.2%, n = 1189). The majority of users said that they would recommend this online course to other teachers (95.6%, n = 1181). Participants reported that they found the online training to be beneficial due to being able to access it in their own time and environment (40 comments), ease of navigation (36 comments) and provision of useful content (26 comments) as illustrated below:

“found this interactive approach much more useful and beneficial than sit[t]ing taking notes while som[e]one talked at the front of a room. It was good being able to take in the information at your own pace and the many exemplar [sic] teaching videos were very useful and practical expansion of the text previous.”

“Easy to follow as clear instructions were given. Gave me new enthusiasm after 30 years in the classroom”

“liked the flexibility of online aspect of training. Accessing it from home was a definite advantage”

Although most participants responded positively, findings from the qualitative data indicated that some respondents had concerns regarding this approach to training. Eleven respondents commented that they did not like the online approach to training:

“i do not enjoy using this type of training format. working online is tedious and more interaction between professionals is more beneficial.”

“I found this training process to be impersonal, too much put into a short period of time and the typical training on the cheap approach which is becoming the norm for Inservice training.”

“The videos were painful to watch due to the buffering for each and every video! This made it disjointed and difficult to follow, having to watch it through after it had gone all the way through once to be able to follow it. All staff found the on-line work very 'dry' and difficult to stay on task with -very difficult to do with all staff in one room, as inevitably everyone reads at different paces and with different levels of concentration based on those talking in the room in relation to the on line material. A very distracted way to do it!”

Other issues with the online training approach drawn from the qualitative data included:

- Interaction with colleagues was still needed (18 comments);
- The online training course did not cater for all learning styles (11 comments);
- Concern about time (9 comments);

- Difficulty to concentrate on online training after school (7 comments);
- Repetitive (5 comments).

Module 2 Summary

Results demonstrated that respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with each of the six parts of the online course.

While the majority of participants found that exemplification materials in Communication in Levels 2, 4 and 5 to be useful or very useful, some participants reported difficult in distinguishing between Level 4 and Level 5. Participants also expressed the need for samples at every level in Communication. Similarly, exemplification material in Levels 2, 4 and 5 in Using Mathematics were reported by most participants to be useful or very useful. It was also the case that respondents expressed the need for further material for all Levels in Using Mathematics. While not statutorily assessed, the absence of Foundation Stage material for both Communication and Using Mathematics was highlighted by participants as an issue throughout the online course.

Throughout this evaluation, videos, exemplification materials and the Teachers' Supporting binder were highlighted as being particularly useful. However, it is important to note that a range of online support features/resources such as the Discussion Forum and Reflection Journal were not used by the majority of participants.

As illustrated throughout this report, a number of participants did experience some technical difficulties using the online course. Viewing videos and logging into the course caused participants most problems. While the videos were widely praised throughout the course, suggestions for improvements included ensuring quicker download time, having the option to maximise the video on screen and more realistic classroom scenarios.

Despite these concerns, feedback indicated that the majority of participants were satisfied overall with the online course and would recommend this type of training to other teachers.

4.3 Module 3: 'Agreement Trials' Day

Introduction

The third module in the INSET on the incoming assessment arrangements addressed training in agreement trials and the process of internal standardisation. This training was facilitated by ELB and CCEA trainers with the purpose to assist schools in levelling samples of pupils work in Communication and Using Mathematics. This part of the training could only be undertaken *after* the online training module was completed. This questionnaire evaluated the training on agreement trials and assessed the three INSET training components overall. In this section, results are based on feedback received from 1411 participants that completed the questionnaires from 16th May to 2nd June 2011.

Demographic Information

A total of 1411 respondents completed this evaluation. Table 7 illustrated schools from all five Education and Library Boards were represented by 1367 respondents:

Table 7: Number of Module 3 participants by Education and Library Board

Education and Library Board (ELB)	Number of Participants	% of participants
Belfast ELB	309	21.9
North Eastern ELB	297	21.0
South Eastern ELB	309	21.9
Southern ELB	158	11.2
Western ELB	294	20.8
Total	1367	96.8

Forty four participants (3.1%) did not identify their ELB. Respondents identified themselves with a range of roles including Teacher (n = 792); Teacher and Coordinator (n = 203); Coordinator (n = 197); Principal (n = 81) and Vice Principal (n = 73).

