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Assessment, knowledge and the curriculum: the effects of a competence-based approach to the training of teachers in further and adult education

Thesis

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Curran A. de Bruler

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ASSESSMENT, KNOWLEDGE AND
THE CURRICULUM:

THE EFFECTS OF A COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH
TO THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS
IN FURTHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates into the effects of a competence-based approach to the training of teachers in further and adult education. The study focuses on the 'traditional' City and Guilds 7307 Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate and the competence-based City and Guilds 7306 Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate which follows the NVQ model.

The study seeks to investigate the perceptions of practitioners in the further education sector who have delivered both courses in terms of the differences between the two programmes, and how those differences affect their professional practice, the students' learning experiences and the students' professional knowledge.

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection, and the participants consisted of 14 practitioners in the South West of England, and a further eight practitioners from around the UK. The first group were interviewed face-to-face. Interviews were audio-recorded, and full transcripts were made. The second group were interviewed via e-mail. Supplementary interviews were also conducted with three City & Guilds officials, and a representative from FENTO and from an NTO. These were conducted by e-mail or by telephone.

The data were analysed using theme analysis, where categories are allowed to emerge from the data, rather than being imposed upon them. Emergent themes are then analysed and categorised to shed light on the research questions.

The results of the study indicated that practitioners saw the key difference between the two programmes to be that of assessment, that assessment on the NVQ model tended to dominate their practice, that students found the NVQ programme to be less enjoyable than the traditional one, and that

students' professional knowledge was less profound on the NVQ model than on the traditional one.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 1987, the further education sector has seen a significant growth in the provision of competence-based education and training (CBET). This development can be seen in the context of the influence of CBET throughout all levels of the education system, from schools to universities (Hyland, 1994). The present study is concerned with the effects of CBET strategies recently introduced for the training of teachers in further and adult education.

The City and Guilds of London Institute 730 Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate (C&G 730) course is the nationally recognised route into teaching in further and adult education. In its traditional form, assessment of student learning is based on an 'aims and objectives' model, with a clear emphasis on the writing of essays, along with the observation of teaching practice. In the past few years, City and Guilds have been experimenting with a competence-based assessment model for this course. This resulted in the development in 1991 of the C&G 7305 which, though competence-based, was not compatible with the standards prescribed by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) (Chown and Last, 1993, p. 16). This led in 1993 to the development of the C&G 7306 which conformed to the standards developed by the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB), and which contained a range of competences to cover a variety of functions undertaken by staff in the further education sector accredited at levels 3 and 4 of the NCVQ

practitioner' (Chown and Last, 1993, p. 19). Hodkinson (1992) sees the competence-based approach as emphasising 'narrow and mechanistic tasks and skills' at the expense of 'schema...and complex intellectual processes' (p. 34).

In the light of these kinds of concerns about the relevance and appropriateness of competence-based courses for the training of teachers in further and adult education, it is the purpose of the present study to investigate the extent to which teaching may have been re-conceptualised by the C&G 7306 and the effects this may have on the nature of teachers' professional knowledge and on how teaching is constructed and enacted. These issues will be examined in terms of the perceptions of practitioners in colleges of further education who have been involved in the provision of both the traditional and the competence-based programmes.

The study will attempt to find answers to the following four research questions:

- What do practitioners perceive as the important differences between the 7306 and 7307 programmes?
- How have these differences affected the professional practice of teacher- trainers?
- How have these differences affected the experiences of students on the two programmes?
- How have these differences affected the professional knowledge of students on the two programmes?

Supplementary interviews were conducted towards the end of the research process, involving officials from City & Guilds and from a National Training Organization. The following questions were asked:

- Why did City & Guilds introduce the 7305/6?
- How did the existing FENTO standards for teaching and learning come into being?
- Why did City & Guilds withdraw the 7306?
- Was the withdrawal of the 7306 linked to the introduction of the FENTO standards?

The Researcher

I am based in a medium-sized college of further education in the South West, where I am Head of Teacher Education and also HE Quality Manager. I have responsibility for 7307, Cert Ed and PGDipEd/MA (Education) provision. I have been involved in 730 provision for some 10 years, but have not delivered the competence-based 7306. I have been a tutor on the Open University's MA in Education programme for the past 10 years.

I tend to espouse 'traditional' educational values and see as the most important purpose of education the encouragement of qualities such as critical awareness, reflection, honesty and responsibility in students. While acknowledging the importance of a range of skills and competencies which teachers must have, my primary concern in teacher education is to encourage professionalism underpinned by values and ethics. I view with some concern the government's increasing emphasis on vocationalism in further and adult education, and the effects this might have on professional autonomy and academic freedom within the post-16 sector.

As Wolf (1995) has noted, the competence-based system in the UK is one on which virtually everyone involved in secondary and post-16 education has strong views. 'It divides people into opposing camps: those who are not for you are against you' (p. 127).

At the same time, I am very aware of the problem of bias in research –
particularly where interviews are used – and the effect that this can have
on validity. The characteristics of the interviewer and the respondents,
and the substantive content of the questions, are all sources of bias
(Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 121). Care was thus taken to ensure that the
questions used in the interviews were as neutral as possible, while the
selection of participants for the research and the need to control for
researcher bias are addressed in the in the methodology section of the
thesis. Bell notes that bias is a constant issue when interviews are used:
'"It is difficult to see how this [i.e. bias] can be avoided completely, but
awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help" (Gavron
1966:159)'. (Cited in Bell, 1993, p.95).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gilbert Jessup (1991)

Gilbert Jessup's book, *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training,* published in 1991, is the seminal work on competence-based education and training in the UK. Jessup argues that the UK needs to move from a provider-led to a learner centred system of provision, and claims that the existing system is fragmented and fails to meet the needs of learners. For Britain to be economically competitive, she requires a 'workforce of more competent, responsible, flexible and autonomous workers' (p. 6). A framework of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) can help to supply such a workforce. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was established in 1986 and funded by the government to establish and market NVQs, and it relied on the government to use its influence to support the introduction of NVQs.

'The NVQ is a statement of competence of what an individual has achieved' (Jessup, 1991, p. 15), and involves 'performance'; 'skills, knowledge and understanding' underpin performance, but are not the same thing as competence. 'This has considerable implications for assessment' (p. 16). NVQ statements of competence are derived from the requirements of employers, rather than from the preconceptions of educators: they are thus 'employer-led'.

Assessment in NVQs looks at whether a statement of competence has been met. There is no particular learning programme which candidates have to undertake: 'the award of an NVQ is based solely on the outcome of assessment' (Jessup, 1991, p. 18). NVQs are independent of any form of learning provision, and this should facilitate open access for a wider group of candidates.

Jessup (1991) explains that statements of competence are based on an analysis of employment functions, and should be subject to continual evaluation and refinement. It is important to understand that the NVQ approach focuses on outcomes, 'without imposing an educational model on how people learn and behave' (p. 39).

Traditional forms of assessment (eg, essays and examinations) are 'demystified in the NVQ model....In addition, assessment is regarded as a natural process of gathering evidence, most often from everyday life and work' (Jessup, 1991, p. 59). Assessment criteria will be open and explicit, and the required standards of performance will be clear to both the candidate and the assessor.

Accreditation of prior learning (APL) will be facilitated as an important part of the NVQ model. NVQs are awarded purely on the basis of competence and not on how the competence was acquired. Evidence of competence can be collected from any relevant source, including evidence of past achievement. 'APL is particularly relevant to people returning to work or changing careers' (Jessup, 1991, p. 67), but it will only make sense within the NVQ model.

In the context of further education, the success of the NVQ model will require changes in attitude on the part of lecturers. 'Lecturers will need to be more than subject specialists and think more about the process of assessment' (Jessup, 1991, p. 106). Colleges will need to be more responsive to the needs of both learners and employers, and 'NVQs can be regarded as part of the solution rather than another problem' (p. 108).

NVQs will provide increased opportunities for learners. Companies, as well as colleges and training organizations, will become centres of learning, and learners will have a high degree of control over their own learning and be able to proceed at their own pace. These features, combined with the clarity of targets and assessment standards, should

lead to a significant increase in rates of participation in education and training.

The place of knowledge in the NVQ model is a major issue. Jessup states that 'The term "knowledge" is used in the broad sense to include the understanding of concepts, principles, theories and relationships…which underpin competent performance' (1991, p. 121). The NVQ does not envisage a body of knowledge being taught separately from practice. In general, such knowledge often does not relate very clearly to practice. 'The more relevant knowledge and theory which actually underpins professional performance is often acquired in a somewhat ad hoc manner, largely through experience, when the individuals encounter real problems in practising the profession or doing the job' (p. 126). NVQ qualifications would therefore assess knowledge directly in relation to competent performance, and not separately in the context of an academic discipline.

NVQs constitute the way forward in education and training, particularly in meeting the needs of employers.

The NVQ Framework

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was established by the Government following the White Paper 'Working Together – Education and Training' (Cmnd 9823, July 1986), and was set nine specific tasks. These were to:
- secure standards of occupational competence and to ensure that vocational qualifications are based on them;
- design and implement a new national framework for vocational qualifications;
- approve bodies making accredited awards;

- obtain comprehensive coverage of all occupational sectors;
- secure arrangements for quality assurance;
- set up effective liaison with bodies awarding vocational qualifications;
- establish a national database for vocational qualifications;
- undertake, or arrange to be undertaken, research and development to discharge these functions;
- promote vocational education, training and qualifications.

(NCVQ, 1990, p. 6).

In its publication 'Introducing National Vocational Qualifications – Implications for Education and Training' (NCVQ, 1990), the NCVQ notes that its primary task is to:

reform and rationalise the provision of vocational qualifications through the creation of the National Vocational Qualification Framework. The introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) will have considerable impact in the coming years on the provision of education and training. (p. 1).

The document then summarises the distinctive features of NVQs as follows:

- NVQs are competence-based. In particular qualifications should be based upon a 'statement of competence', incorporating the required standards, determined by those in employment responsible for maintaining such standards;
- NVQs must incorporate the assessment of 'performance' in addition to the assessment of knowledge and understanding, which may be required to underpin and extend such

performance; the award of NVQs should be independent of the mode of learning. That is to say that it should not specify a particular programme of learning or period of time as prerequisites to attainment. (p. 1).

Awarding bodies were to be encouraged to offer qualifications in the form of discrete 'units' for separate certification in order to 'open access to qualifications to a larger proportion of the population and to recognise different modes and contexts of learning' (p. 1).

Education and training in the context of competence-based qualifications would involve clearly defined 'outputs':

Programmes leading to NVQs will have specified learning objectives, derived directly from the statements of competence, determined by those in employment. The standards of performance required to be demonstrated by candidates will also be clearly stated. (p. 2).

Education and training would put much more emphasis on the 'performance' requirements of employment than did many existing qualifications, and opportunities for trainees to develop and practise these performance criteria would be a key feature of competence-based learning programmes. This would require educational institutions and employers to work together closely to provide learning opportunities within integrated programmes.

The assessment of performance would often take place in the workplace:

Trainers and supervisors in the workplace will frequently be the only people with the opportunity to observe demonstrations of performance required for assessment. It is therefore anticipated that employers will increasingly

become approved centres for assessment leading to the
award of qualifications. (p. 2).

The assessment of 'knowledge and understanding' is explained as
follows:

> The NVQ criteria assume that the knowledge and
> understanding which underpin competent performance and
> facilitate its transfer to new situations will be assessed more
> systematically and comprehensively than in the past. Unit-
> based qualifications and credit accumulation also assume
> continuous assessment related to programmes of delivery
> rather than terminal tests, which are still common in the
> assessment of knowledge and understanding.
> In both the assessment of performance and knowledge/
> understanding, NVQs will lead to a greater integration of the
> assessment process within programmes of learning both in
> terms of its timing and involvement of the education and
> training providers. (p. 2).

'Assessment on demand' for competences acquired outside of formal
learning programmes would also be a feature of competence-based
programmes. Full-time learning programmes could still provide a
coherent learning experience by combining units in various ways in order
to facilitate more effective learning. Assessment would focus on *product*
rather than *process*:

> It should be noted that unit credits are based upon
> assessments of 'outputs' and do not pre-determine the
> process by which competence is acquired, ie the 'inputs' of
> learning. The only proviso is that the qualification should
> allow the possibility of separate assessment of individual
> units and not prescribe specific combinations of units to be

assessed, as this would defeat the objectives of credit accumulation. (NCVQ, 1990, p. 3).

NCVQ took the view that the move towards CBET would necessitate substantial staff development in educational institutions, and saw this as being achieved through collaboration with the then Manpower Services Commission and Department of Education and Science, along with LEAs, employers, awarding bodies and institutions of vocational education and training. The paper concludes:

> The introduction of National Vocational Qualifications is intended to bring about a reform of vocational education and training. The providers of education and training have two clients. On the one hand they serve employers whose needs will be met by NVQs which specify the competence required in employment. On the other hand they serve individual learners whose needs will be met by flexible and cost-effective programmes, tailored to their requirements.

> To achieve these goals we shall need to adapt existing provision within education and training institutions and create a new infrastructure of training and assessment in, and for, industry and commerce. (p. 5).

Origins and Development of Competence-Based Education and Training

Peter Raggatt and Steve Williams have produced what they claim to be the first comprehensive account to document and explain the development of the UK's system of vocational education (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 2). Successive UK governments have, through the 1980s and 1990s, attempted to boost levels of skills in the workforce through a national system of vocational qualifications known as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).

(Where matters discussed refer to both NVQs and SVQs, the term
'N/SVQs' is used). The aim was to enable the nation to compete
successfully in the global market place by unlocking the potential of
individuals.

The system of vocational qualifications is characterized as follows:

> Perhaps the most striking aspect of the new system of
> vocational qualifications is the way in which their
> assessment has been founded upon, or related to, the concept
> of occupational competence, in contrast to traditional
> approaches in which an examination of knowledge or time
> served was the main basis of certification. The competence-
> based approach, which appears to have originated in the
> United States (Tuxworth, 1989), is characterized by: a focus
> on measurable learning outcomes, not inputs; the separation
> of learning from assessment; no time-serving requirements
> or any other artificial barriers to assessment; and an
> emphasis on performance in the workplace, or a close
> simulation of it, as the most desirable source of evidence
> about whether an individual is competent or not.
> (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, pp. 1-2).

Both employers and individuals are meant to benefit from this approach:
employers have individuals who are certified as competent to undertake
defined job roles; individuals are able to have tacit skills and unaccredited
learning acknowledged without having to successfully complete
examinations.

The account offered by Raggatt and Williams is 'based on a considerable
amount of research involving the analysis of substantial amounts of
documentary evidence and data derived from nearly a hundred interviews
with key informants in the policy process' (1999, p. 2). The authors

examine the evolution of the UK's system of vocational qualifications, the attraction to policymakers of an ill-defined concept of competence, the effects of the 1985-86 *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales* (RVQ), and the development of N/SVQs and GNVQs. In the final sections of the book, the authors examine some of the over-arching issues which shaped the development of vocational education and training in the UK, such as:

> ...the powerful commitment given to the primacy of
> voluntarism; the institutional mechanisms within which
> vocational qualifications policy was formulated and
> delivered; and the relative power of politicians and officials
> in shaping and advancing policy initiatives. (Raggatt &
> Williams, 1999, p. 3).

The authors identify a historical weakness in technical and vocational education in the UK, which is traced back to the 1850s and linked to 'the continuing cultural dominance of aristocratic, anti-industrial values in the UK' (p.6), and an education system in which traditional academic subjects predominated. Political and economic factors – linked to industrialization and a *laissez-faire* political climate – 'and the absence of state intervention militated against the development of a coordinated national system of education in the UK in general in the nineteenth century' (p. 6).

Technical and vocational education were characterized by voluntarism and evolved in an incoherent and fragmented way. Responsibility fell on the apprenticeship system, which was both work-based and exclusive. Networks of technical colleges did emerge towards the end of the nineteenth century, but these had a localized focus and there was no duty on local authorities to provide services. Technical colleges developed in a fragmented manner, and were characterized by a lack of both resources and prestige. Technical education would be seen, a century later, as the 'Cinderella of the education system' (p. 6).

The vocational qualifications system developed in a similarly fragmented and voluntaristic manner. The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) emerged in 1856 to coordinate the awards of the various Mechanics' Institutes which had become established in the first half of the nineteenth century. City and Guilds of London Institute was established in 1878, and took on the RSA's technical and craft examinations. The RSA then began to concentrate on business and commercial areas.

> From the 1880s to the 1970s, these two bodies – both of
> which were private organizations dependent on examination
> fees for their income – were the two major national
> providers of examinations in craft, commercial and technical
> subjects. Those Mechanics' Institutes that had kept control
> of their products in the 1850s gradually came together in six
> regional examining bodies over the course of the twentieth
> century, for example the Welsh Joint Examination
> Committee. Apart from the development, from the 1920s
> onwards, of a series of National Certificates in certain
> occupations, frequently sponsored by relevant professional
> bodies, by the 1960s the system of vocational qualifications
> was substantially the same as that which had been in place at
> the beginning of the twentieth century. Like vocational
> education and training in general, there was no proper
> national system. Moreover, the major national providers
> were private organizations and their awards either
> overlapped, or had no connection at all, with the
> examinations provided by the multiplicity of professional
> and local awarding bodies. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 7).

The 1960s, however, saw a significant shift in terms of the direction of vocational education and training (VET) policy. A new consensus and a more interventionist approach to training policy was signalled by the

Industrial Training Act of 1964, resulting in the establishment of 27
Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) by the end of the 1960s. ITBs were
made up not just of employers, but of trade union and educational
representatives, and were empowered to raise levies from firms in their
sectors to promote and enhance training and skills. The aim was to
ensure an adequate supply of skilled labour, but the establishment of ITBs
also represented a clear shift from the voluntaristic ethos to a more
interventionist approach in VET policy.

Criticisms of the ITB system, particularly from small employers
concerned with levies and bureaucracy, contributed to the establishment
of the Employment and Training Act of 1973. Raggatt and Williams
maintain that the most significant aspect of the Act (though it was
probably not recognized as such at the time) was that it:

> ...provided for the establishment of a national training
> agency which would not only coordinate the work of the
> ITBs and run public employment services, but would also
> help to forecast and strategically provide for skill changes.
> The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) was set up [in
> 1973] as a body independent of government to coordinate
> the work of the Training Services Division and Employment
> Services Division of the Department of Employment
> (DE)....As later chapters will show, before its demise in
> 1987 the MSC played a strong, interventionist role in
> promoting vocational education and training in general, and
> the reform of vocational qualifications in particular. (1999,
> pp. 8-9).

Between 1967 and 1969, under the auspices of the Department of
Education and Science (DES), the Haslegrave Committee met to consider
how the provision of business and technical awards could be improved.
In 1973, following the recommendations of the Haslegrave Committee,

the government established the Technician Education Council (TEC) and the Business Education Council (BEC) whose purpose was to coordinate and enhance the provision of higher-level vocational awards within a single, standard framework' (pp. 9-10). These bodies came together in 1983 as the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC).

During this period, the competing agendas and separate areas of responsibility of the MSC, the RSA, BTEC and City and Guilds ensured that the rationalization of vocational qualifications envisaged by the Haslegrave Committee did not progress very far.

Raggatt and Williams discuss the establishment in 1985 of a Working Group sponsored by the DES and the MSC. This group was to make recommendations for improving the system of vocational qualifications in England and Wales:

> The *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales* (RVQ) proposed that a new National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) be established, which would be charged with the responsibility of developing and overseeing a framework of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Furthermore, it was recommended that an NVQ should be 'a statement of competence, clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate entry into, and progression in, employment, further education and training, issued by a recognized body to an individual' (MSC/DES, 1986, p. 17). Following the report of the Working Group the government issued a White Paper – *Working Together: Education and Training* (DE/DES, 1986) – which broadly accepted its recommendations. The NCVQ itself was instituted in the autumn of 1986, and it was given the 'vital' task of reforming 'the present heterogeneous pattern of vocational qualifications' in England and Wales (DE/DES, 1986, p. 16). (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, pp. 11-13).

