Who's prepared to teach school English?

The degree level qualifications and preparedness of initial teacher trainees in English

March 2010

Committee for Linguistics in Education
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About the Committee for Linguistics in Education

The Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLIE) was set up in 1980 by its two sponsoring organisations, the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB) and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL); its website is http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/clietop.htm. Its remit covers all aspects of language education in the UK's schools, so secondary English teaching is one of its main concerns. Since the 1990s CLIE has welcomed the increasingly high profile of language study in the school curriculum, while at the same time noting the increasing mismatch between this curriculum and that of traditional 'English' degree courses. Anecdotal reports suggested that some PGCE tutors were reluctant to consider a newly emerging alternative supply of English teachers, from departments of English Language or Linguistics. These anecdotes led CLIE to conduct two small-scale but systematic surveys of English PGCE tutors, one in 1994 and the other in 2006, whose results can be read at http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/pgce-clie.htm. The second survey suggested that tutors' attitudes had changed significantly since the first, so CLIE commissioned the present survey. The brief was expanded to consider the general profile of higher education qualifications of those selected for PGCE Secondary English courses, the selection process, and the subject discipline support given during the course.

About the authors

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Foreword

This is a very welcome, timely and thorough report. It is welcome because it is the first systematic overview of the 'preparedness' of future English teachers and it comes at a time when English continues to evolve as a school subject and when national changes are profoundly reshaping the curriculum. One of the most significant changes of the past 20 years has been increased specialism at Key Stage Five with many English teachers now teaching Language or Media Studies, almost always with no specific training except for some day courses provided by various assessment bodies. Generally, English at Key Stages Three and Four has become more concerned with language broadly conceptualised and also with a cultural analysis perspective towards the study of the media. The impact of technological change has also very excitingly affected what counts as 'standard' forms of communication, with the spectacular example of text messaging forever attracting media attention.

It is clearly no longer the case, if it ever was the case, that a degree in English Literature is the perfect preparation for becoming an English teacher. At the same time the report reveals how dominant this notion remains and my own research over many years demonstrates that 'the literary' does preoccupy much attention in the English classroom. However, the careful research outlined in the report reveals that there is a problem with 'preparedness'. Many PGCE admissions tutors take a very narrow view of what kind of degree is acceptable and they cite various pressures, with OFSTED a recurring theme. At my own University we explicitly created an 'exceptions' policy to demonstrate our willingness to give opportunities to graduates with a range of degrees. However, even this policy, ironically, proves the point that we had to justify ourselves to external, generally negative pressures.

What the report demonstrates is that it really is time for a much broader view of English as a school subject and a much more inclusive attitude towards potential teachers of that subject; clearly both Media degrees and Linguistics degrees would provide much needed specialist teachers. If the 'Creative and Media' Diploma really gets going then the argument is even stronger for a more inter-disciplinary approach to English teaching. The report is welcome and deserves to have long term influence on the future of the profession.

Professor Andy Goodwyn

Head of the Institute of Education, University of Reading

Chair of the National Association for the Teaching of English

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **aims** of this research were to find out:

- what degree level qualifications teacher trainees have when they start full time university based Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) Secondary English courses in England.
- how PGCE English tutors judge the content knowledge of students with different degree level qualifications in respect of the different parts of the Secondary English curriculum.
- how PGCE providers support students with different subject knowledge development needs.

The **main methods** used were:

- questionnaire surveys completed by course leaders at 65% of Higher Education institutions offering full time university based PGCE Secondary English courses in England.
- structured interviews with a sample of nine PGCE course tutors (17%).

The **main findings** were:

- Secondary English PGCE tutors hold diverse but patterned views about what is desirable in the initial qualifications and experience of prospective applicants.
- There is a general pattern of preference for applicants with degrees in English Literature or combined English Language and Literature, although preferences and levels of flexibility vary across institutions.
- Which degrees are preferred does not correspond in a straightforward way to what tutors think about how well students' degrees have provided them with the content knowledge they need for teaching English in secondary schools.
    - A majority of tutors believe that degrees in a wide range of subjects provide students with adequate content knowledge to teach Key Stages 3-4 (to GCSE) English Language. However, no tutor considered that English Literature graduates have the knowledge to teach English Language at Key Stage 5; only graduates with degrees in integrated English Language and Literature, English Language or Linguistics were judged by a majority of tutors as having the requisite knowledge.
    - In a similar way, a majority of tutors believed that graduates with degrees in a wide range of subjects (but not Linguistics, Media Studies or Film/Cultural Studies) begin their PGCE course with adequate content knowledge for teaching Key Stage 3-4 English Literature. However, few tutors considered that any qualifications other than English Literature or integrated English Language and Literature give students the necessary content knowledge to teach Key Stage 5 English Literature.
    - Similar patterns emerged as regards the teaching of Media and of Drama/Theatre Studies: only specialists were judged to have the knowledge to teach at Key Stage 5.
    - Interviewed tutors reported that students with a lack of experience of poetry (including some with Literature degrees) are anxious about teaching poetry. Teaching knowledge about language, and especially grammatical knowledge, was also a frequent anxiety (less so for those with Language/Linguistics degrees).
- PGCE courses use a variety of ways of identifying students' content knowledge needs and a wide variety of ways of addressing them. The latter included year-long conversion courses, peer-led seminars, online interactive activities, expert sessions, structured reading programmes, content-based assignments and a host of others.

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INTRODUCTION

English is regarded as a successful and attractive subject discipline in schools and a correspondingly popular option in Higher Education. At school level, recent OFSTED reports have judged 75% of English lessons observed as good or outstanding. English is a popular and well regarded subject which recruits and retains students at post-compulsory level and beyond. The ratio (reported here) of PGCE English applicants to those selected is another indicator of the attractiveness of the subject. However, the longer term durability of new entrants to secondary English teaching is less clear[i].

The project focused on the initial qualifications of prospective student teachers, or trainees, applying to university education departments for one year full time postgraduate courses equipping them to teach English to students between the ages of 11 and 19 (Key Stages 3-5)[ii]. Such courses are accredited with a postgraduate qualification in Education, which is a common first step to achieving the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) required to teach in state schools.

Until the 1990s such courses were based mainly in university education departments, with one term spent in a school teaching practice placement. Since then, the balance has been reversed with the university-based element reduced to a total of 12 weeks of full-time contact, and the school-based element, conducted under the aegis of a school teacher mentor, increased to 24 weeks. In addition to learning about teaching and the regulatory requirements of being a teacher, and practising teaching in schools for assessed observations, student teachers also have to complete a number of university assignments set at postgraduate level, with 60 Masters level credits now available over the course of the PGCE year, putting students and their tutors under additional pressure to achieve within tight constraints of time.

The changes to what constitutes English and a student of English make the job of preparing a potentially more diversely qualified cohort of student teachers more complex. Working under the constraints outlined above, with a prior function of evaluating the likelihood of the student teacher to pass the course, and with the substantial apparatus of regulation and assessment emanating from various agencies, university based PGCE teachers have little time in which to prepare students for the complex and multifarious pedagogic and curriculum roles many will encounter in schools. Looked at from the outside, listening to the tutor interviewees talk about their working lives, and attempting to make arrangements in crowded timetables of commitments, both researchers were struck by the level of difficulty and duress in the PGCE tutors' role, and take this opportunity to thank the course leaders who responded to this questionnaire and to invitations to be interviewed.

In a context where there is no database of such information, the research sought to establish the patterns in this area and collate a summary of tutors' perceptions about the level of subject knowledge preparedness of students with different degree level qualifications. Following from this, the enquiry was also interested in the ways that PGCE institutions support students with different subject knowledge development needs. This information is likely to be of interest to tutors and their professional associations such as the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) committee of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE), to agencies engaged in the funding and development of Initial Teacher Education, and to future prospective trainees.

CONTEXTS: curriculum change in English since 1980

The course titles and disciplinary content of the subjects traditionally grouped under the heading ENGLISH in secondary schools and colleges in England have undergone substantial alteration since 1980, especially at Key Stage 5, with a similar marked alteration in course specification and provision in Higher Education. This has consequences for what is taught and for the expertise of those engaged in the teaching, many of whom are now in part formed by that altered curriculum. The changes to curriculum can be represented in the three tiers of education from secondary level to undergraduate degree on which this study is focused: Key Stage 3 and 4 school English up to the age of 16; 16 to 19 curriculum provision at Key Stage 5, increasingly undertaken for university admission; and higher education degree courses in English related curriculum areas. All three age related areas have been subjected to high levels of regulatory control and competition in recent years.

Key Stage 3 and 4

At Key Stage 3 and 4, the definition of the English curriculum has been influenced by ongoing revisions and changes to the specification of the National Curriculum, first introduced in 1987; by national, externally assessed Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs) introduced in 1991; and by the Key Stage 4 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) introduced in 1986. In addition there have been two Language related initiatives introduced and then terminated as the direct result of political intervention. In the earlier years, the Language in The National Curriculum project (or LINC project), launched in consequence of the recommendations of the Kingman Enquiry (1987), introduced explicit teaching of Knowledge about Language (KAL) into the subject English curriculum between 1989 and 1991. More recently the Literacy Strategy, later merged into The Strategy, was introduced in 1999 in order to raise standards in literacy, and then terminated in 2009. Although in many ways unrelated, these two projects both gave a greater scope in school English for ways of working based on theoretical frameworks taken from linguistics, as opposed to literary study. Meanwhile curricula related to the study of media and film have continued to thrive as the focus for many classroom activities, and form part of the assessment for many GCSE English courses.

School students now routinely encounter genre focused non-literary approaches to reading and writing which have their roots in the application of Hallidayan linguistics. Students and teachers commonly work with non-literary texts and contexts such as newspapers, advertising, film, ICT based new media, and increasingly with multimodal texts not primarily dependent on the written word for meaning. The new National Curriculum orders and GCSE also now make greater space for language and cultural study with the option of a new English Language GCSE specification with components having a provenance in Applied Linguistics, Semiotics and related cultural studies: spoken language, language variation and change and (new media) technology.

Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, and in the context of England's education system in which students experience a comparatively specialised curriculum with a small number of subjects chosen by them, there has been a notable diversification of curricula. In 1980, GCE Advanced Level English Literature was the only option available for students who wanted to pursue academic study of English beyond the age of 16 in schools and colleges. Following a number of curriculum innovations in the late 1980s, GCE Advanced Level students can now choose to study an additional variety of English related courses in

English Language, English Language and Literature, Media Studies, Communication Studies, Film Studies, and Theatre Studies, with plans for the introduction of Creative Writing. Other comparable options include the International Baccalaureate and BTEC courses in Media and Performing Arts and English related topics in the new Diplomas. Meanwhile, the study of Literature at Advanced Level continues to be a popular choice. It is not uncommon for students, especially those in Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education Colleges where there is a wider curriculum offer, to follow two or three A Level courses from the English subject's grouping.

Higher Education

These new options were possible in part because of changes in the specification and constitution of English related degree titles and content in Higher Education[iii]. Until around 1980 most University Higher Education courses in English could be encompassed by the titles English Literature, English Literature and Language, the relatively new and specialized discipline of Linguistics, and some combined courses in English with History, or with a Modern Foreign Language. In polytechnics and more progressive university departments there were innovations in disciplinary content including the Birmingham model of cultural studies, and related developments in the Open University courses, including modular options and combined courses. Another layer of complexity can be traced to the growing influence and diffusion of Critical Theory in Higher Education English Literature courses, at some expense to previous attention given to a disciplinary field organised historically and thematically around the teaching of literary writing drawn from a canon of poetry, plays and novels.

This complex set of changes has consequences for the expertise and qualifications of those who might be seeking to teach English, and who are now applying with a more diverse profile of specialised learning from their school studies and more particularly from their choices made in the context of more diverse undergraduate studies in English related subjects. The influence of critical theory outlined above, in conjunction with the mushrooming of newly innovated courses in forms of cultural study such as Film and Media, along with the development of modular and combined courses in place of Single Honours, has given a different shape and texture to the expertise and experience learnt through Higher Education. All this has also been accompanied by a marked alteration in the constituency of those staying on in school at 16, and in those studying in Higher Education as a consequence of the expansion of Further Education (FE), of government policies promoting widening participation in post compulsory education, changes in expectations of employers, broader social changes and changes in the levels of literacy beyond school age. Indeed, some of those curriculum changes can be thought of as responses to linguistic and cultural studies becoming more attractive to this different constituency.

Consequences of this altered ENGLISH

This outline of the changes in the English related curricula points to alterations in the knowledge, understanding and practices of those more recently qualified in English related subjects, and to the requirements of what is to be taught. Requirements and contexts for expertise in linguistic and cultural studies more broadly defined coexist with official documents which continue to point to lists of recommended authors from a canon of valued literary writing, especially in compulsory education. The result is diversity and complexity in the expectations of what subject knowledge is required by teachers. These expectations seem beyond the level of resourcing in place and there are also some contradictions in what is being recommended.

METHODS USED IN THIS STUDY

The study used a mixed methods approach comprising quantitative and qualitative information and garnering perspectives reported by both tutors and students. The data set comprises: 42 online survey responses, of which 35 were unique and 35 complete; recordings and transcripts of 9 PGCE tutor interviews; notes from 39 PGCE student interviews.

Online survey

The online survey was conducted using Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) from June to September 2009. It consisted of 8 questions covering information about the tutor respondent and the number of trainees starting in 2008-9, the degree subject backgrounds of their 2008-9 cohort, numbers of trainees with different degree classes and higher degrees; and also a matrix question asking tutors to show the areas in which trainees with different degree qualifications are usually adequately prepared for the different components of a career as an English teacher at the start of their PGCE course, and an open comments opportunity (Appendix I). From 54 institutions with current PGCE Secondary English programmes (Appendix II) there were 42 responses. 4 were left incomplete after the tutor name, institution name and number of PGCE trainees who started the programme in 2008-9, and 3 were duplicates, leaving 35 complete responses and representing 65% of providers. These 35 responses are the basis of the numerical information presented here.

PGCE tutor interviews

The PGCE tutor interviews were conducted concurrently with the survey. Nine PGCE tutors were interviewed, a sample of 17% of the total; these were selected to represent a range of universities, shown in Table 1 below, experienced tutors with many years standing in the role and those coming to it recently, large and small institutions, institutions with active research profiles and those with a focus on teaching and short courses of teacher professional development. Three institutions were selected in close geographical proximity in order to survey variations in provision in one area.

	Russell Group University	New University	Other University
10-19 PGCE students	1	2	0
20-29 PGCE students	1	2	1
30+ PGCE students	1	0	1

Table 1: Profile of institutions in interview sample

A structured interview schedule followed the online survey in structure and scope, seeking to elicit qualitative responses to illuminate the survey's quantitative responses (Appendix III). The interviews were 40-90 minutes long and were transcribed and coded in relation to the interview schedule and to the emerging patterns observed. All nine institutions are successful and well regarded.

PGCE student interviews

39 students in the first few weeks of their 2009-2010 PGCE Secondary English programme were interviewed from a complete cohort of 45 in one of the institutions represented in the survey. This was an opportunistic sample of 87% of that cohort. As part of their early induction and orientation, they each had an individual interview with a tutor to set targets in response to a process of subject knowledge auditing. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. At the end of each interview a note was made of each trainee's subject knowledge development targets.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Basic data was gathered to profile the 35 participating institutions, shown in Tables 2-4 below.