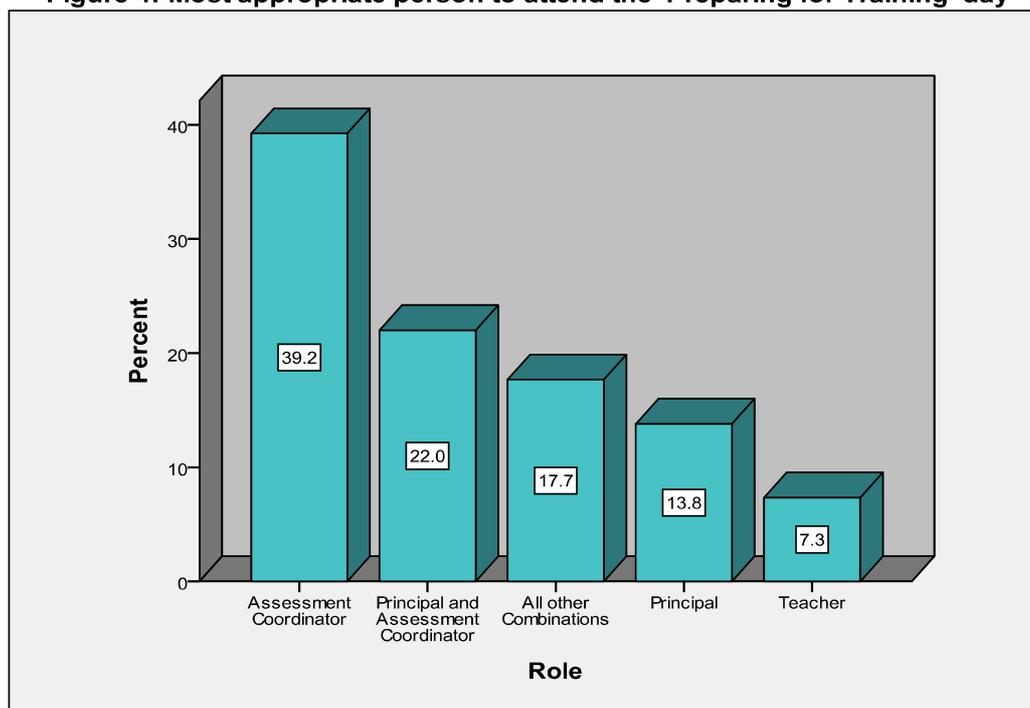
Over half of the respondents indicated that they attended the 'Agreement Trials' day as part of a cluster (54.7%, n = 793). Of those who were not part of a cluster (n = 629), 91.3% reported that they were not planning to become part of a cluster in the near future.

‘Preparing for Training’ Day

The majority of participants attending the ‘Agreement Trials’ day had not attended the ‘Preparing for Training’ event in April 2011 (83.2%, n = 644). This section refers to the number of participants reported attending a ‘Preparing for Training’ day (n = 240). Please note that this figure has been inconsistent throughout each training component. The number of participants reported attending the ‘Preparing for Training’ events in this part of the evaluation is more than the 183 attendees referred to on p.14 of this report. From training records, it can be confirmed that 183 participants attended this training from the 4th – 7th April 2011. This being the case, the findings in the next section should be treated with caution.