From 1987 onwards, sectorial 'lead bodies' were to design the standards of competence on which NVQs were to be based. Some 160 such employer-led bodies were eventually established, though there was none for education:

> There was a recognition within the DE and the NCVQ that the establishment of a lead body for education would be desirable, in order that standards of occupational competence and N/SVQs could be developed for teachers. Although the DES exhibited some initial interest in this area, to the extent that it organised a conference on the matter in 1991, progress was very slow, and the idea was ultimately shelved, principally because education ministers were resistant to the concept. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 110).

Awarding bodies were given the responsibility of producing qualifications based on the standards of competence. The most prominent of these were to be BTEC, the RSA and City and Guilds. The NCVQ would accredit NVQs at four levels. Level one was an entry level qualification, while level four would include some supervisory and managerial occupations. The first awards appeared in summer 1987, and a fifth level – intended to include the awards of professional bodies – was added in 1989. In that same year, the government instructed the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) to develop a system of SVQs which would be comparable to NVQs in England and Wales. The first SVQ awards became available in 1990.

By July 1997, over 1.6 million NVQs had been awarded, 82% of these at levels one and two. The majority of awards (over 65%) were made in two 'framework areas': 'Providing Goods and Services' and 'Providing Business Services'. The former category was dominated by hairdressing and retailing, and the latter by various aspects of business administration (pp. 13-14).

The authors stress that the reformed system of vocational qualifications was characterized by the importance given to the notion of vocational competence. They link this to the MSC's New Training Initiative (NTI) of 1981, which gave rise to the 'massive Youth Training Scheme (YTS), in the context of which much of the initial research and development work into the characteristics of a competence-based approach was undertaken' (p. 19). Implementation of the NTI was not brought about only to improve the UK's system of vocational education and training, but was also driven by 'short-term political pressure to manage rapidly rising youth unemployment' (p. 19).

Raggatt and Williams (1999) state that the concept of competence was not, at this stage, precisely defined, but was 'understood in a general sense as a combination of key skills, technical skills, knowledge and attributes…[and] had a number of positive elements that appealed to different groups' (p.39). Competence was established as an organizing principle of vocational education and training, largely by policy-makers in the MSC. The development of the YTS dominated the agenda of the MSC from 1982 onwards, and 'the elaboration of the concept of competence rapidly became associated with measures to improve the quality of youth training; principally the imperative for suitable certification' (p. 40).

The need for proper YTS certification, and the pressures for reform of the system of vocational qualifications, led to the establishment of the NCVQ and to the inception of NVQ policy, 'following the recommendations made by the *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales* Working Group and the provisions of the subsequent White Paper, *Working Together* (MSC/DES, 1986; DE/DES, 1986)' (p. 63). The RVQ proposals were initially welcomed by the providers of existing awards, 'because it was assumed that the new national framework would embrace their products and presumably give them value-added status' (p. 64).

Raggatt and Williams argue, however, that the RVQ Working Group's recommendations can be interpreted in different ways:

> One interpretation of the proposals suggests a limited degree of change, with the establishment of a new framework centred around existing vocational qualifications, gradually modified to become based on competence. This is what most policy-makers envisaged. However, the Working Group's report can also be read as implying more radical change. That awards would not be accredited as NVQs unless they were explicitly competence-based [*sic*]. This ambiguity was left for the new NCVQ to work through during the initial implementation of NVQ policy. (1999, p. 64).

Although the first NVQs based on lead body standards of competence (in retail distribution) were accredited in 1988, progress in establishing the NVQ framework was much slower than had been anticipated by policy-makers, due to the way in which the NCVQ had interpreted its remit. Rather than slotting existing vocational awards into an emerging framework, 'NCVQ officials were able to advance a more fundamental reform of the system of vocational qualifications. The NCVQ began to construct a framework of NVQs that would comprise only explicitly competence-based awards' (p. 87). Early NVQs had a task-based character which was exacerbated by the very large number of lead bodies, and by the distancing of the education sector.

Providers of existing qualifications were reluctant to commit themselves fully to reform, and often offered the new NVQs in addition to their existing provision. 'Thus between 1987 and 1989 there was no significant progress towards the establishment of a coherent and transparent structure of vocational qualifications in the UK. Indeed, it could be argued that the addition of NVQs on top of the existing

provision made the system more opaque' (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 87).

By the summer of 1990, the future of NVQ policy looked uncertain. The pace of reform had been slow, and the NCVQ had run out of funds. A government review ensued, and the Department of Employment (DE) was able to secure additional resources for the NCVQ. A target was set whereby NVQs were to cover at least 80% of the workforce by the end of 1992, and this target was met. In achieving this goal, NCVQ was assisted by a number of factors:

> The signing of an agreement with SCOVTEC regarding mutual recognition of SVQs and NVQs; the way in which BTEC was increasingly compelled to adapt its products to the NVQ framework; the development of a consistent approach to the development of assessable standards of competence by industry lead bodies; and a greater degree of cooperation with the TA [the Training Agency, which had replaced the MSC in 1988] and the DE.
>
> [....]
>
> Clearly, then, a much more sustained and coordinated effort went into implementing NVQ policy between 1991 and 1993 than had been the case hitherto. Indeed, perhaps the most striking difference in the way in which NVQ policy was advanced during this time was the notably greater degree of interventionism by the government and its agencies....Finally, while the NCVQ and the DE had expended a considerable amount of effort in establishing the NVQ framework, there was a growing realization that not only was the slow take-up of the qualifications an issue that needed to be addressed, but also that their quality needed to be improved. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 115).

The authors describe in some detail the processes by which General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) emerged in March 1992. NVQs had been heavily criticized for their emphasis on 'narrow, job-specific skills...[which] failed to take into account knowledge and understanding that individuals might accrue outside their immediate work places' (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, pp. 118-19). NVQs were employment-led, and the expertise of further education colleges, other educational bodies and providers of existing vocational qualifications was unwanted. Officials of the TA and DE, and even of NCVQ, began to realize that the scope of NVQs was too narrow. In addition, the emphasis on workplace assessment marginalized any role that further education colleges might have had in the delivery of NVQs. There was 'a feeling within the DE that the pendulum had perhaps swung too far away from education' (p. 119).

A 'general NVQ' policy, intended to introduce broader, non-occupationally specific awards into the NVQ framework was announced in the 1991 White Paper, *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES/DE, 1991). Work on the new qualifications was swiftly carried out by NCVQ and the three major awarding bodies – the RSA, City and Guilds and, with reservations, BTEC (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 135). The authors note that:

> It is evident that the NCVQ council were not all that happy with this expansion of the organization's remit. While the NCVQ aimed to base the new GNVQs, as they had become known, as clearly as possible on the criteria it had employed for NVQs, pressure from DES [Department of Education and Science] officials and ministers ensured that grading and external assessment specifications were added to the awards. (1999, p. 135).

GNVQs were developed as broad-based qualifications to be delivered in schools and colleges. They covered a number of occupational areas, and

were intended for candidates planning to enter employment and/or higher education. However, a number of serious problems emerged once GNVQs were introduced from 1992-93 onwards. 'Concerns were raised about the heavy burden of assessment in GNVQs, the reliability of the assessment and grading procedures, and the high drop-out rates among other things' (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 118). The authors identify two key issues of concern:

> First,…a number of problems were identified that had a deleterious impact on the implementation of GNVQ policy….While these can be ascribed in part to the rapidity with which the new qualifications were developed, their manageability was also adversely affected by the nature of the assessment arrangements – a combination of the NVQ criteria, which had been criticized for being overly bureaucratic and burdensome in their own right, and external testing requirements. Second, the extent of government intervention in this area of policy is striking. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this was the government's willingness to act to regulate vocational awards. (pp. 135-36).

By 1993, DE officials were becoming increasingly concerned with the progress of NVQ policy. Attention was increasingly focused on the assessment process, which was seen as being overly bureaucratic and restrictive. Another area of concern was that of outcome-related funding: 'A later substantial review of the implementation of N/SVQ policy found that such a funding mechanism was "not conducive to rigorous assessment" (Beaumont, 1996, p.28)' (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 138). The authors quote a DE official who noted that:

> What hasn't stood the test of time…is the sort of detailed way in which they [NCVQ] thought assessment should take place. That has proved to be a very substantial Achilles heel

for NCVQ...I greatly regret that we didn't actually grip the assessment part of it as quickly as we should have done. (p. 135).

In December 1993, a Channel Four *Dispatches* programme and accompanying report by Alan Smithers (Smithers, 1993) gave a good deal of publicity to the perceived deficiencies of NVQs and GNVQs:

> In *All Our Futures* Smithers derided the 'bureaucratic procedures', 'unfamiliar jargon', and the 'outcome-related funding' element that accompanied NVQs, accusing the NCVQ of employing a 'schematic framework derived from behavioural psychology ruthlessly applied' (p. 9). Perhaps the most notable criticism made by Smithers was his argument that knowledge and understanding were marginalized in competence-based NVQs, particularly because of the lack of written examinations. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 138).

The authors quote Smithers as follows (p. 138):

> The root of the problem is that in seeking to develop an education which is distinctively practical the National Council for Vocational Qualifications has departed from established educational practice. It has insisted that students should be assessed solely on what they can do rather than including also what they know and understand. (Smithers, 1993, p. 9).

There was a notable shift in the direction of NVQ policy between 1995 and 1997, focusing on the regulatory functions of the NCVQ and on how it, and the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), could develop and oversee a coherent framework of awards. In addition, the

assessment criteria for N/SVQs were relaxed, and GNVQs were made less prescriptive. Raggatt and Williams note:

> It is important to recognize that these developments took place in the context of substantial institutional reform: the merger of the DE and the DfE [Department for Education] in July 1995 to form the DfEE; and the lead-up towards the establishment of the QCA, from an amalgamation of the NCVQ and SCAA, in October 1997. (1999, p. 156).

The merging of the education and employment departments was intended to encourage a more coherent approach to education and training policy and its implementation, and it was felt that the prospects for VET would therefore be enhanced:

> Paradoxically, however, the effect of the departmental merger has arguably been to diminish the impetus behind vocationalism that had hitherto been a characteristic of the DE, and was a residue of the MSC. In the DfEE issues relating to schools and academic education, areas that were perhaps more politically sensitive, appear to have been prioritized. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 157).

Raggatt and Williams cite the comments of an NCVQ official:

> [T]he NVQs went into eclipse a bit, because when the departments merged the DfE won the battle if you like. (1999, p. 157).

In their final chapter the authors provide a more analytical account of the development and progress of VET policy in the UK:

> In this respect four areas for analysis have been identified: the frequent absence of political commitment to the

furtherance of vocational education; the increased emphasis
on voluntarism in labour market policy; the centralization of
government power, particularly through the use of
'quangos'; and the divergent goals of different actors and
institutions within government. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999,
p. 186).

The much-criticized narrowness of NVQs is linked to the NCVQ's
technocratic approach and the government's emphasis on training
programmes for the unemployed. The opportunity to introduce broader,
educational elements into VET programmes was lost, due to the
reluctance of the DES to become involved itself in NVQ policy. In
addition, the encouragement given to employers to voluntarily develop
occupational standards led to a proliferation of lead bodies.

In spite of these problems, there were two factors that contributed to the
resilience of the reforms to VET policy. The first was the enthusiasm of
the DE (inherited from the MSC) for the provision of better VET both to
improve skills levels and to provide opportunities for young people
unsuited for academic study. The second was the need to develop a
standard measure of outputs in order to satisfy the Treasury's policy of
basing funding on successful completion of programmes. NVQs were
seen as suitable qualifications in this respect.

In summary, then, the existence of important political and
institutional imperatives appears to have shaped and guided
the direction of vocational qualifications policy during the
1980s and 1990s. (Raggatt & Williams, 1999, p. 187).

Raggatt and Williams (1999) conclude that the trend towards greater
government regulation of VET policy was not 'an expression of the
strategic grand design of policy-makers' (p. 197):

For the most part it was disjointed, incremental, and
reflected both the tensions that existed between the
interventionist tendencies of officials and the flexibility
preferred by employers and awarding bodies, and the
differing goals of discrete government departments....
Nevertheless, the most significant change to the UK's
system of vocational qualifications during the 1980s and
1990s has been the gradual replacement of a largely
unregulated market for vocational qualifications with one
that is much more heavily regulated by the state. Although
Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s
frequently claimed to have drastically reduced the size of the
state, through privatization initiatives among other things, in
some areas, such as in education and training for example,
its central powers have grown dramatically. (Raggatt &
Williams, 1999, pp. 197-98).

The Challenge of Competence for the Caring Professions

Phil Hodkinson and Mary Issitt (writing in 1993) observe that public
sector professionals in Britain in the early 1990s were subjected to a new
managerialism which 'requires that the quality of service [within the
sector] can be demonstrably measured as can the competence of those
employed as service providers, whether working within education or
welfare' (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 1).

The authors argue that as a result of NCVQ policy, 'the emphasis on
qualification has moved away from the notion that preparation for
effective practice involves the right kind of training "inputs" on or off the
job. The shift to competence-based assessment has been towards
"outputs" or the "standards that need to be achieved at the end of a
training programme" (Jessup, 1990, p. 2)' (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995,
p. 1).

They note further that:

> Jessup contrasts the new standards which would be more
> detailed and specific and would be set out in a statement of
> competence with what he sees as the 'generalised and loose
> concept of standards which has prevailed in educational
> circles in the past' (ibid.). (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 1).

Hodkinson and Issitt are concerned to address what they see as the
challenge for professionals that this shift entails. There is an implication
in NCVQ policy that programmes characterized by competence-based
assessment will produce practitioners who are better able to carry out
their work than is the case with more traditional forms of training.
However, the notion of competence is inextricably associated with
industrial models and methods which are being imposed on professionals.

The authors identify two ideal-type views of professionalism. The first is
associated with state-funded professional support – as in teaching,
medicine and social work – as understood in the context of the welfare
state. Practitioner professionalism was taken for granted, and 'educating
a "good" teacher or social worker was seen as integral to the guarantee of
high-quality provision' (1995, p. 2). Bureaucratic structures supported
professional activity and controlled its development and direction. There
was a framework of national legislation for funding, pay scales and
conditions of service, although there were variations between local
authorities.

This system flourished for some thirty years from the end of World War
II, and the authors suggest that it is not surprising that its inadequacies
received more attention than its strengths. As a result, it began to be seen
as overly bureaucratic and paternalistic. Criticisms of the quality of
professionalism in education and social work gained momentum in the
1970s and 1980s. 'New right' agendas in the 1980s rejected the 'nanny
state', and argued for the need to free up individual responsibility and

choice. Competition and the free market were the right approaches to allocate scarce resources. A 'quasi-market' model was seen as the ideal-type for social provision.

Hodkinson and Issitt argue that the central tenet of this approach was to give more power and choice to institutions such as schools and colleges by freeing up provision from local state control. This process would also empower clients or 'customers', as they were now being called, and would encourage competition between providers and institutions, resulting in value for money. Funding was focused on individual institutions, rather than on local authorities. Further education colleges were completely removed from local authority control (as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992), while 'Care in the Community' involved the voluntary and private sectors:

> Furthermore, funding increasingly comes either from
> competitive tendering for contracts, or through performance-
> related formulae. In education, for example, the key
> criterion is the ability of an institution to recruit pupils or
> students, which in turn is supposed to reflect customer
> choice in a market-place. (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 3).

Performance-related funding is based on measurable performance indicators such as examination results, leading to quality improvement and informed customer choice.

Funding devolved to semi-independent quangos such as the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and the NCVQ, and quality of provision would be ensured by regular external inspection by another quango – the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED).

These two ideal-types imply different notions of professional practice:

As we have seen, a possibly naïve belief in the efficacy of
professionalism to ensure high-quality provision was central
to the local authority ideal-type, despite the practical
restrictions on true professionalism that bureaucracy
sometimes produced. However, in the market forces ideal-
type, practitioners are seen more as technicians, playing their
part in the production and sale of quality services, as part of
a team. If the old professional was legitimated through
academic education and the status of his/her position, the
new technician needs better quality training, to help ensure
better achievement against the measured performance
indicators. A key part of this market ideal-type has become
the notion of competence, as the term is used by the NCVQ,
although other conceptions of this term are available and
may be more relevant in the caring professions. (Hodkinson
& Issitt, 1995, p. 4).

The authors proceed to discuss the notion of 'post-Fordism' in the context
of the perceived need for Britain to compete effectively in the global
market place. They identify a 'low skills' and a 'high skills' route in an
environment where markets change very quickly, and conclude that the
high skills route is the only choice for the UK. Within this high skills
route the key to market success is quality of output. Manufacturers thus
focus much of their activity on raising quality – sometimes referred to as
'total quality management' or by the Japanese word 'Kaisen'. Quality is
discovered by measuring products or outputs. 'Firms committed to these
approaches argue cogently that under Kaisen, quality improvement and
cost cutting can go on simultaneously' (p. 4).

There has thus been an emphasis in Britain on the need to improve the
training and skills of the workforce, and one of the strategies put forward
to achieve this goal was the development of NVQs. The authors describe
the structure of NVQs and the role of lead bodies, but note that even

within an industrial setting the NVQ notion of competence has been heavily criticized:

> It is claimed that it is based on narrow behaviourist conceptions of learning, and on a functional analysis of current jobs, which risks atomizing the job, so that the whole becomes less that the sum of its parts, and which is, in any event, backward looking....However, what we are centrally concerned with here is the relevance of this view of competence and the wider industrial view of quality from which it derives to caring professions such as education, social or youth and community work. (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 5).

The mode of quality and competence associated with the industrial model is sometimes referred to as instrumental or technical rationality:

> The notion of technical rationality derives from what Habermas (1971, 1972) calls technical interests. Gibson (1986, p. 7) defines it thus: 'Instrumental rationality...is concerned with *method* and efficiency rather than with *purposes*....It is the divorce of fact from value, and the preference, in that divorce, for fact'. (1995, p. 5).

Education or caring for others thus becomes an engineering problem: customers buy a product, and that product can be improved by measuring and improving the efficiency of the production line. This approach may be relevant to manufacturing, but it is questionable whether it applies to services focused on interactions with people.

The authors argue that quality in the caring professions is not value free. There are, for example, different ideological views of education and what it is about, and these value positions determine what we look for and see

in education. The notion that educational outputs can be measured – like outputs on a production line – is an ideological value judgement in itself.

Even where outputs in the caring professions can be identified and agreed upon, they are notoriously difficult to measure:

> We almost always fall back on *performance indicators*, which are believed to give a partial view of quality. The term is important. Truancy rates may be a performance indicator of the success of a school in relating to its pupils. High truancy rates may indicate a problem that needs further investigation, but are not themselves a measure of school/pupil relationships. They do not tell us whether school relations are actually as good as they could reasonably be expected to be in the context in which teachers are working, nor do they tell us what should be done, if anything, to improve relationships. (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 6).

Interaction with people is a dialectical process, and it is not possible to stand outside and measure outcomes objectively. There is thus a central dilemma that arises when a technically-rational model is introduced in the caring professions. We cannot define quality adequately, let alone measure it. Performance indicators may lead institutions to improve truancy rates by not recruiting from certain social groups, authorizing more absences or excluding pupils. Meeting performance indicators could thus result in a *loss* of quality.

The NVQ version of competence is part of an industrial, technically-rational model, which works towards specific measurable outcomes and which sees the learning process in terms of a production line. The model distorts learning, and is also distinctively different from the industrial model on which it is based:

In industry, the measured output changes. The whole point
of Kaisen is to alter the output by improving its quality. In
the NVQ system, the outputs are defined and given. The
teams cannot change their specifications, but merely strive to
achieve them more efficiently. This puts real pressure on
some providers to cut resources, in order to achieve
minimum NVQ standards as quickly and cheaply as
possible. (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 7).