PGCE Programmes by HE Institution Type

As stated, there was a 65% completed response rate to the online survey, but closer analysis shows a differently textured pattern, with 56% completed returns from tutors working in New Universities, and 70-75% returns in all other institutions. This is shown in Figure 1 below. In New Universities it was more commonly the case that the researchers were unable to establish contact with the PGCE tutor, and therefore the reasons for non-returns are unknown. In Russell Group and other traditional universities it was more commonly the case that contact was made but there was an explicit decision either not to participate in the survey or not to complete it, though again specific reasons for this are unknown.

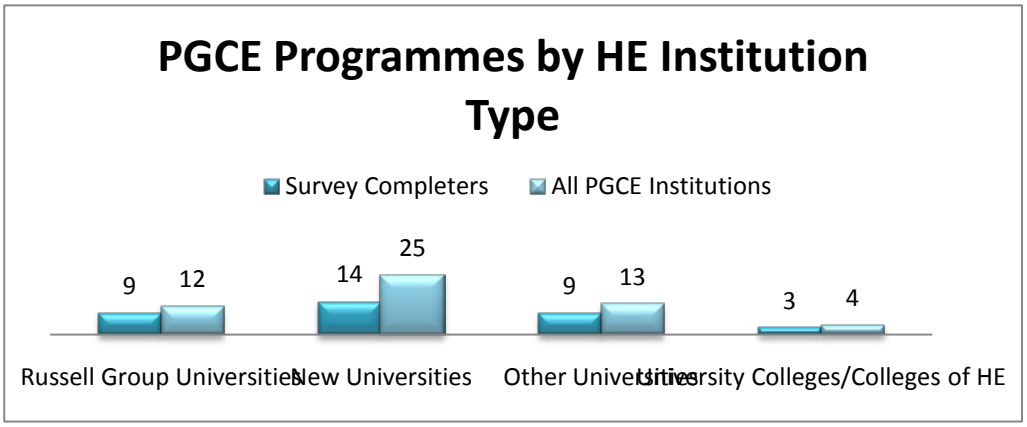

Figure 1: PGCE Programmes by HE Institution Type

Size of PGCE cohorts

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the participating institutions run relatively small PGCE programmes. There were, however, participating institutions from across the size range.

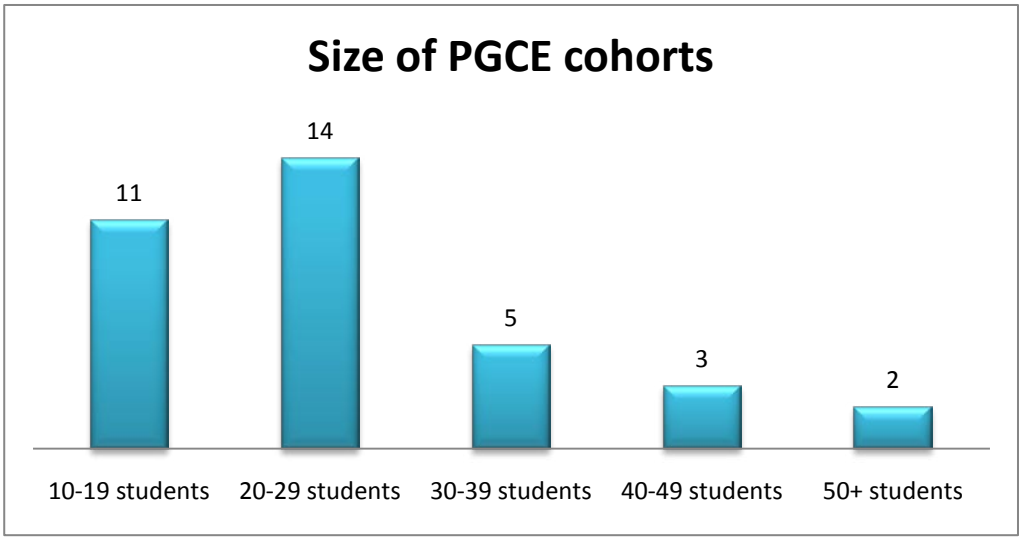

Figure 2: Size of PGCE cohorts

Ratio of applicants to number of students accepted

In the interview, tutors were asked about ratios of applicants to the number of students accepted onto the PGCE course. This is summarized in Table 2 below and ranges from double the number of applicants to accepted students to eight times as many.

Institution	# Applicants	# Accepted	Ratio
1	250	30	8:1
2	90	30	3:1
3	170	20	8:1
4	65	10	6:1
5	100	18	5:1
6	300	140	2:1
7	130	20	6:1
8	60	20	3:1
9	100	20	5:1

Table 2: Ratio of applicants to number of students accepted

It is interesting to note this high level of demand for places on PGCE secondary English programmes though it should also be noted that prospective students may apply for up to four institutions[iv]. Even so, most tutors reported the problem of having to filter from such a large pool of applications and two justified particular criterion based methods of selection as a means of reducing the scale of application to reasonable scope. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this demand is intensified at the level of the individual applicant where they are specifically applying to study the programme in their home region, where there may only be a small number of providers/places, or where that institution has a more selective admissions policy with regard to degree subject.

Retention

There was a general retention rate of around 90% on all the courses represented in the interview sample, with this varying between 85% and 100%. Key factors reported for dropping out of the course included personal and family circumstances of illness or other trauma, and course related issues which varied from students not liking the curriculum content of school English, or the regulative environment or culture in schools, to other one-off factors such as difficulty in reading aloud. Five of the interviewed tutors made the point that a small number of students left the course because they decided they found teaching did not match their previous image of it, and argued this was an appropriate outcome for some. One tutor who actively selected Literature graduates in the application process described three students with high status literature qualifications who dropped out for want of opportunity to use their expertise in teaching. The reports written by students exiting early were often said to comment positively on the way they had been supported during the course.

THE SURVEY DATA

Degree subjects

Survey profile

The data in Figure 3 below shows the aggregated patterns by degree subject of students accepted onto PGCE programmes in the surveyed institutions in 2008-9. As such, it might be regarded as proof positive of the diversity of degree subject backgrounds with which it is possible to qualify as an English teacher, though not necessarily in the particular institution to which a particular graduate might apply. What it does not show is the degree subject background of those whose applications were rejected; further research would be needed for this bigger picture, but some insight is gained from the zero returns discussed in the next section. Furthermore, degree titles made classification under these headings problematic for some tutors: for example, one observed that applicants with an 'English Studies' degree might have components from across this range, and others commented on the frequency and complexity of multiple combinations.

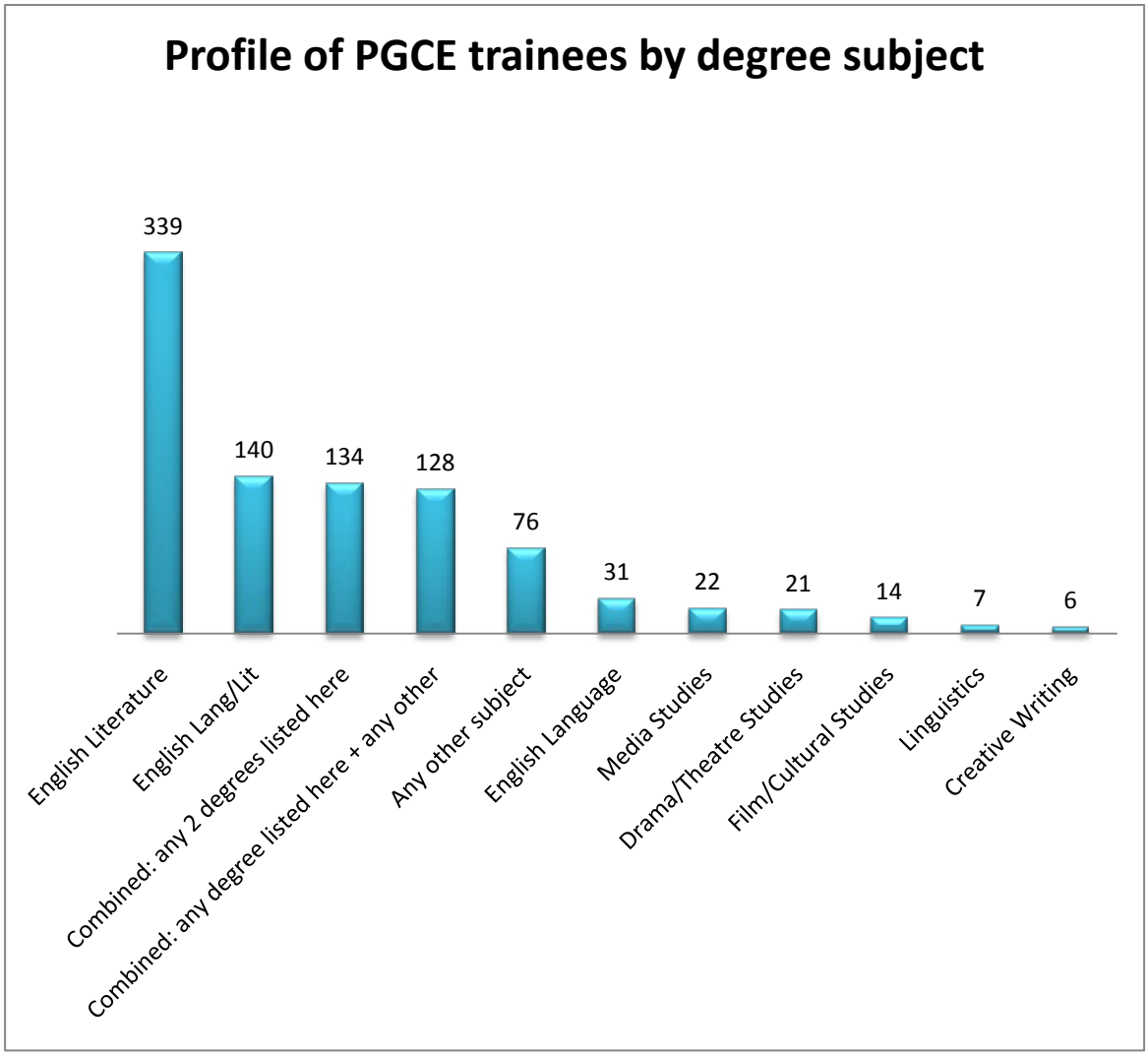

Figure 3: Profile of PGCE trainees by degree subject

Nonetheless, the raw data presented here shows the dominance (37%) of English Literature graduates in the 2008-9 cohort represented in this survey. It would be interesting to know the relative numbers of students studying these different courses at undergraduate level. There are many more English Literature undergraduates than Linguistics undergraduates, so it is no surprise to see a difference here; the question is whether the ratios are similar, or whether English Literature graduates are being preferred by PGCE tutors, despite frequent assertions in the survey open box responses that, in principle at least, all 'English related' combinations are considered.

Interview comments

In the interviews, tutors reported divergent attitudes to degree title and content of degree study. Overall it was reported that most applicants who were accepted had prior HE qualifications which mainly focused on English Literature. However, four of those interviewed emphasized that degree subject and content was a matter of secondary importance, and two of these played down the value of a degree in English Literature as against other options. Some institutions encouraged candidates with degree qualifications in other English related subjects such as English Language, Linguistics and Media. Three tutors commented on the shortage of applicants with backgrounds in English Language and Linguistics and said they would like to see more. One of these was from an institution which filtered applicants on the basis of the Literature content of their undergraduate courses. About a third of the institutions sampled for interview (or half by number of applicants) had no prescriptive requirement about degree programme or content and routinely accepted students in a range of subjects including Law, History and Social Sciences. Several tutors described courses which combined study of English Literature with English Language as an ideal prior qualification.

Six of the nine tutors interviewed made statements to the effect that they liked to see the word 'English' on the degree title, and five of those commented they liked to see English Literature content of at least 50% of the course. The intensity with which such attitudes were held varied from the literary balance being desirable but by no means essential, to it being a strong preference, or a selection criterion. Applicants to one institution were usually rejected unless they had degrees in English Literature or a degree with 50% English Literature, although the tutor concerned had pursued a different policy at a previous institution. By contrast, lecturers from four institutions put greater emphasis on the importance of confidence, self direction, intellectual capacity, and transferrable skills in responding to the changing nature of what constitutes 'school English'. This was echoed by two of the other institutions, although their reported selection policy attended to degree content, including the literary content of modules and their transferability to the National Curriculum.

The survey data provides an interesting perspective on the selection of graduates of "Any other subject" (such as Law or History), seeming to suggest that these are more frequently accepted onto PGCE programmes than graduates in Media Studies or Linguistics. This might make for a provocative sound-bite but, as well as the relative frequencies, it conceals sharply divergent practice between institutions, as the interviews also found.

In response to an interview question about the level of module detail taken into account at the admissions stage, tutors at four institutions reported relatively little interest in such detail: other factors, including and variously balanced, the quality of the degree, the institution studied at and the more situated information of personal profile, were of greater interest. Some institutions reportedly

took an exacting approach, especially where the degree was not English Literature, or English Literature combined with English Language. For some, there was an interest in establishing how the literary content of the student's prior degree mapped on to the requirements of recommended authors in the National Curriculum and Key Stage 5, mainly in its literary form.

There was a general consensus in the comments of seven of the nine interview respondents that the nature of the initial degree matters less than other factors at the start of a teaching career and matters still less over the longer time frame of a career. One tutor argued that the main impact was on students' self-image and confidence, with an initial qualification in English Literature leading to the sense that the student knows the domain in which they are operating. In some cases it also led to a situation whereby student teachers worked within the known of their existing orbit of familiar knowledge and avoided taking on the challenge of what they did not know, including knowledge about language.

However, three of the tutors emphasised the importance of prior subject knowledge and especially familiarity with a wide range of literary texts as the basis of classroom credibility and effective functioning in a professional role. Extensive knowledge of a range of literary reading was regarded as providing the best basis for initial teachers in making connections for themselves and their students, and also modelling for students the pleasure of wider literary reading. Others argued for the importance of rich cultural, aesthetic and literary experience but were less insistent on associating this with a previous qualification in English Literature.

PGCE selection processes

Both the interviews and questionnaire comments provided a textured account of current practices around PGCE selection processes. All tutors reported looking for a mixture of abilities, qualifications, and experiences as evidence of the appropriate aptitudes and dispositions required to be successful in the PGCE Course and as a classroom teacher. All mentioned the importance of the information in the application form and accompanying personal statement and also looked for evidence of recent observation of activities in state schools or of related work with young people. There was a diversity of opinion about which prior qualifications and experience were essential and which were subject to professional judgment. The underlying contrast was between, on the one hand, selection criteria arrived at by a holistic evaluation of the overall profile of the prospective trainee and their general state of appropriate suitability, orientation and readiness and, on the other hand, selection procedures which treated certain items as mandatory requirements and filters for selection.

First degree qualifications

The interviews matched the questionnaire survey's evidence for a general preference for students with degrees in English Literature or combined courses in English Language and Literature. Some tutors used the evidence of previous degree qualifications in English Literature or in English Language and Literature as selection criterion, making only a small proportion of exceptions for acceptances of students with other degree titles. Other tutors were much less concerned by degree title or content.