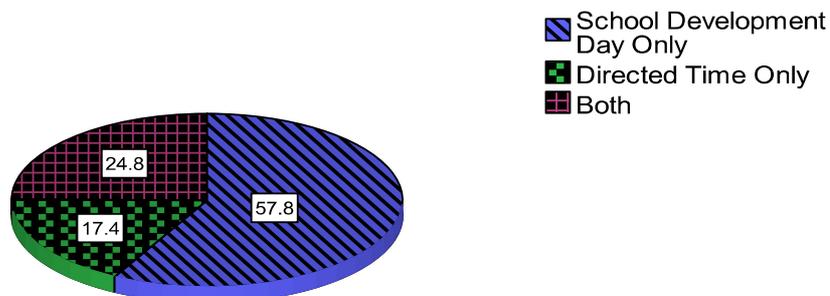
The majority of respondents who answered this question were satisfied or very satisfied that this training assisted them in taking forward the online training in their school (99.1%, n= 228). The majority also reported that the ‘Facilitator’s Guide’ supported them in their role (98.7%, n = 227). This group also considered that the most appropriate person to attend the ‘Preparing for Training’ day in the future should be the Assessment Coordinator (39.2%, n = 91), followed by Principal and Assessment Coordinator (22.0%, n = 51) as illustrated in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Most appropriate person to attend the ‘Preparing for Training’ day



The time management of completing the online training component in school was placed at each school’s discretion. Just under half of the participants reported that their school managed the online training using a School Development Day only (44.0%, n = 102), while 39.2% (n = 91) of participants reported that their school used Directed Time only. Participants indicated that they would prefer that training was taken either during a School Development Day only (57.8%, n = 133) or as Directed Time only (17.4%, n = 40) as a model in the future. A further 24.8% of participants preferred using a combination of both School Development Day and Directed Time (n = 57) as illustrated in Figure 5:

Figure 5: If you were to participate in this type of training again, which management model would you choose?



Reasons given to support these preferences within the qualitative data included:

“You really need time to discuss each section and at the end of a teaching day you would not have the energy!”

“Teachers are too tired at 3pm. Need to have a clear head”.

“As we had several staff who did job share it was not always easy to accommodate all - although a full day may be too much to take in.”

“I feel that the online training was better when it was broken into short units, rather than trying to take in all the information on one day.”

'Agreement Trials' Day

Participants were asked to evaluate their understanding regarding: (i) agreement trials; (ii) internal standardisation and; (iii) levelling pupils work after the training they received on Statutory 'Assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills'.

Agreement Trials

The majority of participants (81.4%, n = 1136) had not taken part in a voluntary agreement trial supported by CCEA moderators in the last five years. After training, 71.2% (n = 938) of all participants rated their understanding of agreement trials to be very good or good. Just over a quarter of respondents rated their understanding of agreement trials to be fair (26.3%, n = 346). The majority of respondents reported that the training received was very effective or effective in contributing to their understanding of agreement trials (98.8%, n = 1385). Furthermore, results show that most participants (94.5%, n = 1323) reported that the training they received equipped them to take part in an agreement trial using the Levels of Progression while 4.9% (n = 68) of participants were unsure.

Internal Standardisation

Nearly sixty percent of participants (57.1%, n = 796) had not taken part in internal standardisation in the past three years, while 42.9% (n = 597) of participants had. After training, 73.4% of respondents (n = 997) rated their understanding of internal standardisation to be very good or good. A quarter of participants rated their understanding of internal standardisation to be fair (24.6%, n = 334). Most participants reported that the training received was very effective or effective in contributing to their understanding of internal standardisation (98.8%, n = 1388). In addition, most participants (93.6%, n = 1308) reported that the training they received equipped them to take forward internal standardisation using Levels of Progression in their school.

Using Levels of Progression

Nearly all participants reported that they understood how to make a judgement on a piece of pupil's work in Communication (97.6%, n = 1371). Similarly, the majority of

participants reported that they understood how to make a judgement on a piece of pupil's work in Using Mathematics (97.7%, n = 1372). Comments included:

“At times it was a little difficult to judge a level as it was not quite clear how much input a teacher had in each activity.”

“Feel more confident in that I now know that a level is much broader and that a child has to be hitting all of the core descriptions and the requirements for communication. Worried about how to implement it effectively and how to shape current practice.”

“Found maths more complicated to level - contradiction between what children can learn (grey) and how children apply knowledge (coloured) - might be easier to level and explain levelling by having separate levellers for knowledge and application.”

Overall, most participants reported that the face-to-face training session was very useful or useful in planning and preparing for the incoming assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skills in (i) Communication (98.9%, n = 1378) and; (ii) Using Mathematics (98.8%, n = 1377).