The authors note that the competence approach has been adopted within
teaching, social and youth work, and that: 'As we write (autumn 1993)
there are moves to adopt TDLB standards for teaching qualifications in
the post-16, further education sector' (p.9). It would be easy to be
dismissive of NVQ policy and to long for 'the good old days of
professionalism under local authority control' (p.8), but that model was
also flawed. The NVQ system has highlighted a number of weaknesses
in the old model. 'This challenge of competence cannot be ignored'
(p. 8).

The idea of professionalism in education and youth and community work
has always been problematic. Workers in these sectors do not have their
own professional governing bodies, and local authority control fulfilled
this role with mixed results:

Sometimes the support and guidance was too lax, permitting
the occasional excesses that have been so well publicized,
and which gradually undermined the notion of
professionalism. On other occasions, bureaucratic control
was so tight that professionals were prevented from thinking
for themselves, bound up in reams of red tape. (Hodkinson
& Issitt, 1995, p. 8).

The authors also note that teacher training programmes were often front-
loaded. Teachers qualified and started the job, often with very little

further training. Teacher education programmes struggled to link theory and practice effectively. Initial teacher education was often seen as irrelevant, and theory was devalued. Qualification was a rite of passage which permitted entry to the profession. Under the NCVQ, the term 'competence' was intended to bridge the gap between theory and practice, with the latter taking precedence over the former. 'It was supposed to incorporate knowledge, understanding and skills in a holistic view of performance' (p. 9):

> In addition, the fragmentation of qualifications into elements
> of competence, described through performance criteria and
> range statements, supposedly made this holism accessible to
> the workers and learners themselves, provided the difficult
> problem of language was overcome. In later chapters it will
> be suggested that this model is over-simplified and
> ultimately fails, but this does not absolve us from continuing
> to address the problem and a different conception of
> competence from that used by NCVQ may be one way
> forward. (Hodkinson & Issitt, 1995, p. 9).

Competence-Based Assessment

Alison Wolf attributes the origins of competence-based assessment to attempts to reform teacher education in the United States, and argues that:

> Today, it occupies a central place in British education and
> training, and is the subject of large-scale government
> support. Competence-based qualifications are considered
> the major tool in securing 'the Government's aims of
> increased participation and higher attainment in further and
> higher education, and hence an improved skills base'; they
> have 'a key role to play in building a world-class workforce'
> (HMSO 1993). (Wolf, 1995, p. xi).

She notes that similar views and levels of support characterize the VET movement in Australia, and that a National Training Board was developing an 'Australian Standards Framework' for a competence-based system.

Western economies are all characterized by rapid technological change and the disappearance of unskilled jobs. This has resulted in a wide debate about the future of education and training in the context of the need for countries to compete effectively in the global market place. All western countries:

> ...feel the need to review and change their traditional
> approaches to education and training. The idea of
> competence seems to offer a conceptual framework within
> which to rethink both content and delivery. (p. xii).

Wolf considers how the idea of competence has developed in the UK, with particular attention to the development of NVQs. She traces the origins of competence-based assessment and reviews the arguments in favour of it and why some people support it so strongly. This is followed by a discussion of some of the theoretical arguments which underpin the competence-based approach, and the extent to which this form of assessment can deliver on some of the more ambitious claims made for it.

Wolf also gives detailed consideration to some of the limited research on the implementation of competence-based assessment. She argues that assessment is not just a technical affair, but that it also operates in complex economic and social contexts and within organizational constraints.

Competence-based assessment and education are essentially American ideas, and the debates of the 1980s and 1990s in the UK and Australia were informed by the United States literature of ten years before. The

essential elements of the approach are an emphasis on outcomes, the clarity and transparency of these, and the decoupling of assessment from learning programmes or particular institutions.

The competence-based system in the UK is one on which virtually everyone involved in secondary and post-16 education has strong views. 'It divides people into opposing camps: those who are not for you are against you' (Wolf, 1995, p. 127). Strong passions are aroused, and normally cynical civil servants see themselves as:

> ...shock-troops or change agents in the cause of better
> training and education. A full competence-based system,
> they believe, could ensure that 'all formal learning...would
> be more effective', give individuals the opportunity to
> realize their potential, and enable the country to 'make much
> more effective use of its human resources' (Jessup 1991: 6,
> 131). (Wolf, 1995, p. 127).

On the other side of the argument she cites Alan Smithers and Sig Prais in the UK, and David Pennington in Australia, who consider the approach to be a catastrophe:

> 'NCVQ seems to be perpetrating a disaster of epic
> proportions' is Smithers' judgement (Smithers 1993: 41).
> Pennington argues that the 'competency crusade' is designed
> to put all education under the direct control of government,
> industry and the unions, and that it not only 'sells short the
> process of education at every level but will end up holding
> back the development of the country' (Pennington 1992: 12).
> (Wolf, 1995, p. 128).

She asks why a mere assessment process should arouse such passions, and argues that it embodies a revolutionary position:

It is based on rejection of, and antagonism to, one of the
huge industries of our time: organized education. Lengthy
debates about range statements or evidence indicators are
secondary to two fundamental claims: that current education
and training is fundamentally inadequate *and* that a better
alternative is available. Throughout, we have argued that the
first of these statements is well founded, but the second,
unfortunately, far less so. (Wolf, 1995, p. 128).

Mainstream educational assessment is criticized by reformers for not
measuring what it should. Assessment is more valid the nearer it gets to
the behaviour in which it is interested. Academic tests are good
predictors of future academic success, but poor at predicting later
performance in other areas. Assessments which mirror workplace
activities, on the other hand, are good predictors of workplace success.
This argument presents support for competence-based assessment.

But, argues Wolf, its advocates have approached the task of introducing
the model in terms of transforming entirely the nature of education and
training:

...they have tended enormously to overstate the the capacity
of the approach to solve enduring problems of any
assessment system....Misplaced theories about what could
be achieved have also carried the creators of the NVQ
system, like their American predecessors, down a never-
ending spiral of specification. This has created enormous
resentment among practitioners, and has rapidly diminishing
returns in terms of either reliability or validity of judgement.
(Wolf, 1995, p. 130).

Research findings show that assessment practices need to be viewed in
terms of their organizational, economic and political contexts, and that
competence-based assessment will need to be substantially modified if it

is to continue in the longer term. Wolf argues that NVQ reformers have treated assessment as an essentially technical affair, overlooking three crucial considerations:

> The first is that a system of competence-based assessment
> must be delivered by organizations which have their own
> pre-existing and enduring concerns. The second is that it
> must be delivered by people who also have pre-existing
> beliefs, values and objectives. The third is that competence-
> based assessment is as subject to cost constraints as any
> other activity. (Wolf, 1995, p. 132).

Competence-based assessment will succeed only where people and organizations perceive that the benefits outweigh the costs. An example of this is the training and assessment of pilots. Here, the industry has accepted the greater value of competence-based assessment, and has spent large amounts of money to establish simulated environments for training and assessment:

> It has done so because so much rides on success – because
> the returns to good assessment are so high and the returns to
> bad ones so catastrophic. A flight simulator costs a great
> deal to build but compared to the price of a crashed airliner
> (with or without passengers), the sum is trivial. (p. 135).

Wolf argues that competence-based assessment is 'more likely to be adopted and to survive the closer one gets to the situation of an airline pilot' (pp.135-36). She concludes that competence-based approaches are best suited to those occupations which were closest to them all along: the old crafts and the professions.

Confirmation of the relationship between occupation and assessment style comes from Australia:

Gonczi describes how, 'Under encouragement from the
Commonwealth government, almost all the professions have
developed competency-based standards and are currently
developing competency based [*sic*] assessment strategies'
(Gonczi 1994: 27). Far from lagging behind other sectors,
the professions have actually proceeded furthest and fastest
in the direction of competency-based systems. (Wolf, 1995,
p. 136).

Although Australian standards have a similar structure to those in the UK,
they are far less restrictive: they are holistic and described in everyday
language, and are linked to curriculum specifications, not to outcomes.

Outside of the professions and the old crafts in the UK, it is likely that the
current emphasis on competence-based awards will continue only as long
as does large-scale government funding. Problems of implementation
will outweigh any advantages for employers. More general qualifications
and training will offer trainees 'greater rewards and flexibility than will a
highly specific competence-based award' (p.137). Enthusiasm for
competence-based systems has reached its high-water mark, and
educational institutions have been left still standing:

However, the ideas on which competence-based assessment
is founded are unlikely to disappear. Its critique of
educational awards remained unanswered, and will become
more powerful, not less, as educational expenditures
continue to rise. (Wolf, 1995, p. 138).

Criticisms of Competence-Based Education and Training

There is a wide literature offering criticisms of competence-based
education and training (CBET), and these criticisms can be divided into
three categories:

1) Definitions of competence are vague and imprecise, and there is considerable confusion over the relationships between competence, knowledge and performance;

2) CBET is based on Behaviourist Learning Theory, and is concerned with prespecified behavioural outcomes; this approach focuses on a narrow range of human capabilities, is at odds with cognitive and humanistic perspectives, and leads to ambiguities in learning and assessment;

3) CBET employs an instrumentalist framework resulting in a new occupational or vocational focus which hinders the development of generic and transferable skills, and which is unable to accommodate the skills and qualities associated with many professional roles. (Hyland, 1997).

A range of recent studies has identified serious problems with the NCVQ programme. In a study for the DfEE, Beaumont (1996) found that there was a lack of clarity over whom NVQs were aimed at, and there was a good deal of justified criticism of verification and assessment. Robinson (1996) maintains that NVQs have proved unpopular with employers, and that their development has cost twice the official figure of £79 million. An Institute of Employment Studies (1995) report also found that employers are increasingly hostile to NVQs. Nash (1997) refers to the need for a massive overhaul and 'relaunch' of NVQs, while Barnett (1995) recommends extreme caution when considering the recommendations of the NCVQ consultation paper, 'GNVQs at Higher Levels'.

Competence and Assessment

In spite of numerous claims in the NCVQ literature about precision and objectivity in assessing outcomes, Tuxworth (1989) maintains that there is little or no research evidence to show that CBET is in any way superior to other forms of education or training in terms of output. An

employment Department study (ED, 1993) reported a number of concerns over NVQ assessment, including the cost, the amount of paperwork, practical problems with assessment in the workplace, and the crucial issue of the reliability of assessments. With regard to the NCVQ model of assessment, Jessup (1991) has suggested, 'we should just forget reliability altogether and concentrate on validity, which is all that ultimately matters' (p. 191). Prais (1991), however, argues that 'any argument that bases itself on the notion that validity (i.e., lack of bias) is all that matters is essentially wrong. We need to be concerned with the total expected error associated with the qualifications procedure (i.e., validity plus reliability); we are likely to be misled if we focus on only one component' (p. 87).

Competence and Learning

The NCVQ (1988) maintains that NVQs are independent of any specific course, programme or mode of learning, and Jessup (1991) asserts that the NCVQ approach is rooted in the functions of employment and does not impose an educational model on how people learn (p. 39). Fletcher (1991) states that NVQs have nothing at all to do with learning or training programmes. But Jessup (1991) also asserts that NVQs are aimed at 'the autonomous learner' (p. 115) and that they are intended to establish a structure 'within which to organise a national system of programmes and learning materials' (p. 92). However, according to Hyland (1997, p. 4):

> There is a yawning gap between rhetoric and reality in the
> NCVQ literature about the flexibility and independence of
> NVQs in relation to learning. Whatever may be **claimed** the
> **evidence** is that BTEC, RSA and C&G courses have had to
> be substantially modified to satisfy NCVQ criteria and this
> has led to narrowing of focus, a loss of significant theoretical
> content, and a de-skilling of occupational roles. The harmful
> and negative effects of all this have been revealed in a

number of recent studies (Callender, 1992, Raggatt, 1991, 1994, Smithers, 1993, McHugh *et al.,*1993).

Denvir (1989) notes that the *form* that assessment takes affects fundamentally the learning experiences of students, and she observes that 'the chosen assessment system is the mechanism whereby society affirms what is valued within education' (p. 277). Bloomer (1994) notes that 'there is growing evidence that NVQs have triggered transformations in learning and teaching which have radically changed the nature of the courses to which they have been applied....they have a significant impact upon curriculum and there is much evidence to that effect' (p. 1).

The Management NVQs

Irena Grugulis (Grugulis, 2000) reports on her study of Management NVQs in three private sector organizations, all of which were selected for the study as examples of good practice:

> Each was prepared to, or had already, committed a great deal
> of time, effort and resources to their programmes. Two had
> been used in official MCI [Management Charter Initiative]
> and NCVQ publications as exemplary organisations and the
> third was commended by a senior official involved in NVQs.
> (Grugulis, 2000, p. 84).

The study, involving more than 120 semi-structured interviews and observations over a period of two years, showed that candidates undertaking Management NVQs were required to meet criteria that did not meet their roles and responsibilities. Under the competence-based system, work on the programmes became a routine process of portfolio building:

In theory, candidates can specify their own choice of route towards accreditation (Jessup, 1991). In practice 'evidencing' competence invariably takes the form of a written portfolio....So while the programmes varied from study to study, the task that faced each candidate was the same, constructing a portfolio of documents that met the requirements of NVQ Level 4. (p. 87).

A typical portfolio filled two large A4 ring binders, and many of the candidates were appalled at the nature and the amount of the work involved. Candidates found that 'working towards the NVQ was a *distraction* from developmental learning, rather than a *contribution* towards it' (p. 89). Meeting the NVQ criteria said little about a candidate's ability:

There is no evidence to suggest that the skills and aptitudes required to put together a good portfolio are in any way related to those necessary for good management, nor does compiling such evidence necessarily show on-the-job 'competence'. (Grugulis, 2000, p. 91).

Theoretical knowledge that might have been used to support evidence was largely absent from portfolios. Claims to competence were mainly descriptive, and opportunities for reflection and for abstraction and generalization were lost.

A very small minority of candidates reacted positively to the NVQ process, but the majority were disillusioned by it and the number of candidates successfully achieving the qualification was very low. Grugulis notes that this result is disappointing but not surprising:

Introducing a qualification which few people gain hardly provides an appropriate reward mechanism, particularly since failure (or what the NCVQ calls being 'not yet

competent') had a devastating effect on the candidates....As Furnham (1990) points out, despite the verbal dexterity of the NCVQ, someone who is not yet *competent* may be regarded as *incompetent*....Unsuccessful candidates had to come to terms with both failure on a training course, and a public acknowledgement that they could not do their jobs or had failed to display management potential. (2000, pp. 94-95).

Grugulis concludes that the flaws in the Management NVQs are 'structural ones That may be expected to continue as long as NVQs continue to attempt to distil the essence of occupations into "standards"' (2000, p. 79).

A Competence-Based Advanced Diploma in Education (FE)

Stark and McAleavy (1992) provide an account of the development and implementation of a competence-based Advance Diploma in Education (Further Education) validated by the University of Ulster and implemented in September 1989. They note that this was the first competence-based *teacher training course in the university sector in Great* Britain for further education lecturers (p. 82). Their paper considers the rationale for a competence-based programme, the process of identifying and developing competences, university and college responsibilities, the interpretation and development of performance criteria and issues related to assessment.

The Advanced Diploma at the University was due for validation in June 1989, and:

The course team decided to adopt a competence-based model for the new course. A primary reason for this

decision was recognition of the important changes taking place in further and vocational education as a result of the proposals made by NCVQ. The course planning team took the view that a sensible way to introduce students to competence-based education, as a result of the NCVQ changes, was to let them experience such a programme for themselves. (Stark & McAleavy, 1992, p. 81).

The authors note that the course team had some grounds for hesitation in adopting a competence-based approach. Firstly, there existed in the British system a sharp divide between university education on the one hand, and public sector further and higher education on the other. The adoption of a competence-based programme in the university sector 'could tend to erode differences which had been jealously defended for years' (p. 81). However, the University of Ulster had come into being as a result of a merger between a university and a polytechnic, and 'the course team did not necessarily feel that it was committed to a traditional view of the role and positioning of a university in relation to developments in vocational education' (p. 81).

A second area of concern cited by Stark and McAleavy was that the competence-based approach 'had been subjected to considerable criticism (e.g. Carr & Kemmis, 1986) on the grounds that it constituted a mechanical and anti-humanist model of learning...that was predicated on a monist paradigm of research with strong technocratic overtones' (1992, pp. 81-82).

The course team took the view, however, that the NCVQ model 'had moved beyond the earlier "performance based" models which had originated in the United States' (p. 82). Skills and knowledge would be linked to application 'in a realistic working context. The team felt that from this framework it was possible to develop a model of competence which would be suitable for further education teacher training' (p. 82).

Stark and McAleavy conclude this section of their paper by making
reference to perceived inadequacies in 'previous programmes' of teacher
training:

> The course team had been increasingly dissatisfied with the
> skills-based focus which had been a feature of previous
> programmes, particularly the notion of micro-skills. There
> was the concern that previous course designs had
> decontextualised important features of professional learning
> so that integration into the work role context was
> problematic. It is important to note that NCVQ has sought
> to develop competences which are essentially concerned
> with work rather than task completion. The philosophy
> behind the competency based course at the University,
> therefore, lies parallel with that of NCVQ. (1992, p. 82).

The authors then describe the process of identifying and developing
competences for the programme. They state that there are two competing
methodologies used for the identification of competences. The first of
these (adopted by the team) 'is based on a functional analysis of the
occupation and its necessary duties and tasks. This analysis results in a
list of competence elements which are then categorised under a series of
functions' (p. 82). Associated knowledge, attitudes and values were also
incorporated into the competences. The second approach is derived from
the area of management performance (Boyatziz, 1982) and results in
competences which are extremely broad. However, this approach does
stress the importance of the concept of proactivity, and this element of the
management performance approach was incorporated into the
programme. The competences were thus developed in a way which
'required students to act in a proactive manner if they were to gain
accreditation, the purpose being to develop greater student autonomy
from the outset' (p. 82).

In the absence of a lead body for education, an advisory board was formed, made up of representatives from the Education and Library Boards, the Department of Education and the colleges involved in the programme. The advisory board identified the competences, and also recognized the need for flexible modes of delivery, the development of individualised learning methods and the encouragement of work-based learning.

The authors report that the team soon recognized the need to develop 'generic competences'. As an example of the need for these, they state that:

> It was agreed by the team members that one central problem they had encountered in further education was that many individuals had never actually seen the curriculum documents relating to the courses they taught. A culture had apparently developed whereby individuals were simply told what the curriculum was to be, or they were given a photocopy of a piece of a document. The team decided, therefore, that individuals had to consult relevant curriculum documents and demonstrate they had understood the contents. This task may appear to be a simple requirement, but it should be noted that, for the first time, individuals were mandated to take active steps to secure a copy of the documents. Similarly, another competence statement requires students to find out where administrative responsibility lies and to investigate college accommodation, resources and equipment. In completing this competence the student needs to accept that his/her role, from the beginning of his/her career, is to be proactive seeking out information and not simply waiting until such information is provided. In other words, the previous attitude the team had encountered, when students simply shrugged and stated that

there was a policy of not distributing documents, was no
longer acceptable. (pp. 83-84).

The authors maintain that the process of becoming proactive in respect of
identifying the context of teaching (as above) is 'is essential to the
achievement of professionalism' and that existing college sub-cultures
had mitigated against this. The 'generic competences' being developed
gave rise to a new form of professionalism seen as the development of
student autonomy in the context of taking responsibility for the
development of one's own competence.

The authors describe some of the inevitable teething problems
encountered during the first year of the programme: some competences
were changed, amalgamated or abandoned; where students had difficulty
understanding what evidence was required, some competences were
rewritten; college-based assessors were less enthusiastic about their role
than were members of the course team at the University of Ulster. Some
students reported that they were being differentially assessed because
performance criteria were being interpreted differently by different
assessors. Most of these problems were overcome by the second year of
the programme.