There was a variation across institutions and occasionally between different departments of the same Higher Education Institution. Tutors at two of the university Education departments had made representations to their colleagues teaching English degrees about the level of representation of literary content (Shakespeare) in those curricula, in one case leading to the provision of a new course module to bridge the gap. Another tutor reported being approached by the subject department in English Language and Linguistics about admissions policies in PGCE English. This gives some confirmation of some of the anecdotal reports about this which prompted the earlier CLIE investigation. Two tutors reported some differences of emphasis among colleagues about the necessity of a prior degree with major literary content.

A small minority of tutors reported their institutions advising students without degrees in English Literature to follow undergraduate (Open University) or postgraduate literary study. There was no evidence of an equivalent recommendation that applicants coming to the PGCE English course with English Literature degrees but no Language, Linguistics or Media content should study part-time undergraduate or postgraduate courses in Language, Literacy, Linguistics or Media. Nonetheless, all those tutors who reported strict requirements for prior literary knowledge also made reference to exceptional cases who had been admitted without literary qualifications and on other merits.

Personal statements, references and student profiles

PGCE tutors at all nine institutions represented in the interview sample valued the prospective student-teachers' personal statements, comments made in academic and employer references, and the student profiles which emerged in the interview process. All looked for evidence of serious, methodically-prepared commitment to teaching English at secondary level along with a realistic sense of how schools function, as distinct from a nostalgic or idealistic sense of how they ought to function. Such evidence of commitment was seen as demonstrated by efforts made prior to application including observational visits to schools, work in schools, employment history as a Classroom Assistant, or by working with youth groups. Such experiences formed a focus at interview. Tutors in two inner-city centres put a value on students understanding the complex nature of that city's schools, including the variation in the kinds of school available and the super-diversity of students' social, ethnic and linguistic profiles. Two of those mentioned this in relation to prospective students applying from prestigious universities with an educational background in private schooling but limited sense of what goes on in inner-city comprehensive schools.

Applicant interviews

All tutors reported putting a strong value on the interview process. Two used that process - in conjunction with other evidence in the application profile and personal statement - as the main instrument for selection. One of these situated the interview as part of a longer term dialogic relationship offered to applicants leading to selection, sometimes delayed on the basis of readiness or until certain recommendations had been acted on. Some institutions interviewed most applicants and others a shortlist of under a third following filtering by previous degree title and related factors.

Timed writing exercises

Tutors from five of the institutions in the interview sample reported using a timed writing exercise as part of the selection process. One of these was generic to the PGCE department. Four were developed by tutors on the courses concerned, and focused on writing about a previously unprepared poem. At two of the institutions, this literary focus was accompanied by a discussion of

examples of younger school students' transitional difficulties with literacy in their writing, including difficulties with standard English. These test examples were sometimes monitored for evidence of the prospective students' control of standard English. The evaluation of this writing sometimes dwelt on features of spelling, punctuation and 'the comma splice' and elsewhere on a more general demonstration of the capacity for academic writing at levels of discourse and genre.

Summary of dimensions of experience valued in the selection processes

This patterned diversity of views can be summarized as follows:

1) Valuing of evidence of **prior specialised knowledge**: a dimension of variation according to the extent to which students' previous subject knowledge expressed by degree title and degree content is of crucial importance and acts as a criterion for prior selection. This valuing of prior specialised knowledge was associated with the level of prior literary study by four of the interviewees, but another three expressly argued that all experiences of Higher Education disciplinary knowledge have the potential to make equal contributions.

2) Valuing of evidence of **proven intellectual capacity**: a dimension of variation according to the extent to which a minimum degree class of 2:1, possibly in conjunction with the perceived selectiveness and rigour of the university where the degree was studied, was of crucial importance in indicating the capacity of the trainee to think through and operationalise rationale based practices in a complex social environment. Several tutors reported being more flexible with older applicants and those with alternative pathways especially those who could offer evidence of other types of work related achievement.

3) Valuing of perceived evidence of **understanding the situated perspectives of teaching and learning with young people**: this dimension was more concerned with evidence of a potential to work effectively with young people in formal educational settings, including a realistic and familiar sense of young people, learning and schools, along with a capacity for reflection and for adapting pedagogy and professional identity to create an appropriate pedagogic design and climate in which learning can take place. This dimension was arrived at by attention to the personal statement and by informed professional judgment in relation to the interview rather than by extrinsic evidence.

Tutors' approaches valued these three dimensions with different emphases, as shown in Table 3.

Institution #	Literature Subject Knowledge in Degree	Intellectual capacity	Understanding classroom learning
1	Optional	Essential	Preferred
2	Essential	Essential	Optional
3	Essential	Preferred	Preferred
4	Essential	Essential	Preferred
5	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
6	Optional	Optional	Essential
7	Essential	Preferred	Preferred
8	Optional	Essential	Preferred
9	Optional	Optional	Essential

Table 3: Valuing of 3 dimensions of variation in interview sample

The extrinsic pressures of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspections were mentioned in relation to the rationales for policies relating to selection by degree subject title, content and level of achievement. In some cases there appeared to be misunderstandings: for example, the requirement for relevant preparation in the degree was sometimes conflated with the requirement to have studied literature.

Attributes of trainees with different degree subject backgrounds

In the interviews, tutors were asked if there were identifiable attributes associated with specific degree backgrounds. Most explored the idea that certain subject disciplines studied in HE may inculcate differences in formation reflected in differences in general disposition and capacity which were not specific to subject content. English Literature students were identified as having a passion for reading and the imaginative, aesthetic dimensions of culture; English Language and Linguistics graduates a capacity for methodical and objective analysis of textual detail; History, a capacity for evidence based argument and situating texts in their historical context in ways accessible to students; Law, strong intellect and a capacity for assertive questioning. These qualities were sometimes ranked in a hierarchy, usually with a preference for those with a passion about reading and aesthetic and cultural pursuits.

More commonly, PGCE tutors applied a more flexible framework which recognized the value of such diversity in the teaching group and the opportunities for students to learn from each other's areas of specialism. For some, such diversity in the cohort was seen as an essential basis for the PGCE course, providing a range of professional aptitudes to suit the different kinds of school settings encountered during and after qualification. Those with admissions policies which were more relaxed about prior qualifications made the argument that all students brought some special aptitudes and perceptions from their previous study. Three made connections with their own professional trajectories as teachers and the new courses and subject disciplines they had had to engage with over the course of their careers. There was a view that students with greater intellectual capacity were able to generate a more active engagement with prescribed curriculum demands and this was sustaining in the longer term. One tutor commented on how the current fashion for curriculum prescription might make the importance of flexibility less apparent now but in the longer term it was likely to be a major factor determining the durability of professional identity.

Profile of zero trainees in certain degree subjects

Although it was not possible within the modest scope of this research project to investigate the degree subjects of rejected applicants, PGCE tutors were invited in the survey to identify where they had zero trainees in any of the degree subjects listed, as shown in Figure 4 below. Tutors were then invited to select the dominant reasons for this: insufficiently relevant degree; relevant but declined on other grounds; no applicants; other. These detailed results can be found in Appendix IV.

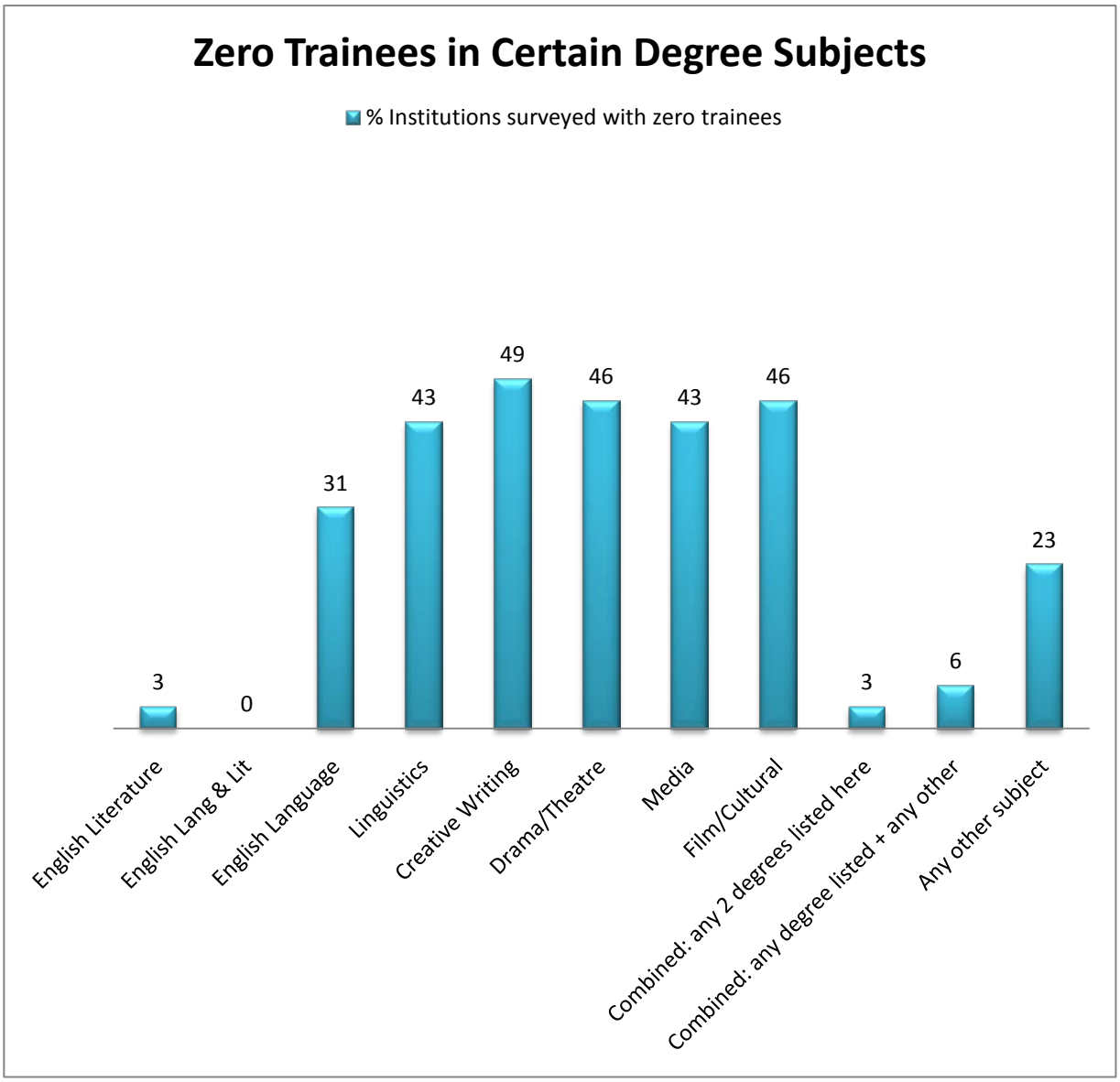

Figure 4: Zero trainees in certain degree subjects

The most significant points to observe here are the continuing preference for English Literature as a prior qualification along with the apparent popularity of combined courses in English Language and Literature. The frequency in the data of graduates with the latter degree title and this zero return might suggest that this is both a widely available degree and a widely acceptable option amongst PGCE tutors.[v] Two tutors commented that students with English Language degrees did not necessarily have a secure grasp of grammar but the general consensus was that Higher Education study of Language led to student expertise and self confidence in this area of the curriculum.

11 of the 35 institutions (31%) had no English Language trainees and 15 (43%) had no Linguistics trainees. It would be easy to regard this as a straightforward aversion to the selection of English Language and Linguistics graduates, but the picture is more complex than this. In both cases the dominant reasons given were lack of suitability in some area other than degree subject (55% Language, 40% Linguistics), and not attracting any applicants from these subjects (18% and 33%). However, it would also be too reductive to say that no bias is occurring. Lack of suitability may include reasons which have their roots in prior degree subject study, such as (in specific cases) the

ability to analyse a poem effectively or to discuss works of literature read and enjoyed at interview. Not attracting applicants might be the product of a course marketing orientation to literature. It is also still the case that 9% of tutors regarded English Language and 7% Linguistics as insufficiently relevant degrees.

49% of institutions had no trainees with Creative Writing degrees; 46% had no Drama/Theatre Studies; 43% no Media Studies; and 46% no Film/Cultural Studies. In each case, a lack of applicants was a major reason, with 20-44% of the responses. The reasons for this need further investigation. It may be that these graduates commonly have other career paths in mind; it may be that general careers information as well as institutions' prospectuses and other promotional material indicate, implicitly or explicitly, that applicants from these subjects are either unwelcome or disadvantaged.

It is particularly interesting to note that 43% of institutions had no trainees with a Media Studies degree. A significant proportion - 26% - accounted for this by regarding Media Studies as an insufficiently relevant degree. This seems strange in a context in which moving image and multimodal texts are emphasized in both the recently retired and the revised National Curriculum. One tutor commented in the survey that 'Studies' in a degree title was a cause of scepticism about subject knowledge. Many cited examples of special sessions and practical projects in Media, usually conducted by outside experts, and provided because Media subject knowledge is a common 'gap'.

Profile of 'Any Other Subject' accepted by some institutions

It is clear that many institutions do not accept degree subjects other than those regarded as conventionally "English". However, where "Any Other Subject" is accepted, it is interesting to see the diversity of other subjects included in this range, as shown in Figure 5 below.

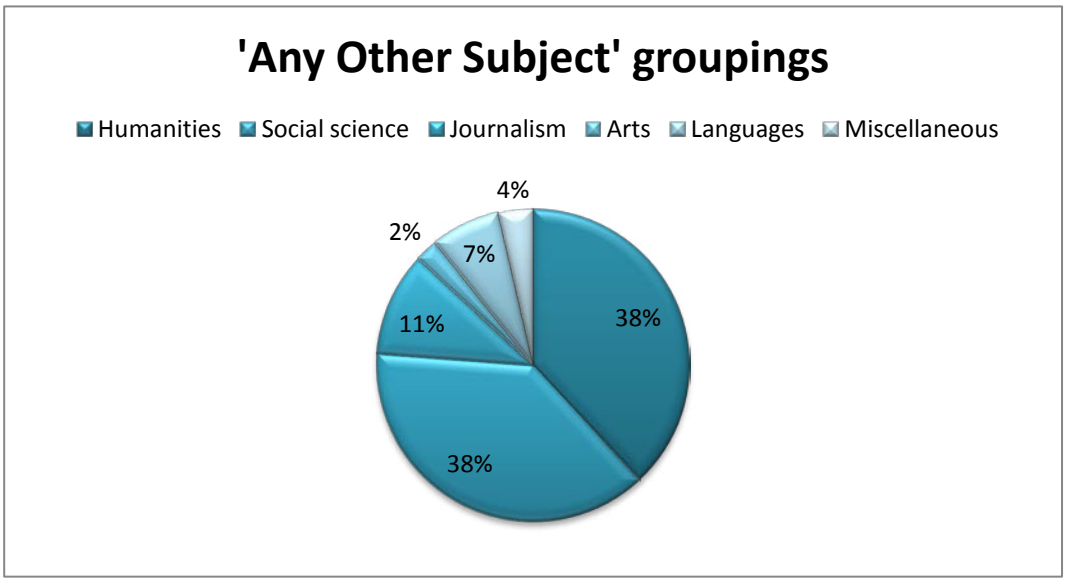

Figure 5: 'Any Other Subject' groupings

Humanities subjects such as History, Philosophy, Theology and Classical Studies accounted for 38% of "Other" degree backgrounds; Social Science subjects including Law, Education, Politics and Psychology for 38%; Journalism and Communication degrees 11%; followed by smaller numbers in Arts, Languages and Miscellaneous subjects. Although some of these subjects, spanning Homeopathy, Old Norse and Auctioneering, might seem odd as starting points for a career as an English teacher, it needs to be remembered that there will always be a context that the tutor has

taken into careful account. Such contexts might include degrees undertaken many years ago, since when the applicant might have undertaken an extensive programme of reading and preparation, including tutors' recommendations to complete Open University modules in English.

