

Information and Communications Technology for Serving Teachers

RM plc's Response to the Teacher Training Agency's Call for Comments

April 1998



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Introduction

1. This document has been prepared by RM plc in response to the Teacher Training Agency's (TTA) request for comments about the suitability of the **ITT National Curriculum for the use of ICT** in relation to serving teachers. It should be read in conjunction with RM's full response to the consultation draft of the Curriculum.
2. RM plc is the leading supplier of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) products and services to UK schools. More UK schools choose RM's ICT products and services than those of any other supplier. This puts RM in a good position to comment on the use of ICT in UK schools.
3. RM has a potential business interest in providing ICT training for serving teachers and any comments made in this document should be considered in this light. In partnership with the Open University, RM has recently announced that it intends to bid to provide ICT training for serving teachers. RM has also responded to the TTA's tender to provide ICT skills assessment software for serving teachers.

ICT Training for Serving Teachers

4. RM welcomes the Government's initiative to provide ICT training for all serving teachers. This initiative will provide a substantial improvement in the ICT confidence and competence of the UK's teaching population.
5. ICT training for serving teachers should focus on the effectiveness of ICT in teaching and learning, rather than computer skills training. Training programmes should concentrate on the pedagogy of ICT and not the basic skills of computer use.
6. The Curriculum rightly defines ICT as including technologies such as TV, radio and video. The great majority of serving teachers will be familiar with these technologies and there is no need for training programmes to address these areas.
7. Every serving teacher should, ideally, be able to demonstrate the skills and competences set out in the Curriculum. In this sense achieving the Curriculum should be the goal of training programmes provided for serving teachers. However, training programmes will need to take into account the wide range of experience, competence and confidence with ICT that serving teachers will have.
8. In practice, the Curriculum is probably too broad to be accomplished for all serving teachers – especially given the relatively limited amount of training the proposed funding will allow. Extra guidance is required which sets out, by subject and phase, the outcomes expected for serving teachers.

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9. In preparing this guidance the TTA should consider which competences are essential and realistically deliverable for serving teachers in each subject and phase. Training providers should be encouraged to concentrate on these essential competences. Training providers should also be encouraged to differentiate their training programmes for different groups of teachers.
 10. Training programmes must recognise the real-world context within which individual teachers are working. Training programmes need to be geared towards the hardware and software provision teachers will have access to in their own schools. They should also take into account that serving teachers already have preferred teaching styles and their use of ICT needs to fit with these.
 11. The successful use of ICT needs to be driven by a school's senior management team. The proposed training initiative for serving teachers should apply to senior managers as well as classroom teachers. ICT appreciation training or guidance for Governors should also be considered.
 12. In itself, training will not equip serving teachers with the skills, confidence and competence they require. Serving teachers will need access to ICT equipment to practise and reinforce their new skills and senior managers within schools will need to encourage serving teachers to develop these skills. Senior managers will also need to encourage a positive ICT climate within their schools.
 13. The recommendations for additions to the Curriculum set out in RM's full response to the call for consultation on the Curriculum should also apply to serving teachers. In particular the use of ICT for personal productivity, assessment, record keeping and administrative purposes is of real benefit to the whole of the teaching population.
 14. The ICT training initiative for serving teachers is closely linked to a similar initiative for librarians. These two initiatives should, wherever appropriate, be consistent and use common materials.
- ### Summary of RM's full consultation response to the Curriculum
15. The Curriculum should take into account the emerging technologies of Integrated Learning Systems (ILS) and computer-aided assessment.
 16. The Curriculum should include a requirement for subject teachers to understand the professional and academic uses of ICT in their specialist subject areas.
 17. The Curriculum should place more stress on preparing teachers to use ICT for their own personal productivity and professional development.
 18. There should be a clearer distinction between the pedagogical skills expected of teachers and technical skills that should be in the domain of technicians and/or suppliers.