The final section of Stark and McAleavy's (1992) paper considers issues
associated with assessment. They note that important assumptions of
competence-based assessment are that students arrive on a programme
with different ranges of attitudes and skills, and that they will progress to
professional competence at different rates. Therefore, they should be
allowed to demonstrate their competence when they are ready to do so.
Students should not have to reach the same targets at the same time, but
should 'make decisions regarding their current state of development with
regard to the competences and present themselves to the tutors when they
wish to receive accreditation' (p. 86).

However, tutors felt that this was unworkable in practice. Students were therefore 'required to have completed a range of competences by the end of the first year of the course' (pp. 86-87). Once a particular competence was accredited, it did not have to be demonstrated again. Once put into practice, this approach gave rise to some concerns:

- Students felt that some assessors were 'easier' than others. Tutors did try to standardise assessment through team meetings.
- Some tutors had accepted oral evidence; this practice was discontinued, as the process did not produce written evidence which would support the assessor's decision.
- Different tutorial styles and arrangements caused concern to some students; this problem was overcome because, as students were working on different competences as the programme progressed, individual tutorials became the norm.
- Tutors found the format for recording assessment (records of achievement) to be cumbersome and time-consuming. The problem was resolved by introducing a grid system for recording competences.
  (p. 87).

Part of the assessment procedure was that students complete two essay assignments. 'The rationale for the essays was based on the belief that the students' professional development involved not only being competent in their immediate work environment, but also having an understanding of their work role in a larger social context' (p. 87). The students, however, felt that having to submit essays on a certain date was not in keeping with the philosophy of competence-based assessment. Many also felt threatened at the idea of having to write essays after many years of not having done so. Therefore, one of the two essays was

eliminated from the programme. For the remaining essay, students were given three months for completion, once the title had been provided.

Finally, Stark and McAleavy report that students had difficulty with the notion that they did not 'fail' a competence, but that they simply had to provide more evidence. Students continued to view the assessor as someone who 'passed' or 'failed' them. At the same time, this concept was new to course tutors. The new course required tutors to become facilitators rather than authoritative figures administering grades at the end of course work (as they had done previously on the Advanced Diploma programme). Tutors felt, however, that this new role, although requiring a greater amount of time, was both stimulating and challenging (p. 88).

A Competence-Based Certificate in Education (FE) Programme

Maynard (1995) provides an account of the development of a competence-based Cert Ed programme devised by six further education colleges in Cheshire, and validated by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) in June 1991. While there were many reasons that the scheme was developed, the reason most relevant here is that existing schemes for FE teacher training programmes 'did not meet the needs of Cheshire teachers' (p. 121). Teacher training in FE had been an integral feature of inservice staff development to enable staff to be trained properly. FE teachers in Cheshire were offered a range of teacher training programmes in-house, at county level and at neighbouring HE institutions, some leading to accreditation. The programmes were disjointed and *ad hoc* and did not provide a structured approach to professional development.

Maynard's (1995) chapter is in three parts: there is an overview of the development, strengths and weaknesses of the programme; the programme is then contrasted with Training and Development Lead Body

(TDLB) awards; finally, there is a discussion of some of the broader issues associated with competence-based programmes.

Maynard notes a number of the criticisms aimed at competence-based qualifications – citing Eraut (1989), Hyland (1992) and Smithers (1993) – including the notion that they are based on the application of behaviourism. She focuses on Smithers' (1993) concern that the fact that students can carry out specific tasks does not necessarily mean that they have acquired the appropriate knowledge and understanding. She counters this with a passage from a letter from City and Guilds to Professor Smithers which empahsizes that 'knowledge is an integral part of competence and is separately assessed in NVQs where this is necessary to confirm competence' (Maynard, 1995, p.130).

While acknowledging that the Cheshire programme was beset by a number of the difficulties identified by critics of CBET, she maintains that most of the problems were being dealt with effectively and that the programme 'works' within the frame advocated by Schon (1987) and others.

In her conclusion, she advocates finding a middle ground between the NCVQ approach and that of the more traditional academic models:

> Hodkinson (1992) argues that an interactive model of
> competence combines the theory and the process of learning
> with performance so that the learner makes sense of his/her
> experience with the support of a mentor or facilitator. This
> model of competence enables the learner to adapt, be
> flexible, change according to the context because it focuses
> upon reflection on practice. The ability to draw on and learn
> from experience to meet new situations (Schon, 1987) is
> encompassed within this model thus reducing the risk of task
> analysis or the somewhat reductionist approach
> encompassed by NCVQ. Perhaps the new vocational 'A'

levels (GNVQs) are attempting to combine the best of these
two approaches by promoting an interactive model of
competence. (p. 131).

Competence-Based Approaches to Teacher Training (FE)

Hyland (1992) notes with concern the emergence of a competence-based
version of the City and Guilds Further and Adult Education Teacher's
Certificate (C&G F&AETC), and highlights 'some dangers in the
uncritical acceptance of competence-based models by teacher educators
and trainers in the further and adult sector' (p. 23). He cites the concerns
of Collins (1991) that such models imply a 'narrow technicist approach'
to education which 'defines useful knowledge in the light of bureaucratic
and corporate needs' (p. 45), and asserts that redescribing the objectives
of teacher education and training in terms of competences will lead to
professional de-skilling and the erosion of autonomy (Betts, 1992).
Hyland (1992) cites a discussion paper from the Unit for the
Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE) which identified
a number of concerns including the 'erosion of breadth and quality' in
learning programmes and the loss of professional autonomy on the part of
teachers (UDACE, 1989, p. 33). He states that:

> there is an open admission that the chief motivation for
> change (which, we are assured, will not dramatically affect
> the "integrity and substantial reputation of 7307") was the
> desire to "ensure some compatibility with the standards
> framework being developed by the Training and
> Development Lead Body" (CGLI, 1991, pp.1-2). (Hyland,
> 1992, p. 23).

He suggests that the profession is increasingly vulnerable to such external
pressures, and that this might explain why McAleer and McAleavey

(1990) would want to recommend a competence-based model of teacher education which has so many obvious shortcomings and weaknesses.

McAleer and McAleavey (1990), discussing the competence-based Advanced Diploma in Education (FE) at the University of Ulster, say that 'the work role of lecturers in further education should be expressed in terms of competences... derived from the functions which lecturers are required to fulfil' (p. 9). Hyland (1992), however, argues that it is inappropriate to model teacher education on the occupational requirements of lecturers rather than on 'the knowledge, skills and values required to promote and enhance qualitative practice' (p. 21). He makes the point that 'Programmes of teacher education which concentrate on specific occupational roles are likely to produce lecturers who are uncritical of change but well able to perform the duties required of them by College management' (p. 25).

He cites Collins' (1991) claim 'that competence-based models are ones in which management interests are well served but in which education and training programmes are trivialised and occupations are increasingly de-skilled through the deployment of narrowly defined prescriptions' (p. 25). Hyland (1992) also cites a 1991 HMI survey of the C&G 7307 and CNAA Cert Ed (FE) provision which reported that courses were generally challenging and rigorous, but which also recommended that students should be encouraged to read more extensively (HMI, 1991). He suggests that in this light 'the use of competence to describe professional requirements begins to look seriously inadequate' (p. 26).

Chown (1992) argues that the application of TDLB standards to the training of teachers in FE is ill-conceived and misguided. The notion of competence (as applied to the C&G F&AETC) is not defined clearly and seems to refer 'to a wide range of physical actions; thought processes; the outcomes of both; effective attitudes; demeanours; linguistic and study habits; design skills and dexterity; the discussion of knowledge. These seem very disparate things to be brought under one banner' (p. 53). It is

inappropriate to suggest that each and all of these things can be brought together in brief, simple, comprehensible competence statements. Chown (1992) also dismisses the further claim that :

> at the same time as being comprehensive, the framework – 'elements of competence', 'performance criteria', 'range indicators', 'evidence' – will be so precise and specific as to ensure competence is identified, described and, most important of all, assessed with <u>national consistency and objectivity.</u> It will, it is argued, preclude all subjectivity, interpretation or value judgements. (p. 53).

Chown (1992) is concerned that if a GNVQ Level 3 'Instructor/deliverer of training' qualification were introduced – lacking the breadth and depth of the C&G 7307 or the first year of a Cert Ed – college managers might well not encourage staff to undertake the full Cert Ed qualification. This could have serious consequences for the quality of adult, further and higher education (AFHE) provision. He further suggests that if the AFHE sector, after proper consideration, were to reject the NCVQ model of teacher training, this could have a serious effect on the credibility of NVQs generally. Thus, acceptance by the sector could be seen as a political imperative.

Chown & Last (1993) agree that TDLB standards as applied to teacher training in AFHE do represent (at least at Level 4) statements of what competent, professional teaching entails, but claim that they fail to take account of much of what teachers do and, more importantly, *why* they do it. They refer to the notion of 'reflective practice' as representing the 'what' and the 'how' of teachers' thinking processes, and as underlying apparent pragmatism. They are concerned that the NCVQ model of competence is 'too inflexible to accommodate the dimension of this reflective professional process' (p. 16).

They cite the Haycocks report (1977) which recommended professional training for all AFHE staff to Cert Ed level and beyond, and they note that the C&G F&AETC is generally regarded as constituting roughly 40% of the Cert Ed. The Cert Ed was defined by CNAA guidelines as having parity with first-year undergraduate, Honours level study, and was generally awarded a Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CATS) rating of 120 points at Level 1. They regard C&G F&AETC and Cert Ed provision as being of a high professional standard, and cite 1991/92 HMI report (based on visits to around 70% of providing institutions) which found that 60% of sessions observed were 'good or very good' while 30% were 'satisfactory' (p. 16). They chart the development of a move towards a TDLB/NCVQ outcome-based competence model, for a form of provision which doesn't need 'fixing', with grave misgivings.

Chown & Last (1993) note that competence-based curricula are associated with an increasing awareness that learners have a right to expect clear statements on a range of issues. Such statements should explain: what they will be able to know or do after following a learning programme; what they will need to demonstrate they know and can do to be assessed as proficient; the assessment criteria; the ways and contexts in which their knowledge and abilities can be demonstrated; recognition of prior learning; open and flexible learning opportunities; distance learning; programmes divided into units or modules; and unified structures of progression within systems of credit accumulation or transfer. They point out, however, that none of these is exclusive to competence-based programmes. A great many institutions, including The Open University, have already incorporated these features in their existing provision without necessarily adopting competence-based curricula. The AFHE sector, they argue, has 'a long history and tradition of placing adult learners and the process of adults learning at the centre of curricular and organisational development which pre-dates competence-based curricula' (p. 17).

Chown & Last (1993) argue that any programme of teacher education must reflect the complexity of teaching, which they regard as a highly contextualized activity characterised by a low degree of routine:

> Teaching, then, might be described as involving the application of a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Teachers have very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others. Personal accountability for analysis and diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation figure strongly in their work. (p. 19).

They use the term 'reflective professional practitioner' to refer to someone whose professional practice conforms to the processes just described. They note that reflective practice is an interactive process which does not lend itself to the prescriptive outcomes associated with competence-based programmes, and that it is a developmental process by which we draw lessons for future practice. Competence-based models, they argue, focus on functional, workplace outcomes: 'Competent behaviour is linear and one-dimensional; it is impersonal, mechanistic and atomistic rather than dynamic and interdependent' (p. 20):

> The proposition that competence can be acquired or demonstrated 'piecemeal' is at odds with the notion of an integrated professional process, and it faces difficulties in adequately accounting for the crucial relationship between competence and context, because it lacks the dimension of the perceptual, analytical, critical process which relates the two....As the FEU has acknowledged, it is questionable how far this model reflects the responsibilities and practice of teachers (FEU, Feb.1992, p 4). (p. 21).

In a more recent paper, Chown & Last (1995) express concerns about the 'D' series of assessor's awards, designed to bring one aspect of teaching – assessment – into the NCVQ framework. They note that these 'D' awards have gone through a series of major reformulations and revisions by the TDLB, and that there have been serious doubts as to whether different centres are consistent in terms of assessment for these awards. They observe that there are problems with 'excessive and labyrinthine bureaucracy, and the use of confusing language, and lecturers do raise doubts about the extent to which the assessment procedures required for the award match the reality of assessment at college or in the workplace' (p. 8). There is also the question of whether or not they seriously misinterpret the real nature of assessment.

Chown & Last (1995) note the development of new and very different awards for assessors of GNVQ, which calls into question the extent to which there is a common concept of competence in the two systems. They also observe that the post-16 sector caters for a wide variety of curricula (GCSE, A levels, ACCESS courses, GNVQs, NVQs, HNDs, HNCs and degrees) and that lecturers training to work in the sector need to experience a wide range of assessment methods. 'Merely because some parts of the post-16 sector deliver the NVQ "curriculum model" does not logically imply that it is the most appropriate model for training staff who work in that sector' (pp. 8-9).

Managers need staff who are capable of managing – if not initiating – change, and this implies the need for a coherent system of broad-based professional qualifications. Existing Cert Ed programmes enable participants to acquire a broad-based knowledge of the post-16 sector and 'to work together in groups from a wide range of disciplines and organisations to achieve this overview of the whole sector' (p. 9). Cert Ed programmes value reflection on experience and experiential learning, and teach lecturers how to put these into practice. NVQ models neglect this and take no account of how people learn or of their potential as learners. 'If the NVQ model is adopted for teacher training, how will

lecturers whose own training has ignored these activities support others in carrying them out?' (p. 9). NVQs provide only a minimal threshold standard for practice. They neither encourage nor validate excellence. 'The post-16 sector needs staff who are more than merely competent; let's aim for excellence' (p. 10).

Bloomer (1994) expresses grave concerns about the introduction of NVQs into teacher education in the FE sector. He argues that NVQs do not 'satisfactorily address the problem of "underpinning knowledge and understanding" and its relationship to practical performance' (p. 1), and notes that the relationship between action and thought has exercised the greatest minds for millennia. Attempts to address these difficulties through the notion of competence have confused rather than clarified matters. He also notes that even if NVQs can be seen to be effective in assessing purely technical skills, it does not follow that they will be appropriate for assessing higher level occupations. 'NVQs offer no adequate model of professional practice or professional competence for dealing with the dynamic and complex knowledge and skills that professional practice entails' (p. 1). He is also concerned that the introduction of NVQs into teacher education (FE) is proceeding without serious consideration of their worth. In spite of a widely held view that NVQs are deeply flawed, many institutions have pursued their swift implementation in teacher education.

Leaving aside questions of the motivations for such moves, Bloomer questions 'the implications they hold for the promotion of professional competence in teaching, for the creation/maintenance of teaching as a profession and for the status of UCET [Universities Council for the Education of Teachers] as an assembly of professional teacher educators' (p. 2). There is no indication that NVQs contribute to the enhancement of teachers' professionalism; rather, they promote a view of teaching as technicianship acquired through the mastery of a range of technical skills. By way of illustration, he cites the competence-based C&G 7306: 'The 7306 makes no demands of "extended professionalism" (Hoyle, 1972), its

concerns being confined to the technical skills of "hand-to-mouth" practice or "restricted professionalism"' (p. 2). He argues that the 7306

> fails to locate learning and education within the wider social, political, psychological and other contexts through which they might be properly understood and through which teachers might develop the personal critical awareness so necessary for professional competence. (Bloomer, 1994, p. 2).

Professional Practice, National Standards and NVQs

Chown (1996) offers a conceptualisation of teaching as professional practice. He identifies three characteristics of professional practice: ethical values, autonomous pragmatism and the pursuit of expertise. He then considers whether NVQs can provide an account of these, and concludes that they can not. The effect of using competence-based approaches in teacher education programmes 'results in a reconceptualisation of teaching and learning as technical procedures, and of teachers as technicians' (p. 133). This represents a threat to the autonomy and independence of both teachers and learners.

Chown (1996) argues that professionals have an ethical obligation to meet the needs and promote the best interests of their clients, in the context of informed consent. Clients' needs and interests may sometimes conflict with the interests or intentions of the agency or authority which employs professionals, and such conflicts need to be resolved in ways which are both accountable and effective.

The teaching of adults involves teachers in considerations such as providing a high quality of service to the public, and preserving public trust and confidence in the service. In addition, teachers' contracts,

institutions' 'mission statements', validation documents and student handbooks variously require teachers to: manage learning situations to meet the best interests of the learners; be accountable for their judgements and actions; and involve themselves in collaborative processes which 'empower' learners (and to which learners give their informed consent).

In spite of the fact that there is inevitably some degree of routine activity in the work of most professionals, Chown (1996) argues that professionals need to be able to exercise judgement in contingent situations in order to meet the needs of clients. This implies that professionals need to be autonomous. He uses the term 'professional pragmatism' to 'refer to this process of making informed, autonomous judgements in order to practise effectively and ethically in unpredictable, dynamic circumstances' (p. 136). It is a process in which teachers are continually engaged, due to the uniqueness of learners' experiences and histories, and their different learning styles.

Professionals, once qualified, are under an obligation to engage in continuing professional development in order to maintain, update and enhance their practice. While those in other occupations may do this, professionals have a particular responsibility because of the ethical obligations they have towards their clients. Chown argues that 'teachers are under a continual obligation to evaluate and develop their knowledge, skills judgements, decisions and strategies, in the pursuit of expertise' (1996, p. 138).

He maintains that training for teaching needs to incorporate the three factors discussed above: ethical values, autonomous pragmatism and the pursuit of expertise. Teacher education programmes therefore need to address the ethical dimension of teaching, enable teachers to develop their qualities as autonomous professionals and enable them to develop as independent learners and reflective practitioners. These characteristics need to be fully incorporated into practice, and teaching qualifications should affirm that this has happened. He readily admits that we do not

know with certainty what the process of learning involves, but that we can probably agree that it is a complex one which involves reflection and the resolution of a variety of forms of cognitive dissonance. 'However, reviewing this experience can lead us to change what we know and value, and, consequently, what we do in the future. In a process of this kind, cognition seems to have a primary, generative role rather than a secondary or "underpinning" one' (Chown, 1996, pp. 139-140). The notion of reflective practice is one which has received widespread support in teacher education programmes in the post-16 sector, although there is a great deal of variety in the ways it is understood or interpreted. This lack of consensus on its precise meaning is simply a reflection of the complexity of the notion, but it is likely that a variety of approaches to reflective practice have certain normative aspects to them. These aspects should be included in the processes of assessment leading to qualifications.

Chown (1996) then considers why the competence-based approach to teacher training is not able to meet the three criteria he has identified. With regard to ethical practice, he states that there is no place for ethical values within the model, and neither the NVQ profile of practice nor the assessment process allow for the integrative or holistic approach that would allow us to deal with the complexity associated with ethical principles. Teaching involves complex interactions in situations of contingency and uncertainty, and the behaviourist conception of prescribed behaviour in occupational contexts is inadequate to deal with such complexity. There is also the problem of who would decide which ethical values should be incorporated into an NVQ programme.

In the context of autonomous pragmatism, Chown argues that the behaviourist psychology on which NVQs are based leads away from autonomy and towards technical prescription. Cognition is seen in terms of 'knowledge and understanding', and these are reduced to 'the recall and application of fragmented factual information at the level of the

performance criterion, or at best the element' (p.143). NVQs are 'utterly incapable of dealing with cognition, change and uncertainty' (p. 145).

NVQs are concerned with outcomes, and not with how people learn. They are thus inappropriate for Chown's third criterion of professional practice, developing expertise. The capacity to learn from practice, after qualification, is specifically denied in NVQs. Candidates are either competent or not, and once they are deemed competent no further development or training is required as long as they remain in the same role. Notions of proficiency or expertise do not play a part in the NVQ philosophy. NVQs merely 'define and assess a minimum, threshold level for acceptable routine practice and at best they are a blueprint for mediocrity' (Chown, 1996, p. 144).

Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice

Eric Hoyle and Peter John note that ' profession' 'is an essentially contested concept....and despite the best efforts of sociologists, philosophers and historians, it defies common agreement as to its meaning' (1995, p. 1). *Knowledge* and *responsibility* are generally cited as the key distinctive qualities of a profession, with the notion of a special responsibility to clients as 'the second most frequently cited defining feature' (p. 1).

Many social theorists, however, doubt the distinctiveness of the professions precisely because knowledge and responsibility are characteristics of a great number of occupations. Despite the intractability of the concept and the debates surrounding its use, Hoyle and John (1995) maintain that *profession* is 'a concept-in-use when teaching is discussed, [and] it must, despite all the semantic problems entailed, remain a concept – perhaps even a central component – of educational discourse' (p. 2).

Hoyle and John adopt what they call a 'criterion' approach to the problem of distinguishing professions from other occupations; they associate the beginnings of this approach with Flexner's (1915) paper. The criteria or distinguishing features of a profession were derived from an analysis of the recognized professions – 'medicine, the law, the church, architecture, engineering and the military' (p. 2). They trace the development of the criterion approach (Parsons, 1954; Lieberman, 1956; Millerson, 1964; Hoyle, 1980) and acknowledge that there is a lack of consensus amongst those theorists who have produced lists of criteria which characterize a profession. Nevertheless, there remains a high degree of agreement in the case of a small number of criteria – particularly knowledge, autonomy and responsibility – even though there are variations in the inclusion of perhaps less central criteria. (1995, p. 18).

When applied to the field of education, Hoyle and John see the term *profession* as 'a central organizing concept for exploring three aspects of *professionality*: teachers' knowledge, the significance of autonomy for effective practice, and the values and attitudes entailed in the notion of professional responsibility' (1995, p. 18). The notion of a profession can thus be taken as 'a starting-point for teasing out some of the complexities of teachers' practices in the three areas identified' (1995, p. 18).

The authors acknowledge that 'Investigating the concept of professional knowledge as it applies to teaching is a complex task' (p.44). The concept itself is contestable and a variety of theoretical models – from rationalist conceptions based on reliability and validity to more interpretative perspectives emphasizing intuitive, creative and practical elements – have been used to attempt to explain and describe it.

Lortie (1975) and Jackson (1968) 'agreed that teachers lack not only technical expertise but also anything approximating to professional knowledge' (Hoyle & John, 1995, p. 45). Liston and Zeichner (1988, p. 62; cited in Hoyle & John, 1995, p. 45) regard the profession as 'insular, reliant on custom, whim, and immune to thoughtful reflection.' In an

attempt to resolve these conflicting positions, Hoyle and John consider the role of knowledge in the professions, the emergence of professional knowledge in teaching, and different types of professional knowledge.

Knowledge in the professions is first linked with a scientific approach which attempted to discover universal laws (medicine and the 'hard' sciences are cited as examples). When applied to education, from the 1960s onward, this approach attempted to establish laws for educational activity based on research in the human sciences – psychology, sociology, philosophy and history. Knowledge validated by research would then be applied in practice. Success in implementing this rationalist approach was limited, and many felt that this was due to the failure of practitioners to apply the specialist knowledge of the researchers. For others, the indeterminacy of the classroom did not allow for the application of a set of predetermined prescriptions.

Hoyle and John discuss the emergence of professional knowledge in education after the Second World War. This development was fuelled by university-based work in education, and dissemination through academic and professional journals. Initially, much of the literature was based in the ideas of early theorists, from Rousseau to Dewey. Later, ideas were influenced by research in the social sciences, especially psychology. In the 1970s, much emphasis was put on educational technology and resources, while the 1980s saw the emergence of the action research movement which sought to 'qualitatively explore and clarify the nature and significance of teachers' thinking and the knowledge that guides practice' (1995, p. 53). This period also saw the rise of 'numerous taxonomies that purport to describe and delineate teachers' knowledge.... [the plurality of which] reinforce the problematic nature of the whole concept of professional knowledge' (p. 53).

The relationship between professional knowledge and the activity of teaching is then considered in terms of the theory-practice divide. The authors consider the normative theory of Hirst (1984), Fenstermacher's

(1986) practical arguments position, and Schon's (1983, 1987) concept of reflective practice. Hoyle and John argue that Schon's work has had a major impact on how we think of professional knowledge in teaching:

> Schon's work has rapidly become highly influential and has led to a considerable rethink of the role of professional knowledge in teaching. The notion of intelligent performance and the stress placed on professional judgement appears to offer teachers the chance to recapture the professional agenda while at the same time giving them the opportunity to celebrate and make explicit a great deal of the knowledge and expertise that resides within their practice. (1995, p. 73).

The authors conclude the section on professional knowledge by noting that the relationship between formal research findings and the classroom practitioner is central to the debate about the nature of professional knowledge. Educational research has produced 'a considerable body of professional knowledge that can help practitioners think about and remedy many of the classroom problems they face' (p. 73).

A recognized body of professional knowledge can also give credibility to teachers' assertions of expertise in terms of the 'technical, reflective and ethical qualities necessary to handle their task' (p. 74). The workplace autonomy of teachers has been considerably undermined over the past 20 years, and 'the stock of professional knowledge which has emerged over the past two decades may carry vital symbolic as well as practical significance by helping them to re-establish their public esteem' (p. 74).

'Practitioner autonomy is central to the idea of a profession' (Hoyle & John, 1995, p. 77). Those who favour autonomy argue that professionals work in uncertain situations where judgement is more important than routine; they should thus be free from political and bureaucratic restraints. Those who argue against autonomy maintain that professional practice is

predictable and readily subject to evaluation; claims to autonomy are simply strategies to avoid accountability. The authors argue that 'the traditional model of the professional enjoying a high degree of autonomy no longer holds' (p. 101). This is particularly true in the professions such as teaching where members work in organizations. Research in schools has shown that the collective purposes of the institution necessarily set limits on the individual autonomy of teachers.

However, there are limits to the extent to which autonomy can or should be reduced in the interests of collegiality. Education is characterized by a good deal of uncertainty and ambiguity, and this argues for a high degree of autonomy for practitioners. There is a clear link between autonomy and job satisfaction, and it is evident that satisfaction enhances effectiveness. The authors argue that 'it would appear that a contingent balance between control and utonomy...continues to offer the best scope for maximizing the professionality of teachers' (pp. 101-102).

Turning to the issue of responsibility Hoyle and John note that 'although members of the professions have no monopoly on responsible behaviour, responsibility towards clients is an essential component of the idea of a profession' (1995, p.103). Responsibility and autonomy are inextricably linked. In so far as professionals are autonomous, 'it must be assumed that the freedom which this allows the practitioner must be exercised responsibly. This means that the practitioner's actions must ultimately be guided by a set of values which place a premium on client interests' (p. 103).

The authors argue that the exercise of responsibility is dependent upon teachers having the necessary degree of professionality:

> There are three levels of professionality. At the practical
> level, professionality entails a body of skill and knowledge
> which teachers must have if they are to be effective
> classroom practitioners.

[....]

A second level of professionality lies in the capacity for
exercising sound judgement. Despite a general agreement
on the basic skills and knowledge which teachers need, there
remain important areas where teachers have to decide
between a range of pedagogical options.

[....]

A third level of professionality entails the efforts made by
teachers to equip themselves with the competences required
to make effective judgements. Three aspects of this third
level have been selected for consideration. They are:
professional development, reflectiveness, and ethics.
(pp. 122-123).

Hoyle and John make the case that a culture of professional development
has emerged in teaching over the past twenty years. Teachers now
participate in a wide range of professional development activities
including in-service courses, collaborating with colleagues, reading the
professional literature, and engaging in small-scale research projects.
This development has been aided by increased levels of funding for in-
service training and by recognition of the importance of continuing
professional development to enhance promotion prospects.

With regard to reflection, the authors note that *post hoc* reflection on
lessons has long been a feature of teacher training programmes. A more
recent development has been an emphasis on the work of Argyris and
Schon (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schon, 1983, 1987), who questioned the
notion that inert bodies of knowledge could somehow be brought to life
by being 'applied' to the problems of clients. Hoyle and John note the
importance of Schon's (1987) notion of '*professional artistry*, i.e. "the
kinds of competence practitioners sometimes display in unique, uncertain,
and conflicting situations of practice"' (1995, p. 124).

The authors maintain that Schon's notions of *'knowing-in-action,* *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* are integral to professionality. In so far as these aspects of professionality can be transmitted, they are most likely to occur in the collaborative settings for personal development which are currently emerging' (p. 126).

Hoyle and John then turn to the question of professional ethics. They note that while responsible behaviour is ethical behaviour, the meaning of 'ethical' remains contentious. They identify three aspects of ethical behaviour. Professionals should not use their position to cause physical or mental harm to clients, to infringe their rights, or to obtain personal gratification. Secondly, they should not behave in such a way as to undermine the professional position of colleagues. Thirdly, individual client interests should be given priority beyond the merely behavioural level described in the first point above. By way of illustration, they cite issues in medical ethics where professionals may place ethical considerations above legal ones.

Hoyle and John (1995) observe that issues of professional ethics are not *as prominent in education as they are in other areas of professional* practice (e.g. medicine and law). While this is in a sense understandable, *they are still surprised at the relative neglect of ethical issues in* education. They suggest that the professional responsibilities of teachers *are underpinned by ethical values, and that these* 'can be addressed as part of the process of professional practice' (p. 127).

The section on responsibility concludes with a list of the components of *responsibility, taken from Eraut (1992, p. 9). These are:*

- a moral commitment to serve the interests of clients;
- a professional obligation to self-monitor and to periodically review the effectiveness of one's practice;

- a professional obligation to expand one's repertoire, to
  reflect on one's experience and to develop one's
  expertise;

- an obligation that is professional as well as contractual to
  contribute to the quality of one's organisation;

- an obligation to reflect upon and contribute to
  discussions about the changing role of one's profession
  in wider society.

(Cited in Hoyle & John, 1995, p. 127).

The authors note that while this could be seen as an idealized list, it is
also a 'useful reminder of the breadth of what is entailed in the initial
training and further professional development of teachers. As such, it can
act as a useful corrective to policies which would severely limit the depth
and scope of teacher education' (p. 128).

Professional Knowledge and Competence

Michael Eraut begins his book, *Developing Professional Knowledge and
Competence,* by stating: 'The professions are a group of occupations the
boundary of which is ill-defined' (Eraut, 1994, p. 1). The most powerful
professions, medicine and law, are seen as the ideal-type, while teaching
and nursing have been described as 'semi-professions'. Several scholars
have attempted to arrive at a definition of a profession 'by compiling lists
of professional "traits" (Millerson, 1964)' (p. 1), but these have not
solved the problem of definition. Eraut notes:

Since this debate is most clearly focused around the concept
of an 'ideal-type' profession, we shall follow Johnson's
(1972, 1984) approach and treat 'professionalism' as an
ideology without attempting to distinguish 'true' professions
from other contenders. Johnson then goes on to define

'professionalization' as the process by which occupations
seek to gain status and privilege in accord with that
ideology. (1994, p. 1).

Expertise is the key element of professional power and influence, and
there are differing views on how it should be controlled. Teachers and
social workers have a long history of professionalization, but their
progress has been constrained:

They have had some difficulty in articulating a distinctive
knowledge base, and have also suffered from being under
much greater government control. Their lack of regulation
(except in Scotland) had led some to exclude them from the
ranks of the professions, but this does not accord with
popular opinion. (p. 3).

There are a number of routes of training and preparation by which people
may be recognized as members of a profession: a period of pupillage or
internship; enrollment in a 'professional college'; a qualifying
examination; a period of study in higher education leading to a
recognized academic qualification; evidence of practical competence in
the form of a logbook or portfolio (1994, p. 6).

Eraut employs the phrase 'the learning professional' to reflect the fact
that professionals continually learn on the job (p. 10). Off-the-job
learning has assumed increasing importance in the past twenty years, and
is often referred to as 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD).
CPD may provide knowledge which is not readily accessible in the
workplace, and which is not always linked with existing practice. There is
a recognition that such learning 'relies on three main sources:
publications in a variety of media; practical experience; and people'
(p. 13).

Eraut stresses the importance of a profession's knowledge base: 'The power and status of professional workers depend to a significant extent on their claims to unique forms of expertise, which are not shared with other occupational groups, and the value placed on that expertise' (1994, p. 14). The professions traditionally rely on higher education to legitimize their knowledge claims. An alternative approach is to ascertain the working knowledge of professionals, but user-derived standards threaten the hegemony of higher education. In this context, Eraut distinguishes beween propositional knowledge and practical know-how (for example knowing how to play a musical instrument):

> Here, we need simply note the increasing acceptance that
> important aspects of professional competence and expertise
> cannot be represented in propositional form and embedded
> in a publicly accessible knowledge base. (Eraut, 1994,
> p. 15).

Eraut uses the term knowledge in its broadest sense – to include procedural, propositional, practical and tacit knowledge, as well as skills and know-how. He also distinguishes between 'the personal knowledge of working professionals which informs their judgement or becomes embedded in their performance and the public knowledge of their profession as represented by publications and training courses' (1994, p. 17).

Eraut discusses a range of everyday meanings and conceptions of the term competence, and then considers it in the context of competence-based education and training. He notes the focus of the post-war behaviourist tradition on training in the United States and 'the behaviourist goal of tightly coupling training to specifications of need so detailed as to limit the possibility of generic programmes' (1994, p. 169). The social and political dimensions of the construction of competence were ignored, and the process was treated as a purely technical matter. Early examples of American competence-based education thus

...made themselves highly vulnerable to criticism and
developed products which revealed all too clearly the narrow
perspectives of their designers. It should be noted, however,
that behaviourist approaches have no monopoly of 'poor'
designs, the transparency of their system of specification just
makes them easier to criticize. (Eraut, 1994, p. 169).

The profession given the greatest attention by this approach was school teaching. Teacher education programmes had specific behavioural objectives, derived from competencies associated with the role requirements of teachers. This approach, emphasizing task analysis, can be contrasted with attempts to establish generic competencies in areas such as management, associated with the American psychologist, David McClelland.

Eraut then considers the development of CBET in the UK in the 1980s. He notes that in 1989, the 'NCVQ was invited by the government to extend the framework to include qualifications at the "professional" level' (p. 183). The role of lead bodies in estalishing standards for the professions meant that the 'role of experienced educators and trainers was deliberately shrunk' (p. 185):

Thus instead of joint committees of employers and
professional educators planning qualifications for
examination bodies such as the Business and Technician
Education Council (BTEC) educators were limited to
occasional involvement and examination bodies to preparing
qualifications to meet already specified standards, if so
requested by relevant lead bodies. (Eraut, 1994, p. 184).

Eraut notes the insistence over several years of NVQ development that qualifications were performance-based rather than knowledge-based: 'if knowledge was needed for competence it would automatically be

embedded in performance: otherwise it was not really needed' (p. 195).
By 1991, however, NCVQ had acknowledged that evidence of
competence did not always reliably imply necessary knowledge and
understanding, and in such cases this must be separately assessed. The
implication of this new stance was that lead bodies now had 'to indicate
what knowledge and understanding they consider to be essential' (p. 195).
Eraut considers that this was due to the problems of assessing over a
wider range of work situations, associated with the 'range statements'
introduced in 1991, and not any departure from the principles of
performance-based competence:

> Interest in knowledge naturally followed the introduction of
> range statements, when it was realized that knowledge
> evidence could improve the validity of judgements of
> competence based on a relatively narrow range of
> performance evidence. (1994, p. 195).

Eraut employs the term 'capability' to include two meanings: in its first
sense, it is the capacity to perform work or to do things, in which it is
almost synonymous with competence; in its second sense, 'capability can
be said to provide a basis for developing future competence, including the
possession of the knowledge and skills deemed necessary for future
professional work' (p. 208).

He argues that use of this construct could help to address two weaknesses
of the competence system: 'the ambiguous treatment of knowledge
arising from its late introduction into the system; and the rather dubious
stretching of the term 'performance' to satisfy the assessment criteria' (p.
209). Capability would thus include the procedural, propositional,
practical and tacit knowledge referred to earlier. In addition, the mistaken
assumption that knowledge and understanding can be inferred from
competent performance would be addressed:

The argument for getting a balance of performance evidence
and capability evidence depends not only on efficiency and
the possible lack of sufficient opportunities to collect a wide
range of performance evidence, but also on validity.
Appropriate capability evidence can often provide more
valid evidence of underpinning knowledge and
understanding than performance evidence, and that too has
to be taken into account when designing an assessment
system. (Eraut, 1994, pp. 209-210).

Standards derived from functional analysis should be used only as the
foundations of programme design, and not as substitutes for it: standards
do not constitute a design. Professional action is complex, and models
are needed which integrate its various elements and functions:

Such integration is needed both for teaching and for
assessment purposes, not only to improve efficiency and
effectiveness but also to improve the validity of the
fragmented representation of competence which inevitably
results from functional analysis. Hitherto, the assumption
made by the NVQ system has been that standards can be
converted into qualifications without any intervening design
stage. Until that assumption is challenged, many of the
perceived weaknesses of the NVQ system will persist.
(Eraut, 1994, p. 213).

Professions and Competencies: The Australian Model

Paul Hager and Andrew Gonczi argue that in Australia, unlike in the UK,
the development of a 'competency-based' approach to education, training
and assessment involved close cooperation between governments,
business groups and trade unions:

> What is unique about the Australian version of the
> competency movement, however, is the widespread
> involvement of the professions. Encouraged by the
> Commonwealth government, most of the professions have
> developed competency-based standards and are currently
> developing competency-based assessment (CBA) strategies.
> (Hager & Gonczi, 1996, p. 246).

The authors state that the 'competency' standards developed in Australia
have a similar format to NVQs in England, with units of competence,
elements and performance criteria.

> However, the differences between the competency standards
> produced by the Australian professions and those produced
> by most industry bodies in England are quite startling.
> Rather than developing large numbers of elements of
> competence with long lists of performance criteria for each
> element, as has been the case in the English NVQ model, the
> professions have typically developed about thirty to forty
> elements of competence. In many instances...the
> performance criteria are 'described' standards which are not
> expressed as long checklists (typical in England) but in
> ordinary prose which is meant to suggest the holism of the
> nature of competence. (1996, p. 251).

Hager and Gonczi note that much of the academic literature has been
critical of the development of competency standards, but argue that the
approach can provide a coherent framework combining government
policies on skills formation, social equity and industrial relations.
Furthermore, the competency-based approach to education and training is
as relevant to the professions as to any other occupations:

> It is also argued that, despite the criticism of the approach, a
> competency-based approach to the assessment of

professionals is potentially (and in some cases, actually) more valid than traditional approaches. That is, it enables us to come closer than we have in the past to assessing what we want to assess, viz the capacity of the professional to integrate knowledge, values, attitudes and skills in the real world of practice. The inferences that are an inevitable part of any assessment are far more limited in this form of *assessment than in traditional assessment (see Hager et al.* 1994). (Hager & Gonzci, 1996, p. 247).

There are a number of ways of conceptualizing the notion of competence, and skills formation policies are seriously undermined when inappropriate ways are adopted. Hager and Gonczi consider three different approaches.

The first of these is the task-based or behaviourist approach, 'conceived in terms of the discrete behaviours associated with the completion of atomized tasks' (p. 247). Evidence of competency is based on direct *observation of performance. It is this model which people generally have* in mind when they attack the competency movement, and its weaknesses are easy to enumerate:

> ...it is positivist, reductionist, ignores underlying attributes, ignores group processes and their effect on performance, is conservative, atheoretical, ignores the complexity of performance in the real world and ignores the role of professional judgment in intelligent performance (see Preston and Walker 1993). (Hager & Gonczi, 1996, p. 248).