Profile of PGCE trainees by degree class and qualification level

In the survey, tutors were asked to identify the number of trainees in their cohort with each degree class. The data is shown in Figure 6 below: 11% of the 962 trainees in the institutions represented in this survey had first class degrees, 67% had upper second class degrees, 21% lower second class, and 1% third class. In addition, 12% also held Masters degrees, 1 trainee had a doctorate, and 7 trainees had other postgraduate qualifications. 12% masks variation, however, as tutors interviewed reported levels of Masters Level and Postgraduate qualified students between 10% and 25%, the latter at the largest institution with the most flexible admissions policy regarding qualifications.

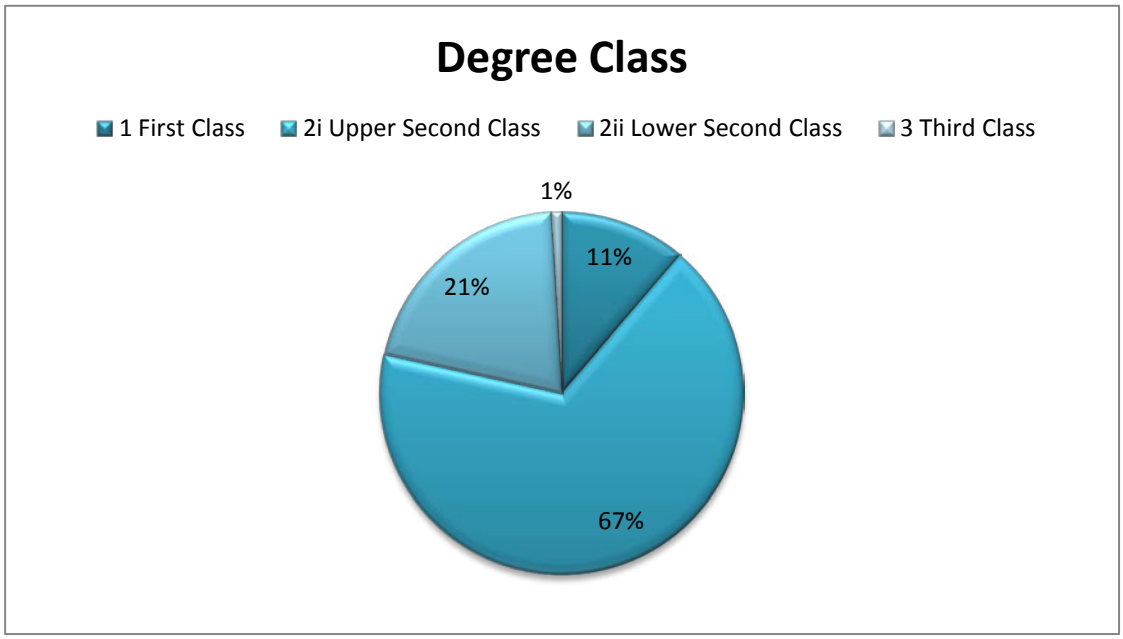

Figure 6: Degree class

Seven of the nine tutors who were interviewed reported that they saw a 2:1 as the required threshold and filter for acceptance on to a PGCE Secondary English course, with five of these prepared to accept a minority of students with 2:2s, especially when there were extenuating circumstances, or other mitigating qualities. Acceptance of those with 3rd class degrees was rare in practice. The two other institutions saw degree class as only one relevant consideration and emphasized that there were occasions when they had accepted students with 3rd class degrees. Tutors at six of the universities argued for degree class as evidence of a capacity for independent thinking and therefore essential for a longer term career in teaching. Three of these also scrutinised students' results from GCSE, through A Level and in the degree module transcripts. One institution with a large cohort had a policy of not filtering applicants by degree class or prior qualifications. Another also had a more relaxed attitude, noting the results but not valuing them particularly per se. Tutors at both these institutions saw academic attainment as only part of what was desirable and made a point of exhibiting flexibility and valuing the profile emerging out of the interview process.

Whilst regarded as a useful filter for Masters Level assignments, there was no perceived benefit in qualifications beyond 2:1. One tutor pointed to the limited overlap between the empirical methodologies of educational studies in their academic form and the demands of literary essays. All those interviewed reported no causal connection between academic attainment beyond 2:1 and capacity to teach well, although it might bring other benefits to the individual and the PGCE teaching group. In one case a 1st class degree was seen as a possible indicator of an adversarial intellectual approach which might lead to an unwillingness to accept advice about professional expectations.

Several of the tutors expressed the view that the 2:1 level of qualification had limited causal connection with the capacity to teach effectively, but influenced levels of student trainee self-confidence and was a good predictor of the student's capacity to work with the academic writing demands of the course and especially the Masters level university assignments introduced in 2008. Similarly, higher degree qualifications were not necessarily a better predictor of assignment performance given the way PGCE assignments differed from the kinds of writing done in most English related degrees. Two argued that a good degree at 2:1 or above was necessary in order to establish credibility in the classroom. Two others suggested a 2:1 was an indicator of the minimum intellectual capacity required to cope with the many demands of the PGCE course and with teaching.

Three of the four tutors who reported being more prescriptive in their requirement about degree class accounted for this in relation to extrinsic factors such as TDA ratings and the small size of the cohort. One of these now makes some offers conditional on achieving a 2:1 where students have applied before their degree is completed, but if they subsequently achieve a lower degree class, they are still accepted and given remedial reading and support. Three tutors commented on the lack of parity of degree classes across institutions. Three tutors were critical of the way that higher degree classes from some institutions did not necessarily guarantee a proficient command of standard English conventions, and conventions of formal writing, specifically paragraphing and spelling.

Tutor beliefs about preparedness by degree subject

In the survey, tutors were presented with a matrix, shown in Table 4 below. This asked them to indicate the areas of the curriculum (top row, Table 4) in which trainees with different degree qualifications (first column, Table 4) are usually adequately prepared for the different components of a career as an English teacher at the start of their PGCE course. 'Adequately prepared' was defined as having a set of subject knowledge and practices that could immediately equip a trainee to tackle classroom content demands (but not pedagogical practice or other classroom issues). The matrix has been coded to provide a simpler frame of reference for the data. Items shaded in the darkest turquoise colour indicate that 76-100% of respondents think this subject is adequate preparation for the start of a PGCE course; the mid turquoise colour 51-75%; the lightest turquoise colour 26-50%; and white 0-25%.

	KS3/4 English Language	KS5 English Language	KS3/4 English Literature	KS5 English Literature	KS3/4 Media	KS5 Media	KS3/4 Drama/TS	KS5 Drama/TS	#
English Literature	61.8%	0%	100%	94.1%	41.2%	2.9%	38.2%	5.9%	34
English Lang/Lit	94.1%	64.7%	97.1%	76.5%	52.9%	8.8%	23.5%	2.9%	34
English Language	93.9%	90.9%	60.6%	6.1%	48.5%	12.1%	12.1%	0%	33
Linguistics	86.7%	100%	40%	0%	40%	10%	6.7%	0%	30
Creative Writing	82.8%	20.7%	86.2%	20.7%	44.8%	3.4%	17.2%	0%	29
Drama or Theatre	40.7%	0%	63%	11.1%	37%	7.4%	100%	96.3%	27
Media Studies	55.6%	7.4%	48.1%	0%	100%	100%	11.1%	3.7%	27
Film or Cultural	42.3%	3.8%	38.5%	7.7%	96.2%	80.8%	26.9%	7.7%	26
Combined: any 2 here listed	94.4%	22.2%	94.4%	22.2%	72.2%	11.1%	44.4%	0%	18
Combined: any listed +any other	94.1%	5.9%	94.1%	0%	70.6%	0%	41.2%	0%	17
Any other subject	90%	0%	90%	0%	50%	0%	30%	0%	10

Table 4: Tutor beliefs about preparedness by degree subject (the last column gives the total number of responses for each row)

This matrix was an attempt to establish an empirical basis for exploring a very complex question. It was not without design problems. The last column in Table 10 is a count of the number of responses to each row. The first row was completed by 34 tutors, the second also by 34 tutors and the third row by 33 tutors. The number of responses declines with each row, until only 10 tutors respond to the last row. It is unclear why this is the case: perhaps greater familiarity with graduates in the subjects in the top half of the table; perhaps an indication of a fatigue effect of this research task; and one tutor commented on the difficulty of making judgments about combined degrees as these varied so much. Two tutors reported finding the task confusing and two others argued for amendment of the design, specifically, being able to make distinctions between preparedness for

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Other tutors expressed considerable tentativeness about their responses due to the amount of variation in any one degree title, the individual's path through available modules, and the influence of other factors on preparedness such as age, personality, other reading and relevant experience. The matrix is complex enough, but even so it does not include other curriculum areas that commonly fall within the remit of an English department, specifically A Levels in Film Studies, Communication Studies and the combined English Language and Literature. Nonetheless, two tutors commented on its value as food for further thought.

Two main perspectives are provided by this matrix: looking across the rows, an impression is formed of how tutors regard a specific degree subject as preparation for the different curriculum components; looking down the columns, an impression is formed of which graduates tutors regard as best prepared, at the start of their PGCE programme, for teaching that component.

Reading across the rows: how well a degree subject prepares for a curriculum component

Looking across the rows, an impression is formed of how tutors regard a specific degree subject as preparation for the different curriculum components. The patterns in this data are very interesting, some of them confirming ideas already discussed in this paper, and some contradicting them. If one counts the number of first quartile (76-100%) responses, then second, third and fourth, it is possible to group degree backgrounds together that are regarded as providing equivalent levels of preparation. From this perspective, it seems that students with integrated English Language and Literature degrees are commonly believed to have the most secure foundation for teaching across the English-related curriculum, with 3 top quartiles and 2 second quartiles. The exceptions to this general level of preparedness are Key Stage 5 Media and Drama. This is corroborated by the recruitment data which showed there were no institutions with no combined Language and Literature trainees.

According to the data here, the next best prepared are trainees with English Literature and Drama/Theatre Studies backgrounds, each having 2 top quartiles, 1 second quartile and 2 third quartiles. It is no surprise that Literature scores so well here, but it is interesting that such low scores are recorded for all other Key Stage 5 subjects. Though these candidates have only one Key Stage 5 string to their bow, as do Drama and Theatre Studies graduates by this account, they are still much preferred at selection.

The next grouping comprises graduates with English Language degrees, Media Studies, joint degrees with 2 or more English-related components (eg English Language and Media Studies), and joint degrees with 1 English-related component and one non-English-related (eg English Literature and Astrophysics). These all have 2 top quartiles, 1 second quartile and 1 third quartile. These subdivide further, however, under closer inspection. The joint degrees are considered adequate preparation for Key Stage 3-4 work in English Language, English Literature and Media, with a reasonable basis for Key Stage 3-4 Drama. Despite the fact that a student might have completed 50% of their degree in Media or English or Literature or Drama, joint degree applicants for teacher training are considered inadequately prepared for work in this subject at Key Stage 5. This is surprising. English Language and Media Single Honours degrees are regarded as providing adequate preparation for Key Stage 3-4 work in Language, Literature and Media and also in their degree subject at Key Stage 5. We know from the survey that English Language is broadly acceptable as a degree subject, so this data is

unsurprising, but Media profiles in a similar way, yet has a much less secure position in relation to admissions decisions made.

The rest of the degree backgrounds are clearly regarded as shakier foundations for teacher training. Film/Cultural Studies fares slightly better, regarded as offering secure preparation for teaching Media Studies at all key stages, but little else. It is curious that Media Studies degrees should fare so much better in tutor beliefs about preparedness than Film/Cultural Studies. Next are Linguistics and "Any Other" degrees, each with two first quartiles and two third quartiles. This is curious too: a Linguistics degree is regarded as a strong foundation for English Language in all Key Stages but a much weaker preparation for English Literature at Key Stage 3-4. In contrast, any other subject is regarded as a strong foundation for KS3-4 English Literature. This data is not logical: if *anyone* with a degree is well prepared for KS3-4 literature, then why not linguistics graduates too? It may be that applicants with Auctioneering or Law degrees are keenly aware of their subject knowledge differences and compensate by reading literary works before applying, so that tutors' perceptions of these "exceptional" candidates is more positive. Nonetheless, with 0% preparation for any Key Stage 5 teaching it is surprising how well regarded "Any Other Subject" applicants are, with only 23% of institutions having no trainees of this kind. Creative Writing degrees have a similar preparedness profile, just slightly lower in Key/Stage 3-4 Drama (which is perhaps a little odd given that a student might have specialized in writing drama), yet 49% of institutions had no trainees.

Reading down the columns: which graduates are best prepared to teach each component

Looking down the columns, an impression is formed of which graduates tutors regard as best prepared, at the start of their PGCE programme, for teaching that component. Some additional points emerge from this perspective. Firstly, most applicants are regarded as having sufficient preparation for Key Stage 4 English Language. This may well have been true at the time of asking (summer 2009) but it will be interesting to see how this set of beliefs evolves in the light of the new GCSE English Language specifications, with the study of spoken language, for example, coming into focus for assessment. Secondly, no degree other than Drama/Theatre Studies is commonly considered as providing adequate preparation for drama work at any stage in the curriculum. This is acknowledged in widespread references by tutors to specialist drama input during the course; the National Curriculum explicitly specifies drama work within the English curriculum at Key Stage 3; and yet 46% of institutions had no Drama/Theatre Studies trainees, with 31% of these regarding this degree as insufficiently relevant. The third issue is the very close correlation that exists in the data between degree subject and preparedness for Key Stage 5 teaching: only English Language and Linguistics graduates are regarded as well prepared for A Level English Language teaching; only Media graduates for A Level Media Studies and so on. If this is the case, why are English Literature graduates preferred in so many institutions?

Student subject knowledge audits

Tutors commented extensively in the open boxes in the survey and in the interviews on the issue of student subject knowledge and how they work to develop it. The ITT National Curriculum for Secondary English, introduced in 1999, specified that trainees on all secondary English courses should have their knowledge and understanding of English audited against the English content specified in the National Curriculum KS3 and KS4 Programmes of Study, as well as content specified as necessary for effective teaching to GCSE, and post-16 (Appendix V). This auditing process needed to show whether or not trainees had developed an appropriate level of competence to start

teaching KS 3-4 English – necessary for the achievement of Qualified Teacher Status – and to document where the trainee had got to with regard to post-16 content as a foundation for further development during the Newly Qualified Teacher year and beyond.

Audit tools

Tutors reported different audit tools, and some of those interviewed offered copies of their documents, but these were not collected systematically. One tutor reported using the Letts publication *English for Secondary Teachers: An Audit and Self-Study Guide* (Johnson 1998) and some reported collaborating with other PGCE tutors in their region to create a shared audit tool. In addition, the opportunity to interview 39 current PGCE trainees entailed discussion of their first subject knowledge audit and review of that institution's audit document for target setting. The small data set opportunistically acquired presents a curious picture.

Audit target setting

Figure 7 below shows the targets set by the 39 trainees interviewed about their first subject knowledge audit: students set themselves between 2 and 5 targets, although they were advised that at this first stage 2-3 was more than enough.