‘Reflection’ Session

The majority of participants found the ‘Reflection’ session to be useful or very useful (94.9%, n = 1100). Participants reported that this session was used for planning for implementation of incoming statutory assessment arrangements (179 comments), evaluating current practice (90 comments), identifying areas for future development (34 comments) and issues regarding standards in assessment (33 comments). It was also used by some as a time to share ideas (30 comments) and to express concern about lack of guidance in the training regarding both the Special Educational Needs and Foundation Stage provisions (14 comments) and the lack of time regarding the system-wide implementation of the incoming statutory arrangements (11 comments). The qualitative data also indicated that there was some confusion about how this session may be used

as some participants reported that the 'Reflection' session would be completed at a later date (10 comments).

Overview of Training

The Blended Model of Training

The majority of participants found the model of blended training to be useful or very useful (96.4%, n = 1326). Most respondents found both the 'Agreement Trials' day (98.5%, n = 1338) and the online training (92.7%, n = 1287) to be useful training modules in developing understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements. Participants reported that this blended approach to training facilitated individual learning allowing greater flexibility and an opportunity to revisit information through the online module while the 'Agreement Trials' day provided interaction with others and a means to clarify and ask questions (128 comments):

“Blend of both is great - allows quiet time to become familiar with the content but also allows time for discussion and communication which is vital.”

“Had it been all face-to-face it would have been too much to absorb. Combining this with online training broke it up slightly”.

“The online module was very well explained easy to follow face-to-face is essential when asking questions and finding out more information. Training can not be completed in isolation - its important to work with other colleagues.”

It should also be noted that 130 (9.2%) participants commented that they found the face-to-face training to be more beneficial and a preferable way to receive training. Furthermore, fifty participants (3.6%) reported that they did not find this blended approach useful. These respondents reported that they preferred face-to-face training (16 comments) or that they did not like the online training component (11 comments).

Online Training

Results highlighted that the majority of respondents (89.6%, n = 1245) rated the online component of training useful as a way to learn. Participants reported a number of ways they found the online training to be useful including:

- Clear and easy to navigate (41 comments);
- Able to use at own pace (36 comments);
- Enjoyed the use of videos (22 comments);
- Ability to refer back to information and guidance (20 comments).

While the online component was rated as a useful way to learn, a clear theme drawn from the qualitative data showed that participants feel that they still needed a face-to-face session of training (70 comments). While some respondents commented on the technical difficulties they experienced online (11 comments), other participants felt that it was unsuitable to hold online training after school (8 comments) and that it was difficult to read so much information on screen (5 comments).