The second approach focuses on the general attributes of the practitioner. Key among these are underlying attributes such as knowledge or critical thinking which form the basis of transferable skills which can be applied broadly across a range of situations. This approach has been popular in the management literature. However, there is no evidence that generic competencies actually exist: expertise may be domain specific. In

addition, the model is unhelpful to those designing education and training programmes for specific professions. The skills required for expertise in law, for example, might be quite different from those required in medicine.

The third conception, and the one advocated by Hager and Gonczi, is one that:

> ...seeks to marry the general attributes approach to the context in which these attributes will be employed. This approach looks at the complex combinations of attributes (knowledge, attitudes, values and skills) which are used to understand and function within the particular situation in which professionals find themselves. That is, the notion of competence is relational....Thus, competence is conceived of as complex structuring of attributes [*sic*] needed for intelligent performance in specific situations. (1996, p. 249).

The authors refer to this as the 'integrated' or holistic approach to competence, and maintain that it is the one adopted by the professions in Australia. It overcomes all of the objections to the competency movement found in the literature:

> It allows us to incorporate ethics and values as elements in competent performance, the need for reflective practice, the importance of context and the fact that there may be more than one way of practising competently. (Hager & Gonzci, 1996, p. 249).

Competency-based teacher education in the United States was based on the use of occupational analysis, reflecting the influence of behaviourist psychology. Teaching was broken down into discrete tasks which teachers had to perform, resulting in observable and measurable behaviours. The ability to perform these tasks, however, 'did not seem to

have any relationship to good teaching as most professionals understand it
(Houston 1974)' (1996, p. 249). On the other hand, the 'general
attributes' approach to competency holds that all teachers need is a strong
knowledge base, and that this will transfer to competent practice. The
integrated or holistic approach advocated by the authors is:

> ...to conceive of competent teaching as being the capacity of
> the teacher to employ a complex interaction of attributes in a
> number of contexts. Thus a knowledge base will need to
> mesh with, amongst other things, ethical standards and
> capacity to communicate with people of various ages and
> capacities. Unfortunately, this means that the hope of
> simplicity and clarity in all matters to do with delivery and
> assessment of education, the things that attracted
> governments to the approach in the first place, are
> misconceived. (1996, pp. 249-50).

The Australian Teaching Council has guided the development of generic
teaching standards in Australia since 1993, and five major areas of
competence have been identified:

> ...teaching practice; students [sic] needs; relationships;
> evaluating and planning; professional responsibilities. These
> have been further analysed into elements of competence
> following the template developed in the UK, though with far
> less disaggregation and, as a consequence, far fewer
> elements. (1996, p. 256).

Where a holistic conception of competence prevails, assessment strategies
for professionals are likely to be more valid and reliable than current
models. Mere observance of performance is not appropriate for the
complex world of professional work:

Thus competency-based assessment strategies for the professions should always use a variety of methods including, where necessary, the indirect assessment of knowledge. What is needed is breadth of evidence from which assessors can make a sound inference that professionals will perform competently in the variety of situations in which they find themselves. This judgmental model may require more time and money than more traditional indirect methods of assessment, but the cost of ignoring these methods is likely to be even greater. (Hager & Gonczi, 1996, pp. 258-59).

The FENTO Standards

The Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) was established in 1998 as one of the UK's seventy-three National Training Organisations (NTOs). The role of NTOs is to promote economic competitiveness by raising the standards of education and training in the industries and occupations they represent. FENTO has responsibility for the development and quality assurance of standards for the FE sector. In January 1999 FENTO published the 'Teaching and Learning Standards' ('the standards'):

These standards have been developed following widespread consultation with further education managers, staff developers and teachers, and a series of trials in colleges. (FENTO, 2000).

The standards are intended to inform the design of accredited awards for FE teachers, inform professional development, and assist institutions in recruitment, appraisal and staff development. They are thus intended to inform accreditors of teacher training programmes in FE, as well as those responsible for the delivery of such programmes. The standards are not

intended to prescribe syllabus content or assessment strategies; those responsibilities rest with the various awarding bodies. The standards consist of three main elements: professional knowledge and understanding; skills and attributes; and key areas of teaching.

Professional knowledge and understanding is arranged under three headings: domain-wide knowledge; generic knowledge; and essential knowledge. The first of these involves a 'critical understanding' of a range of factors such as the role of FE in the wider context, professional subject knowledge, learning theories, the concept of inclusive learning, methods of assessment and models of curriculum development. Domain-wide knowledge is applicable over all areas of professional practice.

Generic knowledge relates to six 'key areas of teaching' covering assessment, planning learning programmes, a range of teaching and learning techniques, management of learning, learner support, assessment, and reflecting upon and evaluating own performance. Essential knowledge relates to the particular standards within each key area of teaching.

Skills and attributes are divided into 'personal skills' – such as analysis, evaluation, managing time, handling conflict and negotiating – and 'personal attributes' – such as enthusiasm, self-confidence, integrity and assertiveness. A summary of the standards appears at Appendix 5 (p. 205).

In addition to the key areas of teaching, there is an 'underpinning competence' of 'meeting professional requirements'. It is expressed as a set of values or principles which are separate from the other 'statements of competence', but which underpins them all, and consists of being able to work within a professional value base and conform to agreed codes of professional practice.

The document (which has no page numbers) describes this underpinning competence as follows:

> Teachers and teaching teams need to be effective in applying the ethics and values of the teaching profession when working with learners and colleagues and in fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities as teachers. Among other things, teachers should recognise the diversity of students' needs and aspirations, understand and apply the concept of inclusive learning and encourage learner autonomy as well as reflecting the vocational and educational ethos of FE. (FENTO, 2000).

City & Guilds have circulated in draft form the specifications for a new '7307 FE Teaching' programme which incorporates the FENTO standards. Assessment is not competence-based, and consists of: a teaching and learning file which will include full records of teaching; a course folder containing all written assignments; and a personal development journal and summative profile. Assessment appears to have been conceptualized on the new (draft) scheme much as it was on the existing 7307.

3. METHODOLOGY

Design

Since the 1960s, Britain has seen the development of a tradition of
qualitative research in education. The beginnings of this tradition can be
seen in the ethnographic approach of Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey
(1970), both of whom focused on the effects of streaming on the
achievement and motivation of pupils (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994, p. 11).
Qualitative approaches developed throughout the 1970s, especially in the
areas of the sociology of education and in curriculum evaluation.

The 'new sociologists of education' noted that the positivistic,
quantitative approach to educational research took too much for granted
and failed to ask deep enough questions. They 'sought to place the
question of who defines what constitutes education on the research
agenda' (Hammersley *et al.*, 1994, p. 12). Research into curriculum
evaluation saw similar developments, and quantitative approaches were
seen as focusing solely on measurable outcomes while ignoring the
processes that led to these outcomes. The number of qualitative studies in
education continued to grow throughout the 1980s, and the paradigm is
now well established in Britain. The present study is located firmly
within this emergent qualitative research tradition.

There is a growing tendency among some qualitative researchers in
education to reject entirely the notion of objectivity on the basis that there
can be no 'objective reality' which is independent of the epistemological
presuppositions of the observer. Eisner (1991) criticizes the notion of an
'ontological reality' which he sees as underlying much educational
research. He also questions the proposition that researchers can adopt a
kind of 'procedural objectivity' that will eliminate subjective bias. He
suggests that all knowledge is framework-dependent, and that we can
have no direct knowledge of a 'world-out-there'. We can, however,

acquire knowledge which is more or less sound as long as we remember
that 'what we regard as true depends upon shared frameworks of
perception and understanding' (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994, p. 14). Phillips
(1992) also argues that the absence of a body of knowledge or data whose
validity is absolutely certain does not prevent us from making reasonable
assessments of competing claims.

These perspectives on the possibility and nature of 'objective' truth
charactize the approach to validity adopted in the present study. The
choice of method has been driven by a desire to avoid the extremes of
positivistic approaches to research on the one hand, and 'research as
story-telling' on the other.

Political and ethical considerations have also influenced my choice of
method. Positivistic approaches to educational research have been
criticized on the grounds that they tended to 'preserve the political status
quo, rather than challenging it' (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994, p. 15). The
use of positivistic approaches implied that education was politically
neutral and that its value was accepted uncritically; issues of the extent to
which education was pressed into service to support social inequalities
and dominant political agendas were not addressed.

In the field of educational evaluation (in which the present study can be
located), qualitative researchers rejected the hierarchical relationship in
which participants (teachers) took an inferior position to the researcher
(evaluator). MacDonald (1977) developed a 'political classification' of
evaluation studies, which he separated into three types:

- Bureaucratic evaluation, which is explicitly intended to serve the
  needs of government agencies by helping them to achieve their policy
  objectives;
- Autocratic evaluation, which offers external validation of a policy to
  government agencies responsible for funding education;

- Democratic evaluation, which is characterized as 'an information service to the community'.

The present study relates to the last of these models, and MacDonald's descriptor is therefore presented here at some length:

> Democratic evaluation is an information service to the
> community about the characteristics of an educational
> programme. It recognizes value-pluralism and seeks to
> represent a range of interests in its issue-formulation. The
> basic value is an informed citizenry, and the evaluator acts
> as a broker in exchanges of information between differing
> groups. His techniques of data- gathering and presentation
> must be accessible to non-specialist audiences. His main
> activity is the collection of definitions of, and reactions to,
> the programme. He offers confidentiality to informants and
> gives them control over his use of the information. The
> report is non-recommendatory, and the evaluator has no
> concept of information misuse...The key concepts of
> democratic evaluation are 'confidentiality', 'negotiation' and
> 'accessibility'. The key justificatory concept is 'the right to
> know'. (MacDonald, 1977, pp. 226-27; cited in
> Hammersley *et al.*, 1994, p. 18).

This study employs a case study method, based on the use of semi-structured interviews supplemented by documentary analysis. I have attempted to maintain some of the methodological and analytical rigour associated with the positivistic or 'scientific' approach to the research process – particularly in respect of the need to maintain objectivity of analysis.

There is always a potential for bias in qualitative research. Drever (1995) has noted that 'Bias becomes an issue if you ask people to volunteer to be

interviewed' (p. 37), and there is the danger that interviewees may hold an entrenched position in respect of the research question. Bell (1993) has noted that there is potential for bias on the part of the interviewer as well, largely because researchers are human beings and not machines. She suggests that 'It is easier to acknowledge the fact that bias can creep in than to eliminate it altogether' (p. 95), and recommends that constant self-control and awareness can help.

The aim of the study is to tease out respondents' perceptions with respect to the differences between the 7306 and 7307, and the effects of those differences on their own professional roles, on students' experiences of the two programmes and on students' professional knowledge. Sampling, procedure and data collection and analysis are discussed in the sections which follow.

Near the end of the research process, supplementary interviews were conducted with three City & Guilds officials, and a representative from FENTO and from another NTO. These interviews will be considered separately at the end of this section of the report.

Sample Selection

Participants for the research process were chosen in the light of the research questions and the kind of information needed. All participants are experienced practitioners in the post-16 sector who have delivered both the 7306 and the 7307, and are thus in a position to make meaningful comparisons of the two programmes. Respondents fall into two groups, which I shall call the 'interview group' and the 'e-mail group'.

The interview group was an opportunity sample of 14 practitioners drawn from seven colleges of further education, one institute of adult education and two universities in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. I made initial contact with two participants who were known to me through my work as Head of Teacher Education at my college. They then provided me with

the names of other potential respondents, and the sample grew to 14 through what Drever (1995, p. 36) has called 'snow-balling'.

The e-mail sample became available as a result of a national conference for post-16 teacher education held in Birmingham in April 2000. The conference organizers asked delegates to complete forms indicating areas in post-16 teacher education in which they had particular expertise, and areas in which they would benefit from input from colleagues. These forms were then posted to all the conference delegates. From these forms I identified 15 practitioners in the further education sector who indicated they had experience with both 7306 and 7307 programmes, and sent them my semi-structured interview schedule (as used with the interview group) via e-mail. Eight of the 15 responded. This group thus provided data from a further eight colleges of further education, spread around the UK.

The use of two groups of respondents, and the fact that interviews were conducted over a period of three years, constitutes what Arksey & Knight (1999) refer to as 'data triangulation'. This means

> ...the use of a research design involving diverse data sources
> to explore the same phenomenon. The data sources can be
> varied, or triangulated, in terms of person, time or space. So,
> for example, data might be collected from comparison
> groups, or at different points in time, or from a range of
> settings. (p. 23)

Such triangulation should help to increase confidence in the results of the study.

Data Collection

The method of data collection employed is the semi-structured interview. This approach occupies a middle ground between the two extremes of

reading out a list of questions and alternative responses on the one hand (as in market research), and the 'non-directive' approach in which the interviewee determines the course of the process on the other.

Observations were considered as a method of data collection. The method was not used because of the problem of identifying representative groups and teachers (Bell, 1993, p.10), and the fact that it was very unclear in what way such a method could help to answer the research questions. The use of questionnaires was also rejected because of the notoriously low level of response on postal questionnaires. Bell (1993, p. 85) notes that response rates are much higher if you are able to make personal contact with your respondents, but common sense says that once you've made contact you might as well conduct an interview.

With semi-structured interviews, the researcher establishes the general structure of the interview – based on the research question(s) – and allows the interviewee to respond in their own words. Prompts and probes can be used to allow respondents to elaborate on or clarify their answers. This method can be very effective in gathering information on respondents' circumstances, preferences and opinions, and to 'explore in some depth their experiences, motivation and reasoning' (Drever, 1995, p. 1). It also allows the interviewer to:

> ...follow up ideas, probe responses and ask for clarification or further elaboration. For their part, informants can answer questions in terms of what they see as important; Likewise, there is scope for them to choose what to say about a particular topic, and how much. (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 7)

Interviews allow the researcher to delve into the perceptions of respondents – what they claim to think or feel – while observations are more revealing about what people actually *do* (Arksey & Knight, 1999,

pp. 15-16). The interview method was thus deliberately chosen as best fitted for the purposes of the present study.

When people agree to be interviewed 'on the record', there is inevitably a 'power-differential' in the sense that the researcher has established the right to ask questions and to control the direction of the interview. This may be justified, however, to the extent that the process is intended to shed light on the specific research question(s): totally unstructured interviews can yield masses of irrelevant data.

Typically, the interview schedule for a semi-structured interview begins with a preamble which reminds the respondent of what they have agreed to do. The preamble also allows you to establish a 'common frame of reference' which may help respondents to understand your questions in the way you intend (Drever, 1995, p. 26).

This is followed by a series of key questions relating to the aim(s) of the research, and a final 'sweeper' question which allows the respondent to add anything they wish to the record. The interview schedule used in the present study appears below:

Interview Schedule

Preamble: When I first arranged this interview with you, I informed you that I was conducting research into the effects of using a competence-based approach in the training of teachers in further and adult education, and that I wished to focus on the 7306 and 7307 courses and on your perceptions of the differences between them. This interview is 'on the record', but I shall not use your name or the name of your college in the report. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Preliminary question: Can you give me an account of your professional role in education, and also of your role in delivering the 7306 and 7307 courses?

Question 1: What do you perceive as the important differences in the 7306 and 7307?

Question 2: What effect have these differences had on your own practice?

Question 3: What effect have these differences had on the learning experiences of the students?

Question 4: What effect have these differences had on the professional knowledge of students?

Final Question: Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic?

Two interviews were conducted in the pilot stage of the research each lasting approximately 45 minutes. The cassette recorder used to record the interviews was not equipped with an auxiliary microphone, and I was obliged to hold the machine and 'aim' it at the respondents throughout the interview process. There is some evidence that both respondents found this procedure invasive or intimidating. The problem was overcome in all subsequent interviews by the use of more sophisticated recording equipment, including a studio quality multi-directional microphone.

Full transcripts of the audio-recordings were made for all 14 interviews for purposes of detailed data-analysis, and each respondent was sent a copy of their interview transcript by way of courtesy and respondent validation. Most interviews tended to last from 30 to 45 minutes. Data from the e-mail group were more concise, and responses to the interview schedule tended to be around 500-750 words. This was due in part, no

doubt, to an absence of the use of prompts and probes in the e-mail interviews.

Procedure

Data for the interview group were collected through one-to-one interviews, using a semi-structured interview schedule. Interviewees were initially contacted by telephone, and their willingness to participate in the research process was established. Dates and times for interviews were arranged, and interviewees were supplied with a copy of the interview schedule in advance of the interview. The same interview schedule was used in all cases. Two interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents. All other interviews took place in college or university settings.

In the case of the e-mail group, potential respondents were contacted via e-mail as described above. They were asked if they would be willing to contribute to the research process, thanked in advance, and provided with the full interview schedule. They were thus able to insert their responses under the various question headings, and return the e-mail to me.

Participants

Details of the research participants in each group are given below.

The Interview Group

Karl was the head of an adult education section within an arts and humanities department in a large college of further education. Our interview took place in his home, in the summer of 1997. He was then in charge of running the Cert Ed (FE), 7307 and 7306 courses at his college, and was responsible for a staff of six full-time and three part-time tutors. At the time of the interview he had been running the Cert Ed for four

years, the 7307 for 12 years and the 7306 for four years (since its inception). He is now based in a university, where he heads an MA (Education) programme and contributes to the Cert Ed (PCET).

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Ralph was also interviewed at his home in the summer of 1997, and was based at the time in a medium-sized college of further education. He had been involved in delivering the 730 for 20 years, and had thus watched the 730 series of courses evolve – practically from its inception. He had been course manager of the 7307 for the previous seven years, and of the 7306 for three years. He had for four years acted as Moderator/Verifier for City & Guilds for both the 7307 and 7306 courses (a role which he still fulfills), and is currently responsible for six courses – three 7306 and three 7307 – for several colleges and one training organization.

Mick is Head of HE at a medium sized college of FE, and has been involved with the delivery of the 730 series since the early 1980s. He has been in charge of teacher education provision at his institution since 1987, and has delivered both the 7305/6 and the 7307, as well as Cert Ed and MA (Education) programmes. His institution moved to the NVQ model of the 7305/6 in 1992, but 'reverted' to the traditional model in 1997. The interview with Mick took place in March 1998, in a conference room at my college.

Martin has been involved in 730 provision in a large college of further education since 1978, and with Cert Ed provision since 1984. The 730 team at his college ran the 7306 for one year. He is currently involved in the provision of Cert Ed, BA (Education) and MA (Ed) programmes. He was interviewed in a conference room at my college in the autumn of 1999.

Fred is a tutor-organizer for a well-established adult community education provider, and was interviewed in his office in the autumn of 1999. He has been involved with the delivery of 730 programmes in a wide range of contexts for more than 20 years. He is an External

Verifier/Moderator for 7306 and 7307, and has thus had the opportunity to compare programmes across a range of centres and contexts.

Gayle had been involved since 1983 with 730 and Cert Ed provision at a large   college of further education. The education team at her college had been running both the 7306 and the 7307 since 1993. She has recently moved to a university, where she focuses primarily on Cert Ed and MA (Ed) provision. I interviewed her in her office in the university in the autumn of 1999.

Peter was appointed eight years ago as a lecturer in education at a medium-sized college of further education, with a brief to bring in the 7306 which was new at that time. He delivered the 7306 for two years, before taking the college back to the 7307 programme. He is now Education Programme Co-ordinator at the college, with responsibility for 7307 and Cert Ed provision. The interview was conducted in his office in the college, in the winter of 1999.

Tim has been teaching engineering-related subjects at a large college of further education for nearly 25 years. He was involved in the 7306 and 7307 programmes for some five years, before returning to teaching engineering full-time in 1995. The interview was conducted in an engineering workshop at his college, in the winter of 1999.

Hugh works in a large college of further education, where he has been teaching for around 30 years. He has been Head of Sociology for most of that time, and was one of the lead tutors for the 730 series for some 15 years. He now heads 7307 and Cert Ed provision at the college. The interview took place in his office in the winter of 1999.