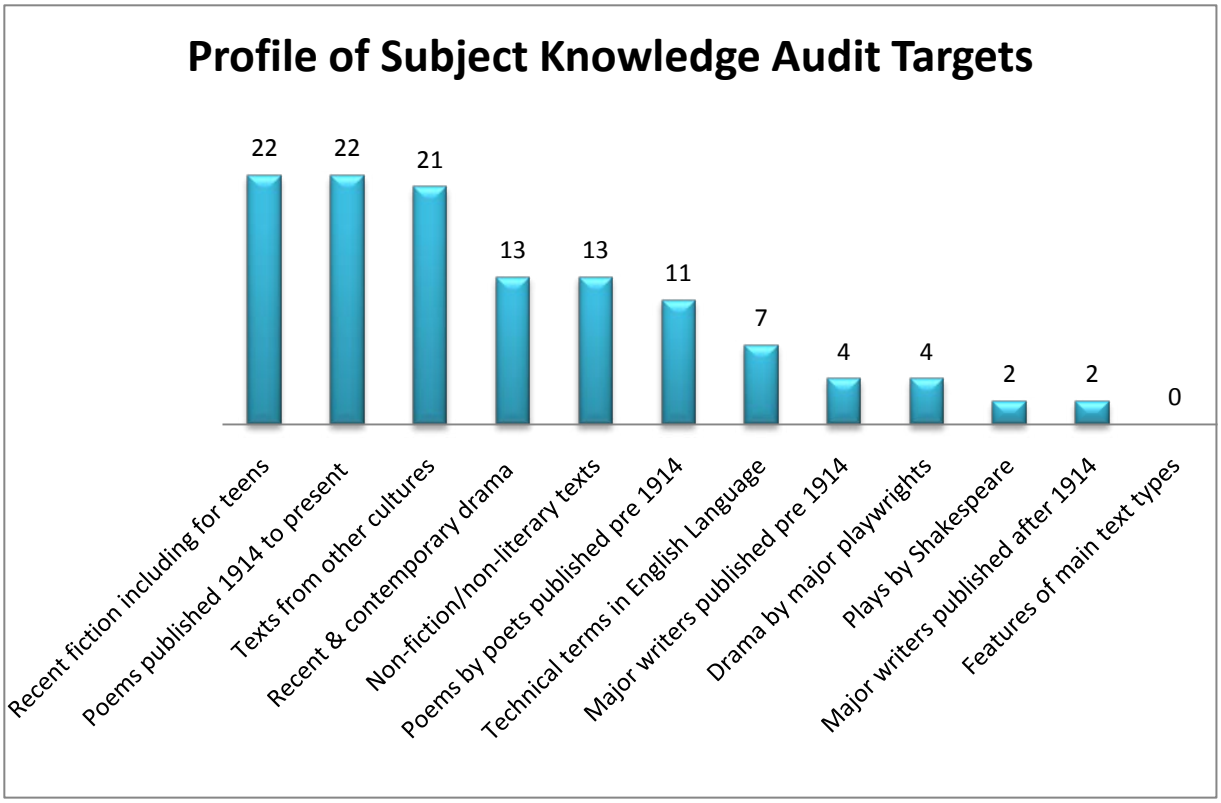

Figure 7: Profile of subject knowledge audit targets

It is difficult to disentangle anything objective from this, as the data collection is methodologically flawed because of the dual role of the interviewer – as visiting PGCE tutor responsible for completing the target setting process and as researcher. This was known beforehand, but the opportunity to gain at least a starting point for more refined research seemed worthwhile.

For research purposes, the reasons trainees have for setting these targets would need much further probing than a 15 minute interview allows. For example, the high frequency here of teen fiction might have as much to do with perceived ease and enjoyment of accomplishing this target than to

do with relative necessity; conversely, the low frequency of drama by major playwrights should not be taken as an indicator of widespread subject knowledge in this area, but in some cases the product of antipathy. The high frequency of "Texts from other cultures" is certainly the product of some steering on the part of the interviewer.

Knowledge about poetry and drama

In addition to this complexity, PGCE tutors also reported different patterns in the survey, with common concern about the level of prior knowledge of poetry and drama. With regard to the teaching of poetry, confidence, capacity and familiarity with the genre was said to have been impeded by limited prior exposure to poetry in the trainees' own earlier schooling and at degree level, where poetry is reported as being often avoided by undergraduates studying Literature. Five of the tutors commented in some detail on the adverse impact of the AQA Poetry anthology used at GCSE, which they reported as the main common experience of poetry in secondary school, and one which had given many students a meagre and reductive sense of the possibilities of poetic writing. Five commented that students who had studied English Literature degrees had little more experience of poetry than others. Two referred to gaps in knowledge of canonical poetry, which they addressed in their PGCE programmes. One made the observation that many of her students reported not having written poetry prior to the opportunities for that in the PGCE course.

Knowledge about language

The study of language, including grammatical description, was the other area tutors reported causing major levels of anxiety, though this is not reported strongly in the student audits. In tutor reports, this appeared to coalesce around the grammatical knowledge now required for the descriptive approaches to texts promoted by initiatives such as the The Strategy, and knowledge about broader domains of language, language awareness and sociolinguistics of the kind promoted by the LINC materials, which would be required for teaching Key Stage 5 Advanced Level English Language. Three of the tutors commented on the recent changes at GCSE and the new scope for teaching about language variation, change and interactive talk. Generally, prior degree experience of English Language and Linguistics was reported as a helpful preparation for teaching about language, including aspects of grammatical description. Two tutors suggested it made less difference to mastery of the kinds of form focused grammatical description associated with The Strategy.

Design of audit tools

Although few meaningful conclusions can be drawn from the patterns in the student targets, it is nonetheless useful in showing the design of an audit tool, which is known to be used, with some minor variations, in four of the thirty-five institutions. Under each of the headings is a list of associated content in the audit tool: lists of authors in the case of the various literary headings, lists of language terminology and text types under others. Students are required to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to set targets in relation to subject knowledge "gaps". In the discussions with students, those with degrees in Language, Media and Creative Writing often had negative perceptions of their subject knowledge and were daunted by the size of the "gap" to fill. Those with English Literature degrees sometimes fared similarly, these expressing frustration at the poor match between their degree content and the subject knowledge required by this audit. This anxiety is partly a product of the design of the audit tool, which details two parts of the (pre September 2008) National Curriculum content - English literary heritage and texts from different cultures and traditions - to the exclusion of all others. These excluded parts include subject

knowledge likely to be held with high levels of expertise by graduates in subjects such as Language and Linguistics, Creative Writing, Drama, Media and Film Studies. Figure 8 below shows the contrast between subject knowledge identified in the audit tool used in a selection of institutions (top shape), as specified in the post-September 2008 National Curriculum (middle shape) for which the trainees interviewed were being prepared to teach, and in the Letts Self-Audit guide used in some of the other institutions represented in the survey (lower shape).

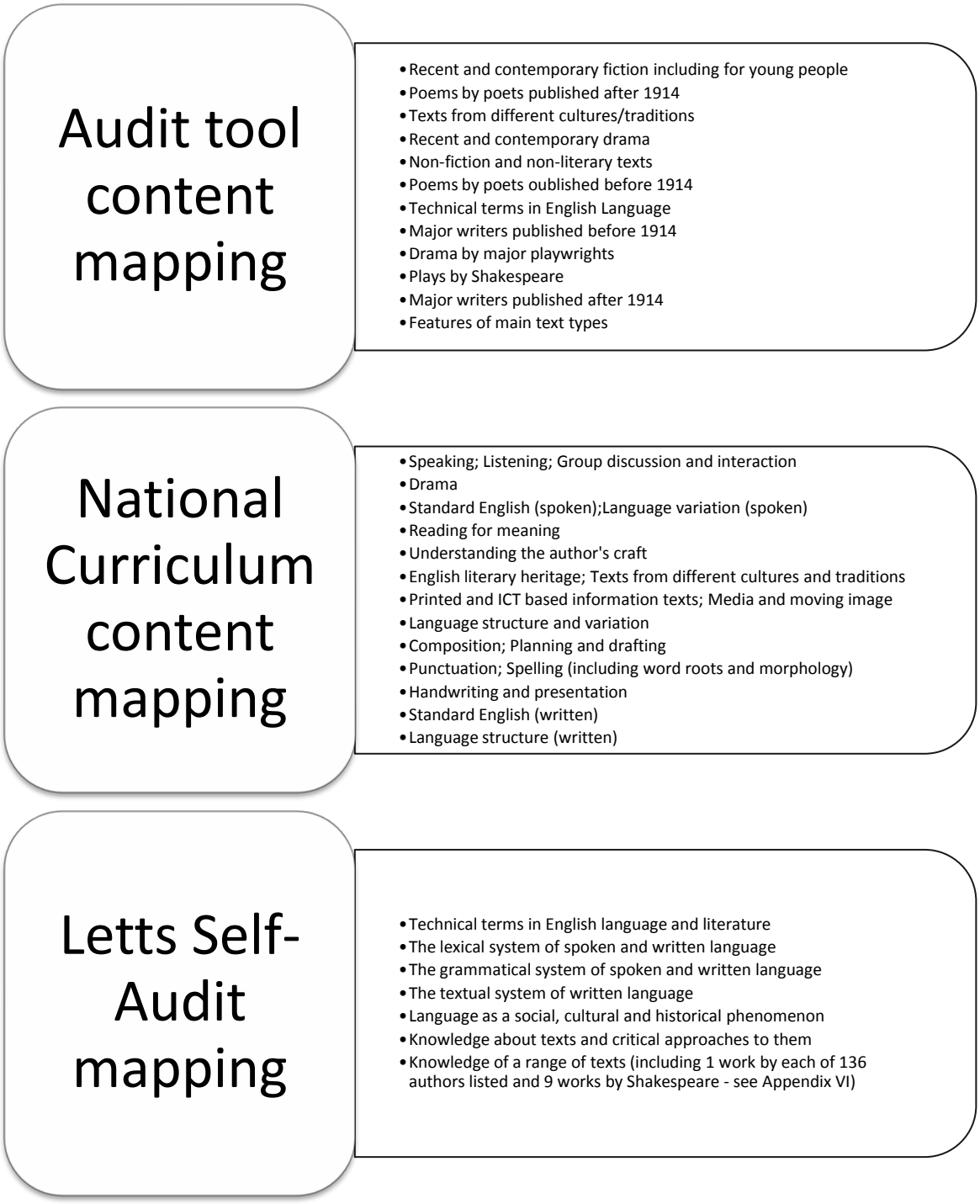

Figure 8: 3 different mappings of curriculum content in Key Stages 3-4

Strategies for subject knowledge development

The open box survey responses indicate that, whatever their limitations, these kinds of audit tool are used both before the PGCE programme, at interview and on being offered a place, and throughout the PGCE programme. They are major tools for logging subject knowledge development, both in the time spent in the university and on school placements, where it becomes the responsibility of the mentor to help set further targets. In the modest amount of time tutors have in the university with their trainees, a number of strategies are employed to help trainees develop relevant subject knowledge in personalized ways. Examples cited included:

- Year long pre-PGCE conversion course for those with degrees in subjects other than English
- 5 day subject knowledge enhancement course for trainees prior to start of the PGCE course
- Pre-sessional preparation tasks and follow up subject related practical tasks
- Post-audit peer support groups
- Peer led subject knowledge master classes
- Planning, resourcing, teaching AS/A2 Master classes for students from a partnership school
- Expert sessions by Media lecturers, external experts, RSC, specialist drama/media teachers
- Sessions on Media, Language, Creative Writing, Drama
- Weekly language sessions to develop trainees' knowledge of English structure and usage
- Practical Media Project that runs across 3 Fridays to improve Media Skills
- Opportunity to join in some MA workshops for Drama
- Sessions run in conjunction with the Drama PGCE students to improve drama in English
- Taking trainees to the theatre and to local museums for reading
- Some guidance on linguistics in regular sessions
- Completing Masters level assignments with a focus on an aspect of subject knowledge
- All assignments linked to aspects of subject knowledge that they need to improve on
- Student blogs with a requirement that they respond to each other and an early focus on collaborative work to support the development of subject knowledge
- Paired placement for co-teaching and knowledge sharing
- Observation, collaborative/individual teaching on subject knowledge "gaps" on placements
- Expectation/encouragement to read more widely supported by subject reading lists, suggestions of books, papers, films, CDs, software, websites, magazines, people to contact
- Surveys of school / library resources on specific areas of teaching
- Self-study guides and self-assessment
- Virtual Learning Environment resource provision
- Language interactive resources to develop knowledge about language
- Class quizzes on subject knowledge

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

In the general context of intensive regulation of all fields of education, the business of selecting between applicants to full time PGCE courses, and the prioritization of the ways in which the subject knowledge is developed, appear to be areas of activity where PGCE tutors can exercise relatively high levels of discretionary choice. At present there is a diversity of practice in the context of strong demand for places. Some tutors used a high level of rationale-based professional discretion in approaches which took the candidates on their own merits without primary attention to degree titles and classes. Others used the titles, provenance and degree class of prior qualifications as the primary instrument for filtering applicants to a manageable number for interview.

On the basis of the evidence of the substantial sample consulted here, there is a general pattern of preference for applicants with degrees in English Literature or combined courses in English Language and Literature. These degree titles were often assumed to indicate a relevant preparation for the role, although many tutors noted the actual diversity of the content of these degrees. Nearly all institutions surveyed reported accepting students with other degree titles, although the levels of flexibility varied very considerably across institutions.

The practices detailed above were not always explicitly stated in the descriptions of the admissions policy to be found on institutions' websites. In some cases prospective applicants, and especially those without higher education qualifications in Literature, would need inside knowledge to know whether their application to a particular institution would be likely to be considered seriously.

There was evidence that some degree titles of relatively recent origin which are increasing in popularity with Higher Education students, for example, Media Studies, Creative Writing and forms of Drama studies, were regarded with some scepticism as a preparation for teaching English in schools, in spite of the presence and popularity of those subfields within the school curriculum.

Lack of knowledge of literary writers and writing was deemed a focus for remedial action in many of the institutions surveyed. There was less evidence of correspondingly weighted concern about lack of knowledge about language, media genres or creative writing. Given the nature of curriculum change in English at all levels described above, this situation might be regarded as anomalous.

The Masters level units introduced into PGCE Secondary English courses appeared to be problematic. The requirements imposed on student teachers and on their tutors are out of kilter with the level of resources which would be required to achieve those expectations, with a consequent likelihood of duress. According to our respondents, the immediate impact of this change appeared to be pressure on tutors to require better academic qualifications prior to application primarily because this would better serve completion rates of Masters level assignments.

Some universities showed a lack of logical cohesion across departments. At least two institutions had launched courses in English Language study in the last ten years, whilst their own Education departments exercised routine practices of not shortlisting candidates without degrees in English Literature, so excluding likely progression routes for their own undergraduate students. Conversely, PGCE tutors complained to their colleagues teaching undergraduates that new designs in Higher Education degrees in English, including Literature, did not equip students to teach English in schools. It will be interesting to see how the altered GCSE curriculum, increased Higher Education student fees and reduced Higher Education government funding impacts on this state of affairs.