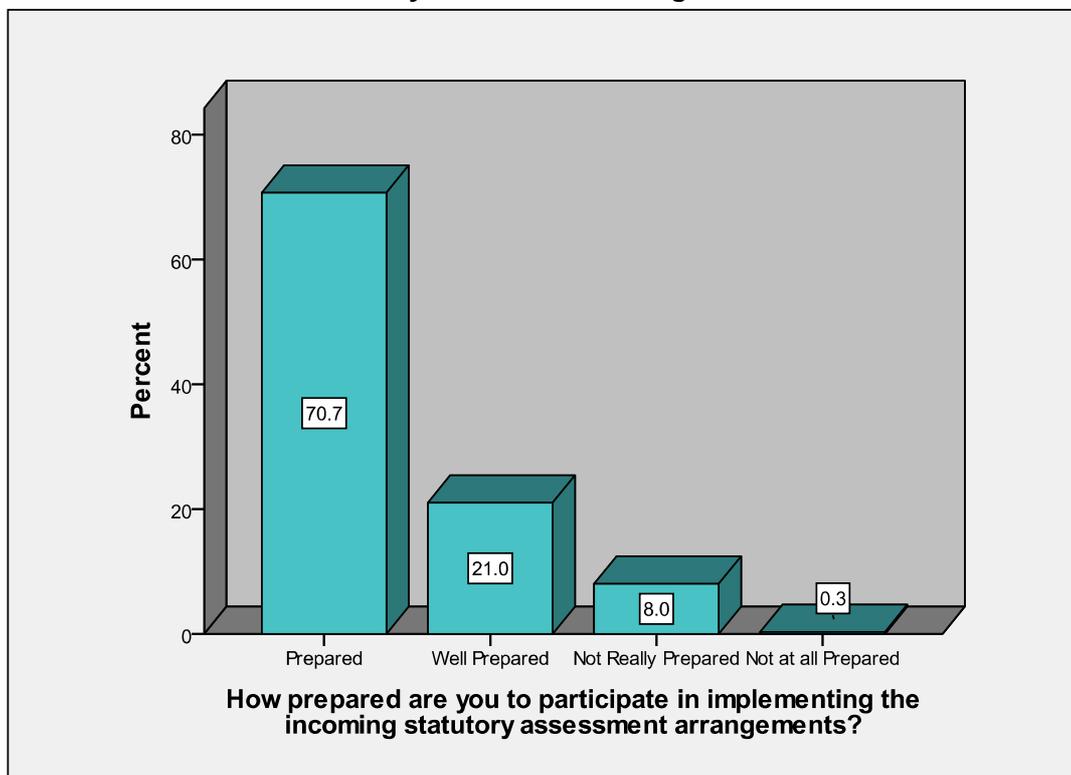
Exemplification Materials

The majority of participants rated the exemplification materials used for training as useful or very useful in Communication (99.3%, n = 1376) and useful or very useful in Using Mathematics (99.4%, n = 1379). This resonates with the qualitative data as 128 positive comments were made. However, it was suggested that exemplifications should be available at every level (74 comments) with participants making reference to Foundation Stage (12 comments), Special Educational Needs (8 comments) and Irish Medium (2 comments).

Having completed the 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' INSET for Communication and Using Mathematics, most participants rated their understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements to be good (57.3%, n = 795), very good (30.1%, n = 414) and fair (11.5%, n = 158). Following completion of this INSET, seventy percent of respondents reported that they were prepared (70.7%, n = 960) to implement the incoming statutory assessment arrangements. A further 21.0% (n= 285) of participants reported that

they felt well prepared in this area. In contrast, 8.3% (n = 113) of participants felt that they were not really prepared or not at all prepared as illustrated below in Figure 6:

Figure 6: Participants' level of preparation for implementing the incoming statutory assessment arrangements



Concerns highlighted by participants regarding their state of readiness for implementing the incoming statutory assessment arrangements in the qualitative data included:

- More time to prepare needed (41 comments);
- Need to become more familiar with arrangements (22 comments);
- Need more training/guidance (18 comments);
- Lack of Foundational Stage material (11 comments);
- Lack of provision for SEN pupils (8 comments);
- Concerns about practical arrangements (5 comments).

Module 3 Summary

Data collected showed that the majority of respondents in this pilot had no experience of participating in agreement trials or internal standardisation. However, after Module 3, the

majority of respondents rated their understanding of agreement trials and internal standardisation as good or very good. Furthermore, most participants reported that they had an understanding of how to assess pupils' work in both Communication and Using Mathematics using the Levels of Progression.

In terms of the INSET overall, participants reported that the blended approach to training was useful. However, some participants did express their preference for face-to-face training. Issues arising in the evaluation of Module 1 and 2 were reiterated here including the need for more exemplification materials for all levels particularly for Foundation Stage, and experiences of technical difficulties with the online course.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Model of Delivery

The majority of participants responded positively to the blended approach of training. Participants reported that they found the online module beneficial in terms of flexibility and accessibility. However, a theme throughout the qualitative data indicated that respondents regarded face-to-face training as an essential aspect of this INSET. This was explained as participants enjoyed the interaction with other colleagues both within and across schools. Face-to-face training was also stated as a preferred learning style by some participants.

Content

Overall, the content in each module of the training course was positively received by participants. Respondents rated that they had received enough information on the course and that this was effective in developing their understanding of the incoming Levels of Progression, internal standardisation and agreement trials. The multimedia content of videos, exemplification materials and the Teachers' Support ring binder were highlighted as useful ways to inform teachers about the incoming statutory assessment arrangements.

However, participants expressed the need for further exemplification materials to be made available for every assessment level for both Communication and Using Mathematics. Feedback also indicated that some participants found exemplification materials at Level 4 and Level 5 in Communication difficult to differentiate between.