Simon has been lecturing in FE and HE for more than 30 years. He has had considerable experience teaching vocational programmes in a medium-sized college of further education, and was involved in the 730 series there for several years. He now lectures in a university, delivering

Cert Ed (PCET) programmes. The interview took place in the Senior Common Room of one of the university's campuses, in the winter of 1999.

Rose is Curriculum Leader for Education at a medium-sized college of further education. She has a background in management and law, and has been involved with the 730 series for some 15 years. She was responsible for implementing the 7306 at her college, and was course leader of that programme for three years. She was instrumental in bringing her college back to the 7307 in 1998. The interview took place in her office at the college, in spring 2000.

Amy taught French language in secondary schools for many years before moving to a large college of further education in 1985. She has been involved since then with the 730 series and the Cert Ed, and delivered the 7306 for four years. She now focuses on the Cert Ed. She was interviewed in the HE office at her college, in spring 2000.

Dot has a background in hairdressing and beauty therapy. She has been teaching vocational programmes in a large college of further education for more than 20 years. She became involved with the 730 series when her college moved to the 7306 in 1993. She now heads a curriculum team, and is no longer involved in teacher education. The interview took place in her office in spring 2000.

Robert is a Head of Faculty in a large FE college, and has responsibility for a range of vocational courses. His background is in history, and he has been lecturing in FE for over 20 years. He was involved with the 730 series for eight years, and was responsiblefor implementing the 7306 between 1993 and 1995. Since that time, he has had only occasional involvement with teacher education programmes. The interview with Robert took place in his office in spring 2000.

These participants have considerable experience in the delivery of both the traditional 7307 and the competence-based 7306, and were therefore regarded as appropriate respondents who were well placed to illuminate the research questions. Access to these participants was facilitated by their geographical proximity to me, and by virtue of my professional associations with some of them.

The E-mail Group

Murray taught for five years in secondary schools before moving to a medium-sized college of further education in the South West, where he taught for a further 18 years. For the last seven of those years, he was course leader for both the 7306 and 7307 programmes. He also developed Cert Ed/PGCE (PCET) programmes, and was for five years Staff Development Manager at a college of HE. He is now a co-ordinator for a educational consultancy organization.

Linda is based at a large college of FE in Lancashire, and has been teaching Basic Skills, numeracy and mathematics for 18 years. She is now Professional Development Manager at her college, and has delivered the 7306 and 7307 since 1995.

Samuel has a background in sociology, and is currently undertaking a doctorate in education. He has taught in FE for 26 years, and has been course leader for the 730 series for the past 12 years. He is based in a medium-sized FE college in Avon, which is 'reverting' to the 7307 in September 2000, after five years of delivering the 7306.

Dick has been involved with the 730 series for 'many years' at a medium-sized FE college in Leicestershire. His main focus has been on the 7307, but he has had some experience with the 7306.

Jonathan is based at a large college of FE in Durham, where he has taught on teacher education programmes for over 15 years. These include 7306, 7307, Cert Ed/PGCE and BA (PCET) provision. He has been course

leader for all these programmes 'at one time or another'. He is co-author of a textbook written for the 730 series.

June has more than 20 years' experience in the FE environment, and is based at a large FE college in Lancashire. She taught biology for 14 years, but has been involved solely in teacher education for the past six years. She teaches on both the 7306 and 7307, as well as Cert Ed/PGCE (PCET) programmes. She 'inherited' the 7306 in 1994, but developed the 7307 in 1998 as 'a new venture in response to changing needs'.

George is Staff Development Officer at a large FE college in Worcester, and has for many years been course leader for the 7306 and 7307 programmes. He is the author of a popular course book for the 730 series.

Vincent has worked in the FE sector for 22 years, and is based at a medium-sized FE college in Tyne and Wear. He has been Subject Leader for Education and Training for 14 years. He was involved in the pilot of the 7305 (later to become the 7306) in 1992, and was also a Moderator/External Verifier for the 7306 and 7307.

All of these respondents from the e-mail group have wide experience of both the 7306 and 7307 programmes. Their responses to the interview schedule should help to ensure the validity and reliability of the present study, when they are compared and contrasted with those of the interview group.

Supplementary Interviews
Towards the end of the research process, supplementary interviews were conducted with three officials from City & Guilds, and a representative from FENTO and from another NTO. This was done because, midway through the research process, the FENTO standards were introduced and City & Guilds announced that the 7306 programme was to be withdrawn. Numerous approaches to City & Guilds to seek clarification as to why

this decision had been taken produced no result. I therefore used personal contacts within the teacher training profession to arrange interviews with individuals who were in a position to shed light on the issue in an unofficial capacity. These people were contacted by telephone or e-mail and asked to take part in the research. One interview was conducted by telephone and the rest by e-mail.

The following questions were asked:

- Why did City & Guilds introduce the 7305/6?
- How did the existing FENTO standards for teaching and learning come into being?
- Why did City & Guilds withdraw the 7306?
- Was the withdrawal of the 7306 linked to the introduction of the FENTO standards?

The results of these interviews are discussed at the end of the Findings section of this thesis.

Data Analysis

The approach to data analysis adopted in the present study can be characterized by the following passage from Hammersley *et al.*, (1994):

> the aim is to develop a set of categories relevant to the focus of the research on the basis of careful scrutiny of the data. Once this has been done, further data are then coded and allocated to the categories. This produces a set of themes or features, each of which can be illustrated by data extracts. (p. 134).

The use of predetermined categories is rejected, on the basis that the researcher might unwittingly distort the data to fit them. Instead, categories are extracted from the material itself (Drever, 1995, p. 68). This approach is based on the notion of 'grounded theory' proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which discounts existing conceptual frameworks 'until categories have emerged' (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994, p. 82).

Hammersley, *et al.* (1994) note that analysis often occurs 'at the same time and in conjunction with data collection' (p. 72). They suggest that it may be inadvisable to continue to collect data 'without examining it from time to time to see if any major themes, issues or categories are emerging. These, in turn, will then direct future data collection in the process known as "progressive focusing"' (p. 72). This is the approach adopted in the present study.

Hammersley, *et al.* (1994, p. 73) suggest that the process of data analysis can be usefully examined under three headings:

- preliminary and primary analysis;
- category and concept formation;
- the generation of theory.

Preliminary and Primary Analysis
This stage of analysis begins by identifying features in transcripts or fieldnotes and making brief notes on important points, suggestions, relationships, etc. This process leads to the recognition of emerging themes and possible patterns.

At this stage, the researcher is studying the data and seeking clues to categories, themes and issues, looking for key words, other interesting forms of language, irregularities, strange events, and so on. This, in turn,

leads to the formation of categories and concepts. (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994, p. 83).

Preliminary and primary analysis begins tentatively and speculatively, but ideas can be expected to take shape as data collection and analysis proceed. These first steps in analysis can indicate the direction of further enquiries, as well as connections with the literature and with other data. Attention also needs to be paid to any inconsistencies and contrasts in the data.

Category and Concept Formation

The next step is to organize the data in a systematic way, by classifying and categorizing. Data need to be organized in an exhaustive, integrated, succinct and logical way, and the first step in this process is to identify major categories behind which the data can be marshalled. In the context of the present study, the categories will relate to participants' perceptions on a range of issues related to the research questions. As Hammersley *et al.*, note:

> The test of the appropriateness of such a scheme is to see
> whether most of the material can be firmly accommodated
> within one of the categories and, as far as is possible, within
> one category alone. Also, the categories should be at the
> same level of analysis, as should any subcategories. (1994,
> p. 77).

The Generation of Theory

Here the research becomes more theoretical and moves from questions of 'what' or 'how' to questions of 'why'. Hammersley, *et al.*, suggest that this facet of analysis involves trying to understand events or reports from the participants' point of view, a consideration of comparative contexts,

and the examination of consequences (1994, p. 80). In addition, it is
necessary to explore alternative theories.

Hammersley, *et al.*, see the development of theory as proceeding through
'comparative analysis', where

> Instances are compared across a range of situations, over a
> period of time, among a number of people and through a
> variety of methods. Attention to sampling is important if the
> theory being formulated concerns a particular population.
> Thus comparisons are made among a representative set.
> Negative cases are sought for these might perhaps invalidate
> the argument, or suggest contrary explanations....These
> kinds of comparisons, however, can also be used for other
> purposes – establishing accurate evidence, establishing
> empirical genralizations, specifying a concept
> (bringing out the distinctive elements or nature of the case)
> and verifying theory. (1994, p. 81).

Early theorizing leads eventually to the identification of categories and
concepts. Because these are grounded in the data, they influence the
direction of the research through a process which Hammersley, *et al.*,
refer to as 'theoretical sampling'. 'This is to ensure that all categories are
identified and filled or groups fully researched' (1994, p. 81).

The process is complemented by the use of a research diary, comments on
field notes, comparisons with other material, considerations of reliability
and validity, and interconnections within the data. 'Consulting the
literature is an integral part of theory development. It helps to stimulate
ideas and to give shape to the emerging theory, thus providing both
commentary on, and a stimulous to, study' (Hammersley, *et al.*, 1994,
p. 81). Consulting colleagues for their knowledge and opinions can also
serve as a useful 'sounding board' in the process of theory formation.

The goal of analysis in the present study is the generation of theoretical or conceptual frameworks, rather than of testable hypotheses.

4. FINDINGS

Theme analysis was used to analyse the interview data, in order to establish categories which represent the perceptions and preoccupations of the respondents. This involves the 'systematic labelling of particular data items in terms of one or more categories and the filing of copies of all the data items relevant to each category in the same place so that they can be compared and contrasted.' (E835 Study Guide, p. 171). Categories were therefore not established at the start of the research, but emerged from the data and were clarified throughout the process of data analysis.

The process of analysis was simplified by the fact that respondents addressed each of the interview questions reasonably directly. Specific categories thus emerged in the context of each interview question. On the other hand, respondents had particular preoccupations or perceptions which were in evidence throughout the interview process and across interview questions.

Principal categories have, where this was appropriate, been supplemented by sub-categories which represent the specific perspectives of the respondents within a more general context. These sub-categories, when compared and contrasted, may help to highlight areas of agreement and difference between the respondents. The research findings are presented below under the headings of the four main interview questions.

Ql: What do you perceive as the important differences between the 7306 and the 7307?

The key difference between the two programmes was perceived to be that of assessment of students' learning. This was emphasised by all respondents, from both the interview group and the e-mail group. Assessment on the 7306 was seen as having an emphasis on the production of evidence of competence, in contrast to the more traditional

essay-based assessment characteristics of the 7307. A number of respondents were concerned that the 'reflective practice' element of the 7307 was lost or diminished in the 7306, because of the demands of the assessment model. Karl also sees the competence-based assessment of the 7306 as a threat to 'teacher autonomy', and links it with behaviourist learning theory:

> KARL: Yea, I mean, obviously an important change is that the assessment structure has become far more focused in the context of the new course structure. The assessment structure is highly prescriptive and lays down quite clearly what students have to do. The focus upon competences obviously makes a fundamental difference to the course. Ah, where the 7307 had the, there was a greater opportunity for teacher autonomy, a holistic approach which embraced a wide range of theories of learning, the 7306 course is very much in the technocratic curriculum tradition and is largely based on behaviourist principles and it's quite hard to avoid that. So in that sense those have been the most important changes. Whether you think that's good or bad is obviously a part of personal preference.
>
> With the 7307 there is less of a focus upon the assessment structure and there is much greater opportunity for reflection, there is much greater opportunity for the students on the course, through the course, to reflect on their practice. They are not constrained by a particular assessment model so therefore they are less concerned about the accumulation of evidence to indicate having competence in a particular area and they are encouraged much more to reflect on their practice in an on-going kind of way. So if you take for example the learning cycle of experience, reflection, theorising and then new action, there is a greater opportunity within the 7307 model to work on that learning cycle,

whereas on 7306 there is less opportunity to do that because there is much greater emphasis on at various stages of the course providing evidence that they can do a particular task, without really asking the students to reflect upon that particular task completion.

Samuel also had concerns about behaviourism and teacher autonomy:

SAMUEL: 7306 stresses product and outcomes. It is highly prescriptive and is probably reductive and behaviourist in that teaching is seen as being reducible to finite observable 'skills'. I would like to think that 7307 will allow for more teacher autonomy with greater emphasis on values and process. A competence model gives you only a specification of assessment criteria and not a syllabus.

Ralph also identifies assessment structure as the key change in the 7306, and refers to many of the associated elements noted by Karl and Samuel. However, his perception of change seems to be more positive:

RALPH: I think the key issue to me with NVQ models compared to the more traditional ones is that the basic difference is the way the student is assessed. I personally don't think there is any great problem in still delivering a quality reflective education course. I think the big difference is the way the students have to provide the evidence that they are in one set of terms competent in NVQ, or able to receive the certificate having finished all the pieces of assessed work for it in the more traditional schemes. I don't think anybody can get away from the fact that the whole of the NVQ model is just firmly rooted in behaviourism. I mean it's an end-result, it's a can-do system, um, and I have a nightmare of a sort of course where you could, for example, the very worst scenario, have people turning up, working in

a workshop situation with no input from the course team and
taking a whole year to prove that they could do what they
could do when they started, and that would mean to me the
ultimate bad course. I think what's happened is where many
courses like mine and lots of the others I've seen where they
were rooted in good reflective practice in the 7307 model,
it's been possible to keep quite a lot of the good elements of
that....So I really do see the major difference between the
two courses as being an assessment model difference. I
don't think the underpinning content needs to be very
different.

Fred identified assessment as the key difference between the two
programmes. He also echoed the view of the other External Verifier
(Ralph) to the effect that the two programmes need not differ in terms of
their underpinning content.

FRED: Well... the obvious one, which is one is NVQed and
is competence-based and the other one is the more
traditional model if you like, then that is the prime
difference. The fact is that there shouldn't really, in my
opinion, be any difference in the underpinning knowledge
that is delivered.

Mick also takes the view that the content of the 7306 need not be very
different than that of the 7307. There were problems, however, in trying
to retain the elements of reflective practice in the competence-based
course: 'maybe that's why we struggled'. NVQ units dominated the
programme, resulting in a 'dominance of assessment criteria to the
exclusion of experiences of teaching and learning'.

MICK: In terms of the structure of the course I wouldn't say
it's very different, the difference, one of the reasons, why
7306 became a really unpleasant course, well not an

unpleasant course because that goes too far, but what made it much less enjoyable to teach than the old 730 was the way in which the NVQ units came to dominate. And this was true even when were trying to persuade people, 'Oh, don't worry about the PC's just worry about the assignments'. There were some people who kept niggling away at what does this performance criteria mean, what does that range statement mean, and so many of the sessions came to be dominated by questions of interpreting the performance criteria. So I suppose I characterise the principal difference between the 7306 and 7307 as the dominance of the assessment criteria to the exclusion of experiences of teaching and learning.

Amy echoed the notion that the content of the two programmes could be 'largely the same', but felt that the assessment criteria of the 7306 mitigated against this:

> AMY: Well I think the content of the programme in a sense could very largely be the same but I think that the format of the 7306 proved to be astonishingly powerful much to my irritation. I gradually actually learned to resist that power but it still places a big burden of producing evidence on students and I think then assessment came to play an unnaturally large part in the process, I think it is an important part but I think if it becomes too important then the other parts of the programme get forgotten. So whereas, I think if you're sufficiently powerful to realise that the content is basically the same and not be misled by these or tempted away by these harmful assessment guidelines I think maybe you can overcome this. It's still very restrictive in terms of assignment work; you can't actually give assignments people have to produce evidence. And I think of criminal activity because in a sense its a court of law mentality. I think the whole vocabulary to me speaks of a

kind of, well either the police court or a kind of factory image, where you're on a production line where you've all got to be the same.

Peter also focused on the dominance of assessment units, which he felt made the programme structurally unsound.

> PETER: For me key difference is around the assessment structure. With 7306 the programme was driven by the units that the candidate had to produce evidence of competence toward and everything focused around that, as opposed to 7307 which I see as a developmental programme, that is well thought-out and meets the needs of candidates. The 7306 demanded if you took students for a year then you really had to be on with some form of assessment process quite quickly, otherwise, towards the end of that year you would have the ten or twelve units, ten units initially, for them to produce evidence of, evidence against; and it would be simply too much. There was very little all year for assessment, and the problem there is that if you engage them with the units early in the year then they were having to establish evidence of competence before they were competent, because many had come to us to learn the craft to decide whether they were going to be okay in the role. Some were experienced, admittedly, but many weren't. And yet to have a balanced assessment process they were being forced to engage in producing what in many ways was notional evidence of competence. I found it to be structurally unsound.

The problems for the inexperienced teacher of gathering evidence of competence was also noted by June:

JUNE: In addition, new tutors cannot always lay their hands on the evidence without some teaching experience under their belt. Both courses require the same level and amount of teaching time: we cover the same curricular areas. Perhaps the [730]7 allows for a broader consideration of policy and practice through the option assignments.

Martin voices similar concerns to those of June:

MARTIN: We felt that while the 7307 was developmental the 7306 was merely a snap-shot of existing competencies and could become a triumph of the photo-copier over learning. It was also more suitable for those in FE and in training than for those who were either just beginning to teach or who practised exclusively in 'traditional' adult education.

Martin also highlighted the nature of the assessment structure, focussing on the D32/32 assessor's awards, and took the view that it was likely to have a detrimental effect on the quality of the programme.

MARTIN: Well you know all this already but it's the performance criteria, the prescriptive performance criteria, and the competences that the students are expected to hit. And D32/3 is part of the 7306. But well I think I've dealt with about 100, I've assessed 100 D32/3 folders maybe more over the last seven or eight years because that was part of my role at the last College, and I don't think more than a handful of people would say they enjoyed the experience. I mean right from the start we said back to NCVQ and BTEC, you're asking professional educators to do things to jump through hoops which is really almost an insult to them really, you could use that word. I think one or two people have enjoyed doing the D32/33, which is a major part of the

7306 as you know, have enjoyed doing it but they enjoyed doing *parts* of it. It might have been people who weren't too up to date with portfolio production and people who weren't sure about writing outcomes and doing evaluation and moderation, it might have helped some people. But the overall 7306 I'm sure suits some learners but I'd like to see some research on what learners it *does* suit. It seems to me that it's a very fairly mechanical process and it can if taught in a very prescriptive way it would produce convergent thinkers rather than divergent thinkers. And the essence of our Cert Ed and the essence of my teaching style is to create divergent thinkers, debaters, critical thinkers, thoughtful, analytical, critical people. Now you *could* do that with 7306 given the right resources and, yeah, you could do it but there is a chance that you can't do it, and that worries me.

Gayle voices similar concerns that the assessment structure of the 7306 may have an adverse effect on the quality of the programme, and also echoes June's observation about 'broader considerations':

GAYLE: I would have said that the 7306, as with most competence-based courses, is identifying particular skills which need to be performed effectively and efficiently by a practitioner and that these skills are taken to a particular standard and passed. My concern with that is that what I observed was that there was sometimes a lack of underpinning educational theory and opportunity for debate and discourse around the development of those skills. And that I see as absolutely crucial to teacher education. The 7307 seems to me to offer an opportunity for that to take place.

Simon also has concerns about a lack of breadth in the competence-based programme:

SIMON: I think the chief distinction is it seems to me that competence-based education seems and appears to be chopping up knowledge into sort of fairly water tight areas so we hold a competence that's got to be achieved by gathering certain amounts of evidence and then we move to the next pocket of competence and particular area of maybe knowledge but certainly deal with competence. The chief difference is that what that gives rise to is I think a lack of coherence in the overall picture of any knowledge because it's captured in the pockets, it's taught in pockets and it seems probably it's learnt in pockets. That sounds a bit tenuous but I felt that quite strongly, the other element in that is we're measuring it in terms of assessment in very prescriptive and well defined performance criteria....Individual students have to go and get evidence to prove competence and this can be quite problematic. Firstly I think because it's a very individual exercise, and I've always rated education as being a more co-operative and collaborative exercise.