CONCLUSIONS

This report was prompted by the difficulty of establishing a basis of evidence about the relationship between prior qualifications and experience and admissions to PGCE Secondary English programmes. In the absence of that evidence, knowledge was left to depend on anecdotal comment and hearsay[vi]. Some of these rumours have been borne out by this report, in both general and specific ways, whilst others have turned out to have no foundation[vii]. The topic seemed to attract controversy and sensitivity from some quarters. An earlier attempt to research some of the issues presented here drew insufficient levels of response to make any general claims[viii]. This report has a substantial basis, and it is now a matter for various sectors of the professional community to discuss further.

The major pattern established by this report is that Subject English has changed in schools and universities over the past 30 years in ways which may not be consistently reflected in PGCE admissions policies and practices relating to prior qualifications. Overall, expertise in language, media and cultural studies is less seriously considered than expertise in English literature. Whilst practice varies considerably from institution to institution, this is a pattern in the findings about selection of applicants and in the support they receive whilst studying and teaching to qualify. There are related issues of how to prioritise subject disciplinary expertise in the context of limited contact time with university tutors and the mismatch between TDA statements about subject knowledge and the resources in place to support those expectations. Several tutors pointed to a two year model of PGCE in some Science subjects as something now appropriate in the context of the complexity of English teaching in schools.

Initial teacher education has come under intense regulatory pressure in recent years, and tutors work with a plethora of mandatory directions and guidelines in an environment of accountability by number. The tutors who responded to this study showed a range of responses to these pressures in the practices they adopted to select and develop their ITE students. Some were resigned to co-operating with a situation they found impossible to believe they could change. Others took the initiative to insist on public rationale-based policy. Others sanctioned certain practices largely on the basis of Teacher Development Agency or OFSTED guidelines, or their understanding of those guidelines. Yet nearly all agreed that the nature of a teacher's capacity over the longer period of her or his working life would depend on a robust mixture of personal qualities, aptitudes, engagement and concern for young people, their education and their life chances. Disciplinary knowledge of English widely defined - language, literature and media – often formed an important part of that preparation but was only one factor in the profile of aptitudes and capacities required over a longer time frame. In spite of this, the title of that disciplinary knowledge at degree level might have a major impact on a prospective applicant's chances of being allowed onto the first steps of professional progression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The management of student expectations

A first point that has emerged strongly from the study is that there is not a perfect match between any single undergraduate degree and the demands of teaching the subject English in secondary schools in England. It is not a case of any student beginning their PGCE course with all the necessary content knowledge and spending the year learning how to teach; rather all students need to spend the year both supplementing their content knowledge *and* learning how to teach. There may be a case for foregrounding this both in Government information about the PGCE and in providers' literature, in order to help students manage their expectations of the course, especially in the context where those students may have incurred substantial levels of debt in order to complete their first degree.

Clarity of recruitment information

It is also clear that different PGCE Secondary English providers have different hierarchies of value for the qualifications and qualities of a suitable applicant. Again, a clearer statement of recruitment approaches by individual providers might give both aspiring teachers and university careers guidance staff a clearer indication of where to direct applications. Those engaged in careers services based in universities may wish to give more textured advice to prospective applicants about the nature of the PGCE Secondary English recruitment and selection process, as well as the importance of applicants giving attention to appropriate preparation before the application itself.

Development of ideas and resources for subject knowledge support

There is both a collective richness of expertise in ways to help PGCE student teachers supplement their content knowledge, on the one hand, and a lack of time for individual PGCE course tutors to network and share experiences, on the other. There may be an argument for an appropriate body to sponsor a project to pool ideas and resources for content knowledge support and make them available to the community of PGCE English course providers.

Design of HE courses in English

There may be implications for the design of some undergraduate English courses in Higher Education. Whilst it is not the primary purpose of an undergraduate degree to serve the needs of those going on to teach the subject discipline at school level, the perceived gaps and mismatches between the subject as it is understood at Higher Education and in school education may not be known about by those engaged in university teaching of subject English, and may appear anomalous to some. There is recent research in this area regarding the study of language and literature and reported at http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/reports.php.

Teacher training policy

Agencies involved in the training of teachers may want to reflect on the perspectives offered by this report in the light of their own contributions to guidelines and statements about standards, and their own research monitoring the number of teachers who leave the profession. In particular, consideration might be given to the discrepancy between statements about subject knowledge and the resources in place to meet those expectations in terms of time, guidance and opportunities for learning. There may also be a mismatch between the expectations of disciplinary knowledge and the policies derived from Every Child Matters with its interdisciplinary focus.

REFERENCES and related information sources

The sources listed below indicate some initial points of reference for interpretations of the recent history of English studies post 14, the nature of Higher Education 'English' courses, and issues of transition. Readers are referred to a series of related reports on the English Subject Centre website, several of which are listed below (http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/reports.php).

The TDA have commissioned a number of reports by National Foundation for Educational Research on teacher retention including retention of PGCE students. The TDA's research department is now collating records of teachers leaving the profession by subject from 2005 but with no publication of that outcome to date.

There is an extensive literature about how PGCE tutors support student teachers which features in journals such as *English in Education* and *Changing English*. See Ellis 2007 for a recent substantial case study of early teacher development contextualized by coverage of the recent history of ITE and the associated promotion of auditing subject knowledge.

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APPENDIX I: Survey Questions

Page 1: Basic Facts

1. Please state your name and university. The purpose of this is to enable us to check survey completion against our list of all institutions. Data provided will remain confidential to the researcher and it will be anonymised so that no individual person or institution can be identified from the public reporting of it.
2. Please enter the number of trainees who started the full time university based PGCE Secondary English course (including courses combined with Media or Drama) at your institution in 2008-9. If you have more then one course (e.g. English, plus English with Drama), please provide a combined total.

Page 2: Degree Subjects

3. Please identify the numbers of PGCE Secondary English trainees who started the course with any of these degree subject qualifications: English Literature; English Language & Literature (integrated); English Language; Linguistics; Creative Writing; Drama/Theatre Studies; Media Studies; Film/Cultural Studies; Any of the above combined together; Any of the above combined with any other subject; Any other subject. If zero please state the reason: Insufficiently relevant degree subject qualification; Relevant subject degree qualification but declined on other grounds; No applicants with this degree subject qualification; Other (please comment below).
4. Please list any other subjects referred to in the 'Any other subject' item of question 3.

Page 3: Degree Class

5. How many of the 2008-9 trainees held degrees with each of these classes? 1 First Class; 2i Upper Second Class; 2ii Lower Second Class; 3 Third Class.
6. How many of the 2008-9 trainees held Higher degrees? Masters degree; Doctorate; Other.

Page 4: Preparedness

7. From your general experience (not limited to 2008-9 trainees), please tick to show the areas in which trainees with different degree qualifications are usually ADEQUATELY prepared for the different components of a career as an English teacher at the START of their PGCE course. By adequate we mean they have a set of subject knowledge and practices that immediately equip them to tackle classroom content demands. Tick as many boxes as you find appropriate.
8. Open box: Please list any extra resources/provision you offer to help trainees develop adequate subject knowledge

	KS3/4 English Language	KS5 English Language	KS3/4 English Literature	KS5 English Literature	KS3/4 Media	KS5 Media	KS3/4 Drama/TS	KS5 Drama/TS
English Literature								
English Lang/Lit								
English Language								
Linguistics								
Creative Writing								
Drama or Theatre								
Media Studies								
Film or Cultural								
2+ these combined								
1+ any other								
Any other subject								

Page 5: Comments

9. Comments

Appendix II: PGCE Secondary English Tutors

#	University	Course	Tutor	Telephone	Email (@ symbol replaced by the word 'at' to avoid spam problems, private email addresses omitted)
1	Anglia Ruskin	English	Alison Feist	0845 196 3589	Alison.feist at anglia.ac.uk
2	Bath	English	Jan Monks	01225 385043	j.monks at bath.ac.uk
3	Bath Spa	English	Lorna Smith	01225 876347	L.Smith2 at bathspa.ac.uk
4	Bedfordshire	English	James Shea	Use email	James.shea at beds.ac.uk
5	Birmingham	English	Kay Fuller	0121 414 4860	k.e.fuller at bham.ac.uk
6	Bishop Grosseteste	English with Drama	Ruth Hewitt	01522 583729	Ruth.hewitt at bishopg.ac.uk
7	Brighton	English	Steve Roberts	01273 643382	rsr at brighton.ac.uk
8	Bristol	English	Sasha Matthewman/ Jean Dourneen	0117 331 4492	Sasha.matthewman at bristol.ac.uk Jean.dourneen at bristol.ac.uk
9	Bristol UWE	English	Bernie Fitzgerald	0117 328 4240	Bernadette.fitzgerald at uwe.ac.uk
10	Brunel	English	Andrew Green	01895 26715	Andrew.green at brunel.ac.uk
11	Cambridge	English/ English with Drama	Gabrielle Cliff-Hodges	01223 767638	gc234 at cam.ac.uk
12	Canterbury Christ Church	English with Drama and Media Educ	Paul Skinner	01227 782130	Paul.skinner at canterbury.ac.uk
13	Chichester	English	Annie Clarke	01243 812049	a.clarke at chi.ac.uk
14	Cumbria	English with Drama/Media	Christine Shannon	01524 384256	Christine.shannon at cumbria.ac.uk
15	Durham	English	David Stevens	0191 334 0188	david.stevens at durham.ac.uk
16	East Anglia	English	John Gordon	01603 593921	john.gordon at uea.ac.uk
17	East London	English	Richard Quarshie	020 8223 2955	r.quarshie at uel.ac.uk
18	Edgehill	English	Paul Windham	01695 657181	paul.windham at edgehill.ac.uk
19	Exeter	English with Drama/Media	Debra Myhill	01392 264767	D.A.Myhill at exeter.ac.uk
20	Gloucestershire	English with Drama	Peter Wride		
21	Goldsmiths	English	Vicky Obied	020 7919 7351	v.obied at gold.ac.uk
22	Hertfordshire	English		01707 284000	
23	Hull	English	Amanda Naylor	01482 465129	

24	Institute of Education	English/ Eng with Drama	John Yandell	020 7612 6992	J.Yandell at ioe.ac.uk
25	Keele	English	Rob Stannard	01782 733130	Eda09 at keele.ac.uk
26	Kings	English	Simon Gibbons	020 7848 3184	simon.gibbons at kcl.ac.uk
27	Leeds	English	Mark Pike	0113 343 4524	M.Pike at education.leeds.ac.uk
28	Leeds Trinity and All Saints	English	Tom Wharton	0113 283 7149	t.wharton at leedstrinity.ac.uk
29	Leicester	English/Eng with Media	Sue Dymoke	0116 252 3683	sd100 at le.ac.uk
30	Liverpool Hope	English	Steve Padget	0151 291 3861	padgets at hope.ac.uk
31	London Metropolitan	English with Media/Drama	Andrew McCallum	020 7133 2640	andrewfrancis.mccallum at londonmet.ac.uk
32	Manchester	English	John Keen	0161 275 3528	john.keen at manchester.ac.uk
33	Manchester Met	English/ Eng with SEN	Avril Haworth	0161 247 5086	a.haworth at mmu.ac.uk
34	Middlesex	English	Ross Cotter	020 8411 4489	r.cotter at mdx.ac.uk
35	Newcastle	English (inc Drama)	Karen Lowing	0191 222 5854	k.a.lowing at ncl.ac.uk
36	Newman Univ College, B'ham	English	Judith Kneen	0121 476 1181	j.kneen at newman.ac.uk
37	Nottingham	English	Val Fraser	0115 951 4453	val.fraser at nottingham.ac.uk
38	Nottingham Trent	English	Kate Buttler		
39	Oxford	English	Viv Ellis	01865 274009	viv.ellis at education.ox.ac.uk
40	Oxford Brookes	English	Michael Matejtschuk		
41	Plymouth	English	Phil Norman	01752 585426	P.R.Norman at plymouth.ac.uk
42	UCP Marjon	English	Elspeth Currey	01752 636700 Ext: 5232	ecurrey at marjon.ac.uk
43	Portsmouth	English	Jane Wood	023 9284 5204	jane.wood at port.ac.uk
44	Reading	English	Sophie Williams	0118 378 8856	sophie.williams at reading.ac.uk
45	Roehampton	English	Philippa Hunt	0208 392 3281	p.hunt at roehampton.ac.uk
46	Sheffield	English	Andrey Rosowsky	0114 222 8136	a.rosowsky at Sheffield.ac.uk
47	Sheffield Hallam	English	Sarah Butler	0114 225 2842	s.m.butler at shu.ac.uk
48	Southampton	English	Kate Domaille	023 8059 3518	kad at soton.ac.uk
49	Sunderland	English	Kath McColl	0191 515 3376	Kath.mccoll at sunderland.ac.uk
50	Sussex	English	Julia Sutherland	01273 877957	J.C.Sutherland at sussex.ac.uk

51	Warwick	English with Drama	Kate Shilvock	024 7652 2297	k.shilvock at warwick.ac.uk
52	Wolverhampton	English	Mary Dunne	01902 322876	M.Dunne at wlv.ac.uk
53	Worcester	English	Trevor Wright		
54	York	English	Nicholas McGuinn	01904 433473	nm13 at york.ac.uk

APPENDIX III: PGCE Tutor Interview Schedule

The interview will seek to develop fuller qualitative answers to the questions asked in the online survey, as follows.

One

In Q2 we asked for the number of trainees who started the full time university based PGCE Secondary English course.

(a) How did this compare with the number that applied? And what were the key factors determining selection for a place on the course?

(b) How did this compare with the number that completed the course? And what were the key factors in non-completion of the course?

Two

In Qs 3 and 4 we asked you to identify the numbers of PGCE Secondary English trainees who started the course with particular degree subject qualifications.

(a) Ignoring subject knowledge for a moment, what attributes would you say trainees with different degree subject qualifications bring to the PGCE programme? For example, I've heard it said that Law graduates have a capacity for very rapid learning of anything...

(b) What level of detail about an applicant's degree content do you take into consideration? Does it matter WHAT they have studied?

Three

In Qs 5 and 6 we asked about degree class and higher degrees.

(a) How much emphasis do you place on these matters in the admissions process?

(b) How much difference does it make to a trainee's capacity or competence on the PGCE programme?

Four

In Q7 we asked you to consider how adequately prepared trainees were by their degree qualification for different components of a career as an English teacher, e.g. for Key Stage 3 Drama or Key Stage 5 English Language.

(a) How much difference do you think the subject studied at degree level makes at the start of a Secondary English PGCE course? At the start of an English teaching career? Over a varied 11-18 English teaching career?

(b) Your response suggests this top 3 for trainee preparednesss... (e.g. 1- English Literature, 2 – English Literature and Drama joint, 3 – English Language and Literature integrated). How closely does that match your selection practice?

(c) We also asked what extra resources/provision you offer for subject knowledge shortfalls. How well does that work? What would help?

Five

Is there anything else you would like to add about admissions to PGCE Secondary English programmes that we haven't covered here?

APPENDIX IV: Detailed data on zero trainees

English Literature

1 of the 35 institutions (3%) had zero English Literature trainees; English Literature was regarded as a relevant subject but the applicants were declined on other grounds. This is a very unusual situation and further investigation is warranted. It is possibly the product of a 3+1 Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) replacement Education Studies programme.