While it should be noted that pupils at Foundation Stage and pupils with profound or severe learning difficulties are not statutorily assessed using the Levels of Progression, the absence of Foundation Stage and SEN material was repeatedly highlighted by participants throughout the training.

Online Aspects of Training

Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with each of the six sections of the online course. Results demonstrated that respondents found the online course easy to navigate and reported it to be beneficial in terms of offering flexibility for individual users and increasing accessibility to information and guidance. Participants highlighted the exemplification materials, the videos and the drag and drop activity as being elements that were particularly helpful.

As shown throughout this report, a number of participants experienced some technical difficulties during the 'Preparing for Training' events and the online course. Logging into the course and viewing videos caused participants most problems. While the videos were widely praised throughout the course, suggestions for improvements included ensuring quicker download time, having the option to maximise the video on screen and creating more realistic classroom scenarios.

Some participants also expressed concern regarding the scheduling and format of Module 2 training in their schools and the need to incorporate further interaction with colleagues.

Despite these concerns, participant feedback suggested that the use of online training was an appropriate and useful way to inform staff on the incoming assessment arrangements.

Face-to-face Aspects of Training

Face-to-face training was regarded by participants as valuable. This may be illustrated through feedback from the 'Agreement Trials' events which were rated by participants to be the most useful component of the training course in establishing the understanding of the incoming statutory assessment arrangements. Participants highlighted that having time on the course to plan and share ideas with other colleagues and ask questions of CCEA and ELB officers was a particularly beneficial aspect of the training.

Results demonstrated that while most respondents had little experience of participating in agreement trials, participants reported that the face-to-face training received was effective in improving their understanding of agreement trials. Similarly, participants also rated that the face-to-face training on internal standardisation and using the incoming Levels of Progression contributed in their understanding.

The findings of this evaluation on the 'Assessing the Cross-Curricular Skills' INSET indicated that participants showed high levels of satisfaction with the blended approach to training and the course content. Areas of lower satisfaction included the limited range of exemplification materials available particularly regarding Foundation Stage and Special Educational Needs, insufficient time to become familiar with the incoming assessment arrangements and a number of technical difficulties with the online course. In order to improve this INSET before roll out to all primary schools, the following recommendations based on the evidence of these evaluations should be considered:

Recommendations for Module 1

This evaluation suggests:

- Further training during the 'Preparing for Training' day could be given on dealing with potential technical difficulties that may arise during the online component of the course and how these may be resolved.
- More emphasis should be placed on the preparation required for the 'Reflection' session during the 'Agreement Trials' day in order to aid clarification.

Recommendations for Module 2

This evaluation suggests:

- Exemplification materials, videos and interactive tasks should be made available for every Level of Progression for Communication and Using Mathematics including samples produced by pupils in Foundation Stage.
- Further consideration by schools should be given regarding how the online training is timetabled within school and the format that this should take.

- Greater awareness of items in the 'Toolbox' of the online course should be raised to facilitate further learning and gain more engagement amongst participants.
- Opportunities and activities for offline discussion amongst colleagues should be clearer and made more explicit within the online training component.
- Due to the number of technical difficulties in the pilot, the capacity of all participating schools and training centres regarding internet speed and network power should be reassessed to ensure download times are reasonable.

Recommendations for Module 3

This evaluation suggests:

- There is confusion between 'Preparing for Training' as a training module and preparation for training as a process that takes place within the schools' individual settings. Consideration should be given to creating a clear differentiation between the module and the overall process in the introduction of each training component.
- Greater clarification of how the 'Reflection' session may be used within the training course is needed.

Recommendations for Future Evaluation

- The icon used to signpost an evaluation in the online course should be changed with text clearly stating 'Click here to complete evaluation'.
- In order to maximise data collection through the online evaluation, demographic information such as ELB, school type and role should be combined with another part of the questionnaire in order to prevent this loss of data.
- Consideration should be given to collecting the date when each of the online evaluations was completed.
- Elements of the questionnaire should be combined in order to reduce the size of future evaluation tools.