English Language & Literature

None of the 35 institutions had zero English Language & Literature trainees. The frequency in the data of graduates with this degree, and this zero return, might suggest that this is both a widely available degree and a widely acceptable option amongst PGCE tutors. However, it is a degree title with some slipperiness. Both of the researchers have degrees with this title, mostly indicative of having studied Old English rather than more contemporary linguistic concerns likely to be of value in School English. Some tutors commented that students with English Language degrees did not necessarily have a secure grasp of grammar. This might be a related issue, or false expectations of an English Language degree, or a tacit recognition that what commonly counts as "grammar" in the School English does not necessarily equate to what academic linguists study.

English Language

11 of the 35 institutions (31%) had zero English Language trainees. The reasons given in the survey are shown in Figure 9 below. 9% of respondents accounted for this absence in relation to their view that English Language is an insufficiently relevant degree for admission to the programme. 18% of respondents had no applications from graduates in this subject. 55% regarded this degree as relevant but had other reasons for declining the applicants. 18% of respondents had other reasons.

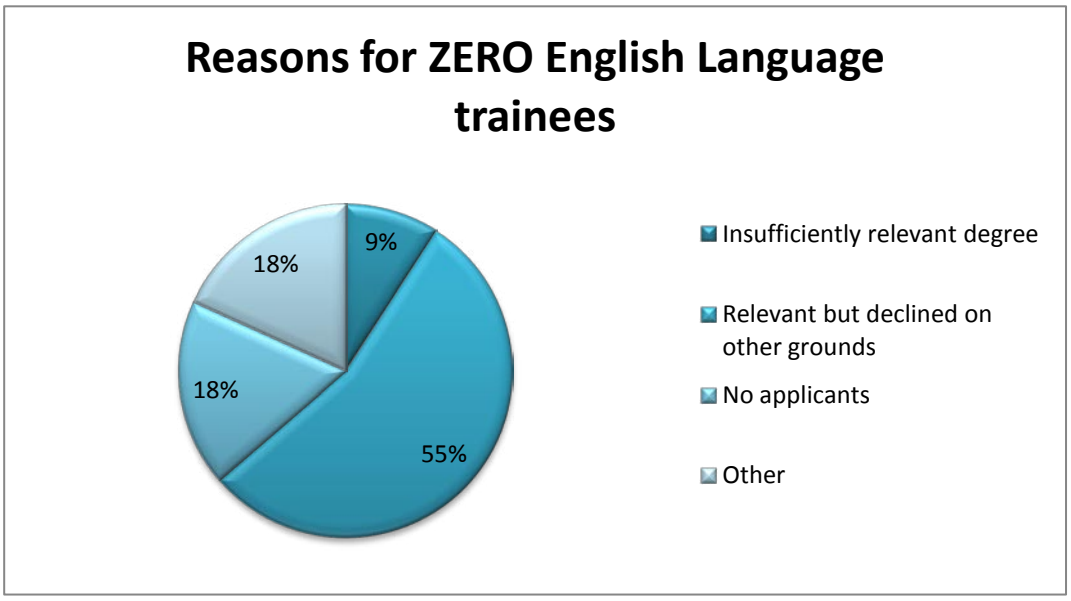

Figure 9: Reasons for zero English Language trainees

Linguistics

15 of the 35 institutions (43%) had zero Linguistics trainees. The reasons are shown in Figure 10 below.

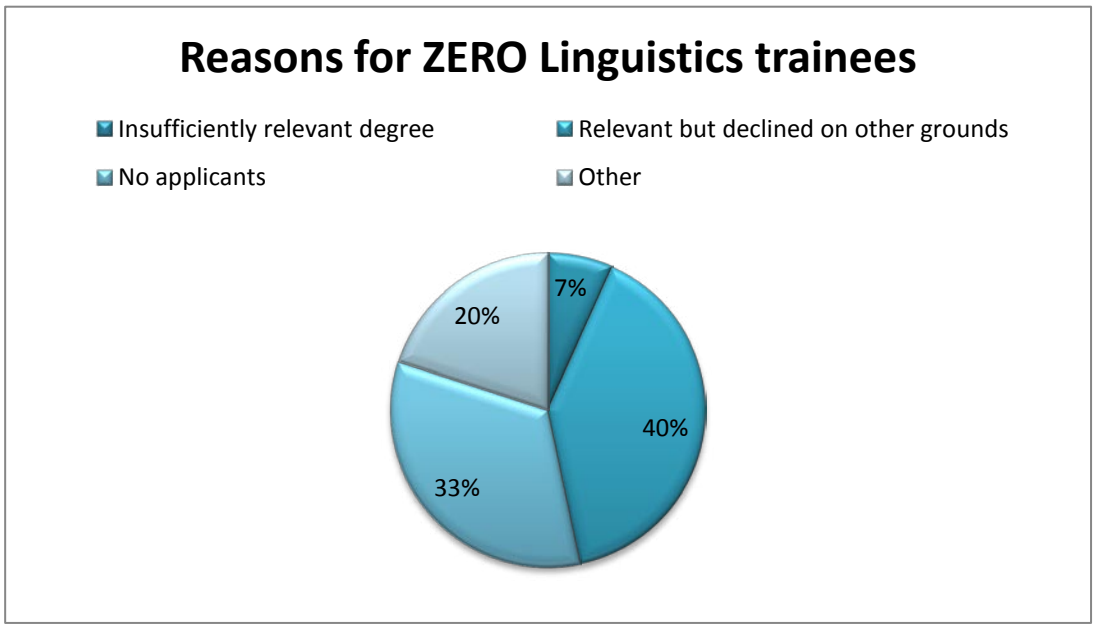

Figure 10: Reasons for zero Linguistics trainees

Creative Writing

17 of the 35 institutions (49%) had zero Creative Writing trainees as shown in Figure 11 below.

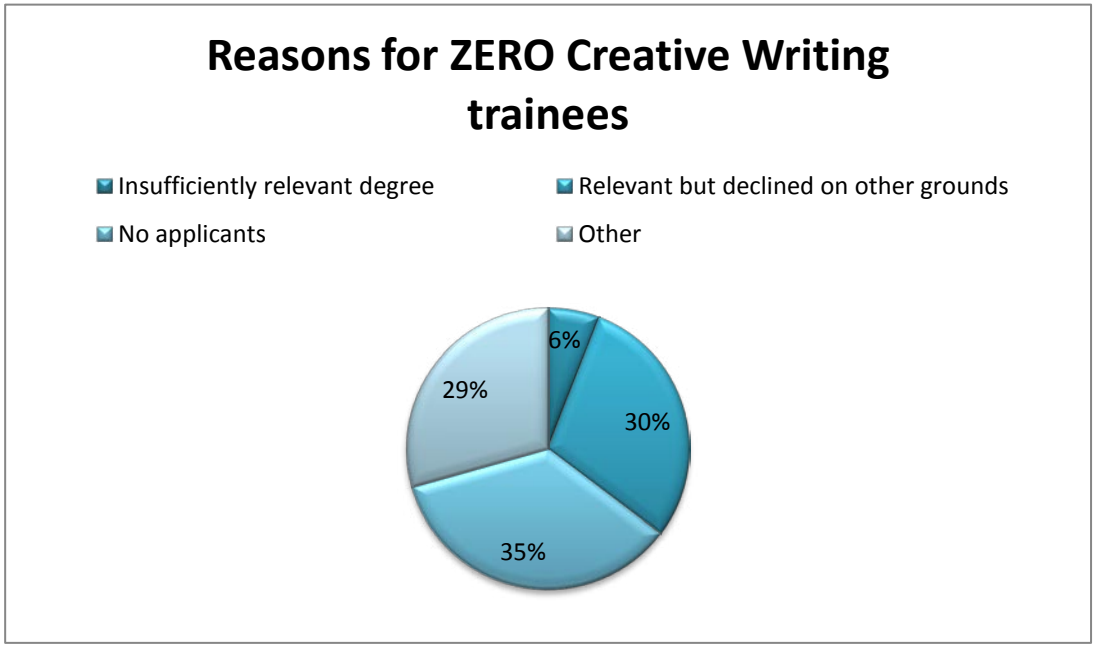

Figure 11: Reasons for zero Creative Writing trainees

Drama/Theatre Studies

16 of the 35 institutions (46%) had zero Drama/Theatre Studies trainees as shown in Figure 12.

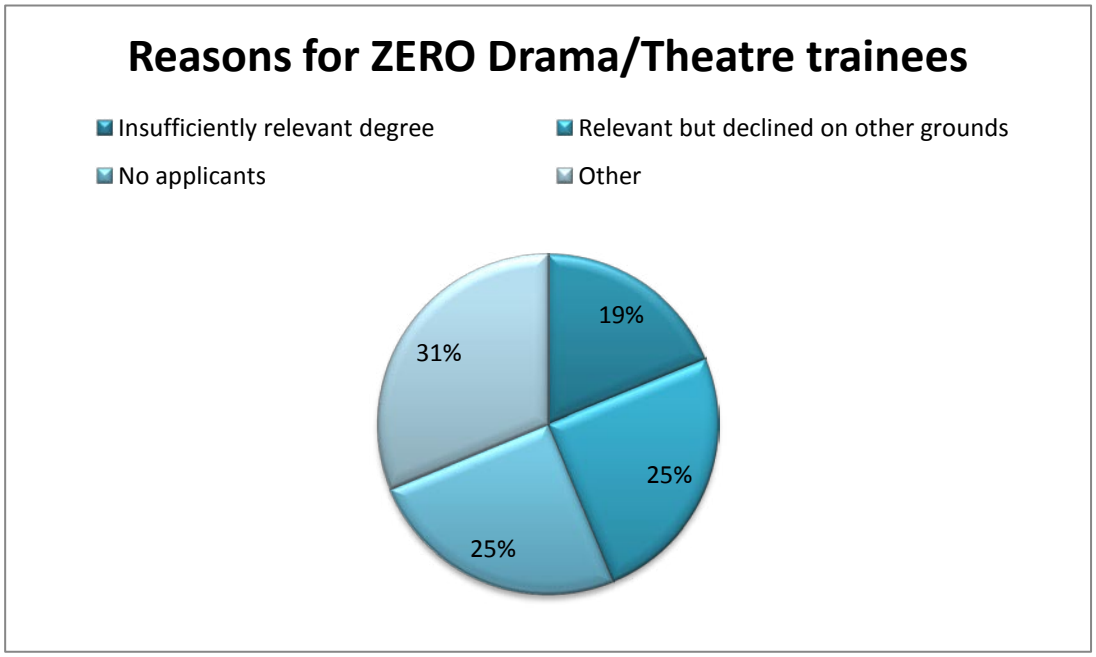

Figure 12: Reasons for zero Drama/Theatre trainees

Media Studies

15 of the 35 institutions (43%) had zero Media Studies trainees as shown in Figure 13 below.

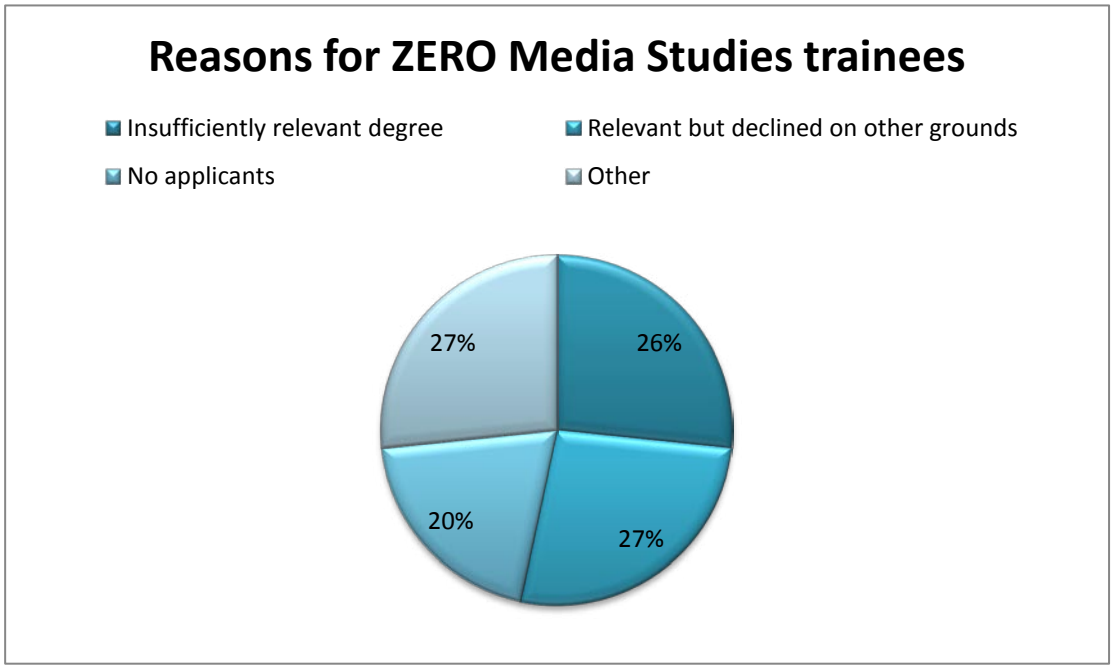

Figure 13: Reasons for zero Media Studies trainees

Film/Cultural Studies

16 of the 35 institutions (46%) had zero Film/Cultural Studies trainees as shown in Figure 14 below.

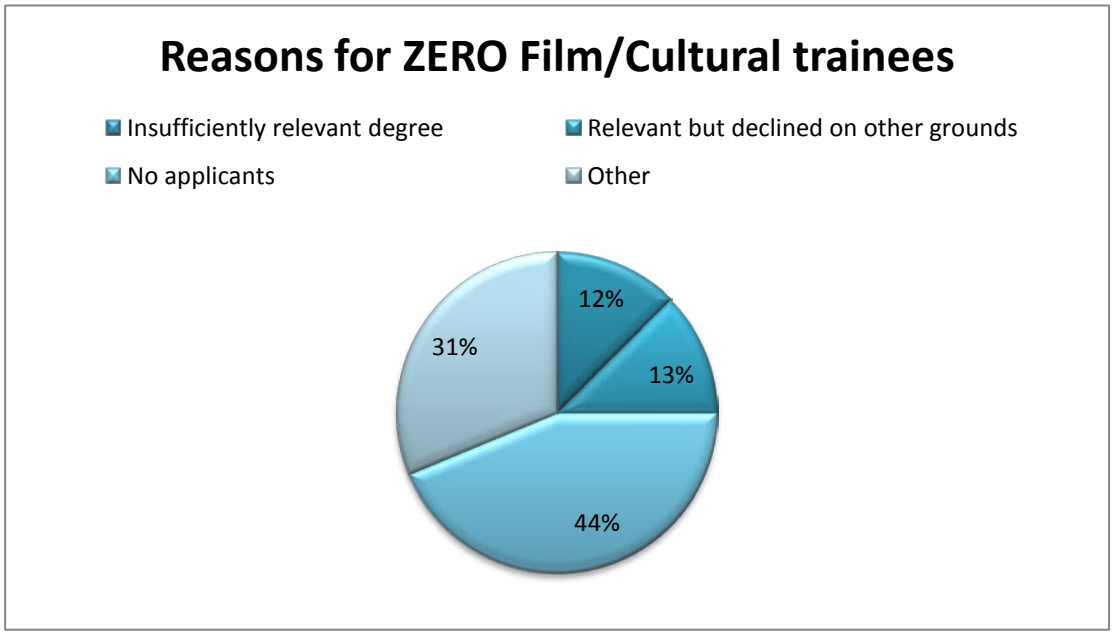

Figure 14: Reasons for zero Film/Cultural trainees

Any Other Subject

8 of the 35 institutions (23%) had zero any other subject trainees as shown in Figure 15 below.

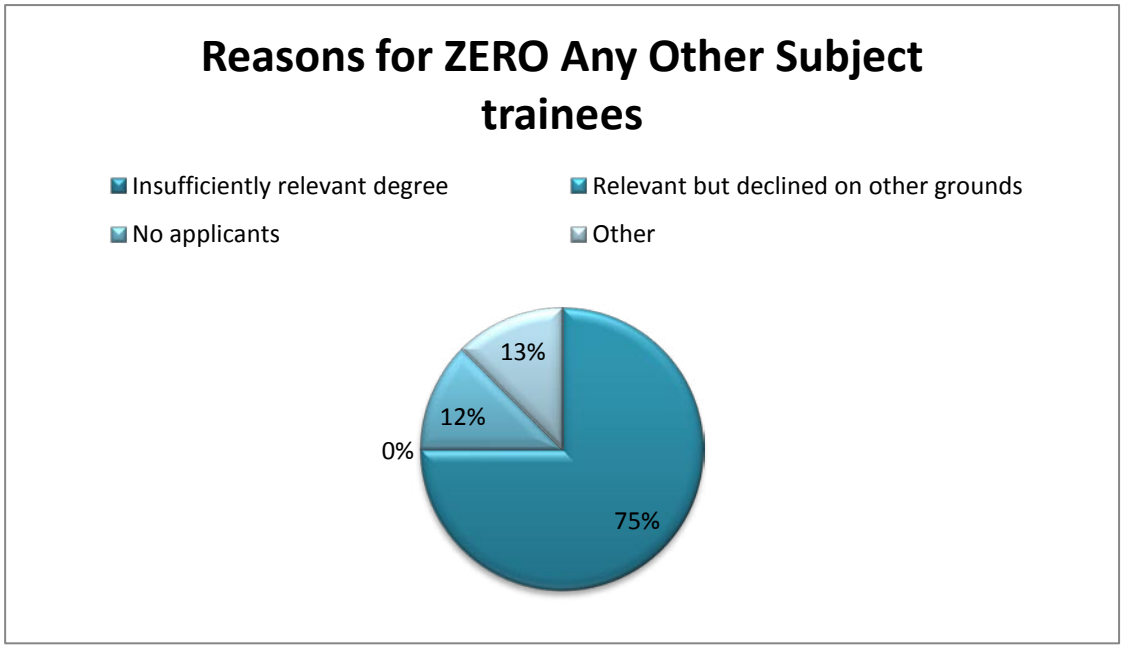

Figure 15: Reasons for zero Any Other Subject trainees

1 of the 35 institutions (3%) had zero trainees with two or more of these degree subjects combined; these combinations were regarded as a relevant subject but the applicants were declined on other grounds. 2 of the 35 institutions had zero trainees with one or more of these degree subjects combined with any other subject; there were no applicants with these combinations.

APPENDIX V: Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum

This excerpt from the Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum, the section *Trainees' Knowledge and Understanding of English,* is included as an example of the kinds of regulatory framework about subject knowledge within which teacher educators are expected to operate. We understand this particular guidance is now out of date, though it was cited by some tutors in the survey and interviews.

25. All trainees enter a course of initial teacher training for secondary English with:

- **(for undergraduate courses)** the academic requirements for admission to first degree studies;
- **(for postgraduate courses)** a UK degree or equivalent and an educational background which provide the necessary foundation for work as a teacher of English in the secondary phase.

Although all trainees will have a substantial amount of English in their previous education, and those on postgraduate routes as part of their degree, different trainees will have covered different areas to different extents. For example, some trainees may have pursued studies which emphasised English literature, while others may have followed courses with an emphasis on linguistics. For some, the narrowness of their background subject knowledge may mean that they do not feel confident about, or competent in, all the English which they are required to teach. All trainees need to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their own subject knowledge, to analyse it against the pupils' National Curriculum and examination syllabuses, and to be aware of the gaps they will need to fill during their training. Trainees need to be alert to the differences between having a secure knowledge of the subject and knowing how to teach it effectively.

26. Audit

a. **For trainees on KS2/3 courses**, ITT providers should audit trainees' knowledge, and understanding of English against the English content specified in the KS2, KS3 and KS4 Programmes of Study.

b. **For trainees on 11-16 courses, 11-18 courses and 14-19 courses**, ITT providers should audit trainees' knowledge and understanding of English against the English content specified in the KS3 and KS4 Programmes of Study, and the content required to teach English at GCSE specified in paragraph 28 below.

c. **In addition, for trainees on 14-19 courses**, providers should audit trainees knowledge and understanding of the English against that required to teach English post-16, specified in paragraph 29 below.

In each case, where gaps in trainees' subject knowledge are identified, providers of ITT must make arrangements to ensure that trainees gain that knowledge during the course and that, **by the end of the course,** they are competent in using their knowledge of English in their teaching.

In addition, for 11-18 courses, the subject knowledge set out in paragraph 29 is advisory only. Providers should have regard to it, have provision available in relation to it, and audit trainees' knowledge, understanding and skills in English against it. By the end of the course, ITT providers should assess how far each trainee's subject knowledge matches the post-16 content, taking

account of the opportunities the trainee has had to practise teaching English post-16. **Capability in relation to the post-16 content should be recorded clearly on each NQT's Career Entry Profile.**

27. In order to teach English effectively all trainees must know and understand:

a. and use correctly, **technical terms** which, in addition to those in the National Curriculum English Order, are necessary to enable trainees to be precise in their explanations to pupils, to discuss secondary English at a professional level, and to read inspection and classroom-focused research evidence with understanding;

b. the nature and role of standard English as the medium through which all subjects are taught, as well as the general, public English used to communicate within the United Kingdom and throughout the English-speaking world.

28. In order to give trainees a more explicit, critical insight into their own writing; to equip them with tools to help them analyse and evaluate others' writing, including pupils' writing; to give trainees the terminology and concepts to understand processes such as language acquisition and development, and to study research evidence on language; and to **teach English effectively to GCSE, trainees on 11-16, 11-18 and 14-19 courses must:**

a. know and understand the principles of spoken and written language as a system, including**:**

i. **Lexis**

- **morphology and semantics** - word structure, meanings, and derivations;
- **phonology** - the sound system of spoken words;
- **graphology -** the alphabetic spelling system;

ii. **Grammatical**

- the **grammar** of spoken and written English, including:
  - word classes and their functions in sentences;
  - word order and cohesion within sentences;
  - construction of complex sentences to include a variety of clauses and phrases;
  - co-ordination and subordination in sentences;

- **punctuation**
  - its relationship to the phrase and clause structure of sentences;
  - its use to denote emphasis;
  - conventions in writing;

iii. **Textual**

- **cohesion** - the way that individual words, sentences and paragraphs work together to convey meaning, including the logic and sequence of ideas;
- **organisation, structure and presentation** including the structure of written text;

b. a broad understanding of language as a social, cultural and historical phenomenon, including:

i. historical changes in English, and its significance as a world language;
ii. standard English and other dialects;
iii. multilingualism and the learning of English as an additional language;
iv. differences between spoken and written English;

c. knowledge about texts and critical approaches to them, including:

i. analysis of different types of literary and non-literary texts, evaluating their quality and making judgements about them;
ii. identification of the conventions associated with different types of text including non-fiction and media, and how they are used and changed for effect;
iii. how information and ideas are presented, depending on point of view, context, purpose and audience;
iv. how to analyse texts for implication, undertone, bias, assertion and ambiguity;
v. familiarity with:
   - the historical spread of prose, fiction, poetry and plays, including key authors from the English literary heritage;
   - a range of texts written specifically for pupils of secondary school age;
   - a range of texts from different cultures;
   - a range of non-fiction and media texts intended to inform, explain, argue, persuade and entertain;
vi. **different critical approaches** which emphasise different ways of reading texts depending on whether the focus is on the reader, the writer, the context or the text alone.

29. In addition, in order to teach:

a. A-level English literature effectively trainees must demonstrate that they:

i. have the breadth and depth of knowledge, understanding and skills required for a post-16 course in literary study;
ii. can reflect on their own response to texts and consider other readers' interpretations;
iii. can use their detailed knowledge and understanding of individual texts to explore comparisons and connections between them, and to appreciate the

significance of cultural and historical influences on readers and writers;

b. **A-level English language effectively** trainees must demonstrate that that they:

i. have the breadth and depth of knowledge, understanding and skills needed to apply a range of linguistic frameworks to a wide variety of texts from both the past and present;

ii. are able to investigate their own and others' speech and writing and respond critically and perceptively to the different varieties of English they hear and read;

iii. are able to select and use the linguistic framework most appropriate for investigation and research into language uses and issues.

APPENDIX VI LETTS *English for Secondary Teachers: An Audit and Self-Study Guide* (Johnson 1998)

These authors are itemised in the Letts Self-Audit guide referred to in the report. Trainees are advised that they should be able to name one work by each of the authors listed, and to devise a programme of 'catch-up' reading based on analysis of this exercise.

Drama

Ayckbourn, Alan
Behn, Aphra
Bond, Edward
Brecht, Bertolt
Chekhov, Anton
Ibsen, Henrik
Ionesco, Eugène
Marlowe, Christopher
Osborne, John
Priestley, J.B.
Shakespeare (3 comedies, 3 tragedies, 3 history plays)
Shaw, George Bernard
Sheridan, R.B.
Tourneur, Cyril

Fiction

Angelou, Maya
Atwood. Margaret
Austen, Jane
Brontë, Charlotte
Brontë, Emily
Brookner, Anita
Bunyan, John
Collins, Wilkie
Defoe, Daniel
Dickens, Charles
Doyle, Arthur Conan
Eliot, George
Fielding, Henry
Forster, E.M.
Gaskell, Elizabeth
Golding, Greene
Hardy, Thomas
Hemingway, Ernest
Ishiguro, Kazuo
James, Henry
James, P.D.
Joyce, James
Kerouac, Jack
Lawrence, D.H.
Lively, Penelope
Okri, Ben
Orwell, George
Rushdie, Salman
Scott, Paul
Shelley, Mary
Spark, Muriel
Stevenson, Robert Louis
Swift, Jonathan
Tan, Amy
Trollope, Anthony
Weldon, Fay
Wells, H.G.

Poetry

Auden, W.H.
Blake, William
Byron, (George Gordon) Lord
Chaucer, Geoffrey
Clare, John
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor
Donne, John
Eliot, T.S.
Gunn, Thom
Hardy, Thomas
Heaney, Seamus
Herbert, George
Hughes, Ted
Larkin, Philip
Marvell, Andrew
Milton, John
Thomas, R.S.
Yeats, W.B.

Texts by writers from other cultures and multicultural Britain

Achebe, Chinua
Agard, John
Brathwaite, Edward Kamau
Desai, Anita
Fugard, Athol
Gordimer, Nadine
Johnson, Linton Kwesi
Kureishi, Hanif
Naipaul, V.S.
Okri, Ben
Ondaatje, Michael
Ramanujan, A.K.
Rhys, Jean
Rushdie, Salman
Seth, Vikram
Soyinka, Wole
Syal, Meera
wa Thiong'o, Ngugi
Walcott, Derek

There are also other sections covering:

- European Literature - ten writers from Camus to Zola
- A list of non-fiction genres e.g. autobiography, journal, and collections of letters
- Fiction and collections specifically for pupils in secondary school
- CD-ROMS and websites
- Book awards
- A quiz inviting trainees to spot 'real' children's specialists amongst other writers

ENDNOTES

[i] It was not possible to establish the figures for teachers of English leaving the profession soon after qualification. This information is now being collected as part of a more systematic data collection process by the TDA with data sets going back to 2004/2005 including gender, ethnicity, degree class and subject. We would like to thank Martin Furner, Head of ITT data collection and analysis at the TDA, for the help he provided us at short notice and we recommend those readers interested to contact him at TDA.

Some interviewees commented on the histories and professional trajectories of their own student trainees after qualification, although we saw no evidence these data were tracked and reported over time at the level of their institution. Professor Jonathan Neeland's keynote address at the 2008 NATE conference at the University of Warwick included reference to the issue of qualified teachers of English and Drama not currently teaching. The TDA have also commissioned reports on the general profile of exit from the NFER, including early exit from PGCE courses.

There is further work to be done with the TDA data set in conjunction with the data sets on English studies in Higher Education which have been collected by the English Subject Centre and are available in their recent reports. We would like to acknowledge help from Jane Gawthrope of the ESC in giving us sight of these data. Equivalent data sets for profiles of undergraduate students of Media, Film and Cultural studies were not found.

One of those involved in the collection of data commented on the general fact of teaching having become a mainly female profession, evident in the 4:1 ratio of newly qualified female teachers of English. There was speculation that it might be difficult to disambiguate early exit from career breaks taken to look after young children. This gender profile of secondary English teachers was compared to the similar, longer established gender profile for primary teachers.

[ii] The enquiry was scoped to focus on full-time courses based at university education departments in England as distinct from school-centred initial teacher training courses (SCITT).

[iii] The ESC recently commissioned a data-base of statistics for those studying different types of English-titled degrees but not including Media, Film, Linguistics or specialised theatre studies. In approximate terms this shows that out of the 66,000 students studying forms of English study at Higher English, 42,000 studied some form of combined English Studies, 12,000 studied English Literature, 3,700 English Language, and 4,000 imaginative writing. See Cronberg, A.and Gawthrope, J.,(2010), Survey of the English Curriculum and Teaching in UK Higher Education Egham: English Subject Centre (see accompanying data workbook)

[iv] Compare this with figures cited in a 2010 parliamentary report on teacher recruitment (House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee Training of Teachers Fourth Report of Session 2009–10 Volume I Report, together with formal minutes Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 18 January 2010): "In many subjects there continues to be a high ratio of acceptances to applications for PgCE/PGCE courses. This indicates the limited scope that initial teacher training providers have to reject applications, even at a time when applications to teaching are booming. In 2007–08, for secondary PgCE/PGCE programmes the acceptance rate for mathematics was 65%, for chemistry and ICT 68%, for physics 69% and for modern foreign languages 70%. This compares to acceptance rates for history of 41%, for English of 45%, and for primary programmes of 44%. It follows that these latter trainees will be better qualified and have qualifications that are more relevant to the subject that they wish to train to teach. In 2007– 08, just 43.5% of modern languages trainees, 42.6% of mathematics trainees and 38.9% of ICT trainees held a first or upper-second class degree. By contrast,77.8% of history trainees and 73.1% of English trainees held a first or upper-second class degree."

[v] However, it is a degree title with some slipperiness. Both of the researchers have degrees with this title, mostly indicative of having studied Old English rather than more contemporary linguistic concerns likely to be of value in school English.

[vi] There were rumours of students being told there was no point in applying for PGCE courses in the same Higher Education institutions and departments where they had studied for their undergraduate degrees. There were rumours of PGCE courses identifying perceived weaknesses in graduate students' expertise in English literature .

[vii] For example we were told one large provider of initial teacher education filtered students by previous qualifications in English Literature degree and it has turned out this is not true at all in this case, nor could it be given that particular institutions' recruitment and selection policy and practice.

[viii] CLIE 2004 Questionnaire survey designed and administered by a CLIE working party under the supervision of Professor Brian Street.