Hugh was originally positive about the emergence of the 7306 and felt it might provide students with more meaningful experiences than the 7307 process. He found, however, that the assessment process tended to 'distort the programme':

HUGH: Well there is an irony really in my judgement about the way that the programme evolved. Originally the 7306 looked and sounded as though it would be very student-led with a focus that acknowledged a much broader portfolio of experience than that based on assignments and participation in classroom activities. So it looked for the first time as though we were likely to get a programme which would enable individual students to express and evolve and develop

themselves in a way that was relevant to their personal
narrative or biography. The outcome however had quite the
opposite effect from our experience. The emphasis as we all
know on competence-based programmes tends to distort the
programme so that there is an excessive focus on outcomes.
This in turn produces a distraction with collecting,
identifying and collating pieces of material evidence, written
or otherwise, which lends support to the claims which are
being made in the portfolio.

Amy also expressed the view that the assessment process on the 7306
'narrowed the possibilities' as to what could be presented or experienced
on the programme:

> AMY: Well first I should say that the traditional 7307 I felt
> it identified the broad areas that people needed to explore if
> they wanted to become reasonable teachers. I felt it gave
> people enough individual freedom to interpret these
> principles for themselves in a really inventive context.
> Whereas, I have to say with the 7306 I thought it narrowed
> the possibilities by being extremely over prescriptive. So it
> became a kind of check list, added to which I think the
> assessment focus on it tends to invite certainly myself and I
> think other members of staff to teach to the assessment.
> Therefore, I think you lose out a lot, I think it becomes very
> narrow and of course it's essentially very repetitive as well,
> which is quite frustrating for students.

For Robert, the crucial difference between the two schemes was that 7306
candidates had to able to demonstrate that they could 'do the job well',
while those following the 7307 programme were required only to 'talk
about' or 'write about' their teaching role. He had expected that the 7306
would develop more effective practitioners than had the 7307, but found

that not to be the case. He appeared to be disillusioned with both programmes:

> ROBERT: For me the crucial difference is that the [7306]
> candidate must be able to demonstrate that they can do the
> job well. Now that's become shrouded in all sorts of
> terminology like 'competent' and all that kind of thing and
> there's been some time to attempt to find out what it was but
> that's the crucial thing being they ought to be able to put
> things into practice and they had to be able to talk coherently
> in the strictest way about their work. Prior to that it seemed
> to me that there seemed to be an assessment process, a
> process within the [7307] course which didn't really demand
> a lot of the students. Some could write about it very well but
> couldn't practice it, some could practice it and talk about it
> and whatever very well, but generally speaking I think that
> my experience of teacher education under the old scheme
> was that people weren't particularly well equipped to do
> things well. Now my experience of the new scheme is that
> that hasn't happened either although it should be. And as an
> educational manager I'm still absolutely fed up to the back
> teeth of the fact that people still can't write a scheme of
> work and tell me why they can't do it, they still can't write a
> lesson plan, they can't write objectives. So although I think
> what the new scheme it seemed to me would be better
> equipped for practice it doesn't seemed to have worked but
> those were the crucial differences I think, you know writing
> about it and talking about it or doing it.

Tim was alone amongst respondents in identifying the kind of student attracted to the two programmes as constituting an important difference between the 7306 and 7307. He acknowledged that the programmes were assessed differently, but he did not appear to attach too much importance to this:

TIM: Well, I think the main differences were that the students on the 7306 were different from the ones that were on the 7307, in as much that the 7306 students were in the main unemployed, and they had been out of education for a very long time. The 7307 students were in a full-time job, most of them were in a teaching sort of situation like they were clinical teachers in hospitals or they were supervisors and they were training other people...and they wanted to get a teaching certificate....So that was one main difference. Another main difference was that the 7306 was a competence-based scheme and the 7307 wasn't, and the types of assignments were a little bit different for both....They [the 7306 students] had to build a portfolio of evidence and it was signed off and when it was complete with the evidence they would have achieved a 7306. The 7307 students had to do 10 assignments and when they did those 10 assignments to the acceptable level they got the 7307.

Finally, Martin identified the language of the 7306 assessment regime as an important difference, while Linda and Dick suggested that the 7306 stifled interaction within the learning group:

MARTIN: The language of the 7306 was so difficult and obscure that it became the dominant feature of the course, overshadowing the curriculum.

LINDA: 7306 is competence-based, proving existing competence. 7307 is more flexible, easier to develop as [a] professional development [programme] ie, extending and enriching and sharing good practice.

DICK: The academic standards required in 7307 assignment work are higher than those for the competence-based 7306. Fellow practitioners have reported that 7306 evidence gathering procedures are long and laborious, [and the] learning gained is mainly centred around portfolio building skills. Group dynamic is often disadvantaged by the roll-on/roll-off, attend as you need to, approach of the NVQ process.

Q2: What effect have these differences had on your own practice'?

A key issue to arise under this heading was that of constraints on time associated with the assessment structure of the 7306. Many respondents reported that the demands of the competence-based assessment specifications left them with less time for the theoretical or reflective elements associated with the more traditional 7307:

KARL: I think I've as far as possible in delivering the courses tried to deliver the 7307 and 7306 courses in the same kind of way, and obviously I would want to encourage students to reflect upon their practice and consider the processes to look at what they are doing and evaluate in an on-going way. But what seems to happen on the 7306 course is that increasingly they go through the academic year and they want to know whether they've got enough evidence for a particular competence, have they fulfilled the performance criteria. So it doesn't seem to be so much that they are engaged in reflection on their practice or evaluation of what they are doing, but more 'Have I fulfilled the criteria for the course?' So I've increasingly offered-up more and more course time, tutorial-type time for example which would be a kind of structural change, not in terms of encouraging students to reflect and open up and so on but to

actually look at their portfolio, to consider the evidence, to say, 'Well, yes, this is, there is sufficient evidence here which enables me to suggest well, yes, you've fulfilled this particular performance criterion.' I feel that has made a substantive change in the two courses. Yes where, whilst you want to expand upon things, you want to encourage the students to engage in discussions and so on in a genuinely reflective and opening-out kind of way, at the end of the day they are wanting you to say to them, Is my evidence OK. I think that really makes a tremendous difference.

Ralph also identified the same issue of time constraints associated with the competence-based programme:

RALPH: In terms of my practice it has meant that I have had to come under even more time-pressure, and this is a thing I don't like. I think, I don't see a way around it, in that all theoretical input has to be finished by about Easter to allow students time to build portfolios of evidence because although they may have been collecting evidence – one hopes they are collecting evidence through the year – it does take quite a long time to put that evidence together in a portfolio in an acceptable way so that myself and my colleague as front line assessors or an internal verifier or my own external verifier can actually make some sense of that. That involves the processes of putting it in the right place, cross-referencing it, logging it in, sorting it out and organising, which is quite a long business. So really the course now has to be delivered from about September to Easter, give or take. That's a shift in practice. That's tended to mean I've had to drop the odd bit of what I would have done. Again that really made me think, 'Now what is really essential?'

Rose felt that the demands of the competence-based assessment regime mitigated against her providing the kind of input into the programme that she would have wished to do:

> ROSE: Okay, when I started teaching here four years ago they were running the 7306 programme very much as a taught competence-based programme. Now we looked at it in terms of the fact that if people were coming into teaching or training there had to be some sort of input, there had to be some sort of body of knowledge, you couldn't just assume that you were going to assess their competence....The problem that we had really was in the way that the thing was assessed, which was competence-based so it was actually filling in an awful lot of paperwork and for them to put their portfolios together and the way that we ended up doing things was that we spent the whole of the third term working with them on their optional units and also putting their portfolios together so it was very, very time consuming and tedious putting the portfolios together.

Many respondents echoed similar sentiments echoed similar sentiments:

> AMY: I think that was the most frustrating thing that they found about the course was the apparent repetitions, I know you can overcome this by indexing and cross referencing, I wasn't teaching people to cross reference and be bureaucrats they wanted to explore how they should behave in the classroom and I thought it had a very, very narrowing effect and a very controlling effect and the paperwork was extraordinarily complex and tiresome.

> MARTIN: Effect on my practice was minimal as I still spent much time teaching what I believed to be important. I did spend some time on helping students with their portfolios. I

also found it difficult to do sensible lesson observations. Longer term it bred in me a contempt for competency based systems as developed in the UK.

SAMUEL: Quite profound influences on practice over the last five years. Had to change delivery completely and became obsessed with managing, interpreting and understanding an assessment-driven model. We became focussed on interpreting the language of the standards and supporting students through the process of 'evidence collection' for portfolios, etc. The process of developing and identifying key teaching and learning skills got lost initially. Only recently do I feel that I have 'mastered' the ability to deliver this course successfully. However, I have gained so much from the NVQ approach that I am grateful for the experience.

JONATHAN: The main effect on the 7306 is the danger that little or no teaching or theoretical input takes place. Students concentrate on filling their portfolio . I am aware that students leave the 7306 to come to the 7307 because they want to learn how to teach. We offer both versions of the 730.

For Mick, the assessment criteria 'didn't affect the *design* of the programme, but did have an effect on how it actually *worked*'. He reported that many hours were spent explaining the performance criteria, and that it would have been 'better to do some teaching first, and worry about performance criteria later'. Performance criteria often meant very trivial things, and it was more difficult to understand them than to do what they asked.

Fred also felt that the assessment criteria dominated both the delivery and students' perceptions of the programme:

FRED: I have to admit to a bit of bias on this, my recollection is clear in that people became, I think maybe 'obsessed' isn't entirely fair, but became very pre-occupied with the building of the portfolio and with the gathering of the evidence. In a strange kind of a way, I felt that it was getting those boxes filled if not ticked that became the end rather than that process reflecting good practice in a kind of a way. I realise you could argue that one would follow the other I don't actually feel that is necessarily the case, I think people can be jumping through hoops for the wrong reason, not because they want to be reflective practitioners but because they have to demonstrate that they are reflective practitioners to fill that box in. Again, maybe that's not fair but that's the kind of gut reaction I had to it.

Robert held a similar view:

ROBERT: Yeah, that's quite an interesting question cause I've quite a lot of experience of starting off with delivering what might be called, you know schemes driven by performance criteria on a competence base. And I think what actually happens is that you tend to get anally obsessed with looking at individual PCs and all the qualifications that come with it, the range statements and all this kind of thing, and what you finish up is doing a crossword, creating a conundrum which you try and get your students through. And in so doing I think you miss the point, I think that's certainly what happened to me. It became a kind of arcane obscure problem which had to be unravelled generally in public, and sort of lost sight of the point of what we were trying to do.

Gayle also saw the competence-based assessment model as adversely affecting the delivery of the programme. There is a suggestion that assessment undermines professional autonomy:

> GAYLE: Right. I think that probably there was, as I said I think that with the 7307, certainly with the latest version, the opportunity for the individual professional practitioner to use their judgement about what theory they included, what particular perspectives they thought were important for people in teacher education (i.e. who were training) and that they could use their discretion; that there was enough breadth within the tasks to include quite a range of different professional activities and study. Whereas my understanding is that the 7306 had a tendency to have to fulfil a very large range of tasks and to produce a tremendous amount of materials perhaps to such an extent that there was a tendency for there to be little time or opportunity for the development of more in-depth approaches to the business of education.

Hugh identified the 7306 assessment process not only as time-consuming but also as vitiating against 'collegiality' within the teaching team:

> HUGH: Well firstly, I think the volume of simple course administration both from the point of view of the tutor and of the student increased in volume, and a considerable amount of our time was spent simply aiding students in their administration of their portfolios. It also had a major impact on the style of course development that we had produced at the college. We ran quite a few team teaching sessions and it was virtually impossible to actually integrate the different elements of the 7306 programme to produce cross-fertilisation, to produce a Gestalt about certain elements of the programme which we felt could not be segmented in to

the different modules. So collegiality and co-operation between the teaching team – this was commented in the team meeting minutes which we had – declined quite sharply....What most of the tutors found, certainly I found, was that a lot of the more creative kind of teaching which puts a lot more responsibility on the students learning had to be withdrawn or modified to such an extent that the scope of our practice, certainly the scope of my practice, really narrowed very considerably.

Amy was one of many respondents who reported that they attempted to retain as many as possible of the 'positive' elements of the 7307, when delivering the 7306:

> AMY: Well I have to reluctantly say here that it may have sharpened up my act in a number of ways because as its a kind of checklist it became much easier to ensure that you included everything that needed to be included. I think it tended to lead rather to a sort of didactic delivery because one was so anxious to ensure that things were included. But because on the whole a didactic approach is not mine I would say I did keep much of, many of the activities that I used to use in the previous 7307 because I thought they were creative, because I thought even though they might not be appropriate for evidence as such or might have to be trimmed down they're still valuable activities.

Peter found that his attempts to introduce to the programme the kinds of elements associated with the more traditional course met with resistance from his students:

> PETER: I mentioned that the first draft was very difficult and that caused a lot of concern to students. The emphasis on delivery of content got skewed because of the concerns of

the candidates. At the end of the day they wanted a
qualification; if they didn't get the qualification at all many
of them would never have started the programme. They
were coming to learn, yes, and they wanted a positive
outcome, an outcome which conferred on them a degree of
status, and it became apparent very quickly that the complex
nature of the assessment process mitigated against an easy
understanding of what they had to do and created an undue
amount of anxiety. And certainly here we found that any
attempt to introduce more content would be met with
resistance when they wanted to understand what they had to
do for assessment. Time and time again, in being responsive
to the demands of students, we had to almost abandon the
content of the session to help them understand the
assessment process. For me, compared to how 7307 works
again now in this establishment, that was a major difference.

Dot was one of just two respondents – the other being Tim – who had a
generally positive perception of the 7306. In her view, the 7306
assessment tasks were more relevant to students than those of the 7307,
and there was more scope for meaningful activity during classroom
sessions:

DOT: The traditional programme was more of a lecture
based situation with students maybe working on various
sorts of tasks, some group exercises within the evening
sessions, but reading around the subject more themselves at
home. Whereas [with] the competence-based, you could set
around real tasks with the students experiencing what they
needed to do to cover their range and their performance
criteria when we went to actually assess the students. A lot
of the competence-based course was very related to the sorts
of teachers, to the teaching the students were doing
themselves. So they could actually relate quite well to the

competence, underpinning knowledge, range statements; they seemed to understand and comprehend those quite easily.

For Tim, the main effect on his practice had to to do with the fact that students on the 7306 seemed to require much more personal, one-to-one tutorial time than their counterparts on the 7307:

> TIM: Okay, I think that there was a difference in the delivery, the methodology was a little bit different when dealing with, and I don't mean to be to say that in a patronising way we didn't patronise these students, but I think we had more one-to-one than we would in the 7307. I think also there was more having to explain things in a simpler way, a more simple way, than there was to the 7307 students. They needed much more help, they needed encouragement, the 7306 students, they needed encouragement, they needed positive feedback....I'm not saying that people on 7307 didn't come to us for help: they did, and some were very nervous and some were very keen to do, and in the main they were very good. Overall I think it was a different approach in the teaching of the two groups, there was this difference.

An issue identified by only Karl and Ralph was the perceived need to have different personnel to run the two courses. Karl appears to take the view that the difference between the two courses is more than just one of assessment:

> KARL: I've found running the two courses, and I've actually run them side-by-side, it's quite a difference. I mean I've even moved to the point this last year where our course teams, I've had two different course teams running the two different courses because it creates a high kind of

schizophrenic kind of, you know you have to move away from one way of thinking, one form of practice, yea, on the 7307 to the 7306. So this last year we ran it we actually had two different course tutors running the 7307 and 7306, because otherwise you'd get a high level of confusion. I mean we assumed when we started out that we would be able to run the courses in the same kind of way and that only the assessment structure would be different; but it hasn't worked out that way.

Ralph sees this issue in a more positive light:

RALPH: One of the things that has shifted quite a lot is the fact that in order to deliver that course I've needed a slightly different partner in my course team because of the business of getting your head around the NVQ yourself. I think it quite difficult for people who were, who have never either been a student or taught NVQ courses to come to terms with that, to feel so comfortable that they can actually get that comfortable feeling over to the students. One of the things that's happened in terms of practice is that I've had to run up that learning curve and I know that's true of other people as well in other places. It's taken probably about a year to do that.

The issue of needing different personnel to deliver the two programmes was not raised by any other respondents. In fact, perhaps one-third of respondents reported that they had run programmes where both 7307 and 7306 students attended the same sessions together. It may be useful to note that Ralph and Karl were interviewed in the summer of 1996, during the pilot phase of this study.

Q3: What effect have these changes had on the learning experiences of the students?

Many of the issues of concern raised under Question 1 and Question 2 were reiterated here. Mick took the view that students found the 7306 to be a much less enjoyable course, due to the burden of paperwork associated with the assessment process. The assessment criteria encouraged students to take a 'minimalistic approach' to the course process. He noted that 'much valuable 7307 stuff was squeezed out' of the programme, and cited microteaching exercises as an example: City and Guilds took the view that 'simulation will not be acceptable'. Classroom practice was not seen to be at the centre of the 7306, where 'only two units out of 20 are concerned with this'. Teaching observations were devalued, and no overview of the teaching and learning process was taken. 'Global requirements [of teaching and learning] don't match with the specific requirements of units'.

Fred reiterates the view that underpinning knowledge was little different on the 7306 than on the 7307. From his perspective as an External Examiner, however, he provides an account of the effect of the assessment process on students' experiences of the programme:

> FRED: I actually feel that there was very little difference in
> the actual way in, which the programme of underpinning
> knowledge was delivered. I mean it was with the same
> tutors, it was in the same building, and so on. I think the
> difference changed with the way in which evidence of
> learning was gathered and the way in which tutorials tended
> to be about portfolio building rather than reflective
> discussion about teaching...We only and – I rue it to this day
> – got involved in the 7306 at the what they used to call the
> Initial Certificate level which was like an abbreviated
> version of it, not even equivalent to Stage One, you couldn't
> even say that. That was horrendous. Mind you it was at the

stage when nobody understood the TDLB units in the kind
of language they were using and the way in which
everybody was re-interpreting and interpreting and re-
interpreting re-interpretation; even so it was crazy. I lost
weight over that and I'm sure the students did. It was
terrible, absolutely appalling, and they became obsessed
with the language and the kind of convoluted way in which
it was structured. We had no experience at all of running a
competence-based course and we were trying to give them
the experience of a traditional course which we feel we can
do quite well and this other thing was getting in the way. I
was most reluctant to look at the 7306 as the full thing. In
fact the real concern was that according to City and Guilds
when it first came out there was only a couple of years' life
left in the 7307. And in fact it's the other way 'round now, I
would doubt if the 7306 as such would actually survive the
FENTO [Further Education National Training Organisation]
set up when it's shaken around and it will go down the
TDLB qualification route which is a mirror of it anyway, the
training one.

Peter notes that students' experiences were changed 'quite profoundly' by
the 7306 process, in spite of the fact that he re-wrote all of the units in
order to make them more comprehensible and user-friendly:

PETER: The initial cohort were incredibly confused and I
was able with the agreement of the Regional Verifier to
effectively re-write units. I re-wrote all of the units and
presented my students with, if you like, units written as far
as possible in plain English as to what they had to do, what
evidence they had to produce and what activities they would
have to engage in, that made sense in that teacher training
situation.

So the focus was on this assessment process and it was compartmentalised. And I have to be honest here, but some people got through that programme having succeeded at a component level that this unit was passed off as okay, that unit was passed off as okay. But the overall product, if you like, the package of components, was never really substantial. There were some people that I didn't honestly think were effective practitioners, yet they passed all the units because they had focused on those. There wasn't an underlying sense of professional development. The [73]07 certainly, which encourages reflective practice, it was just completely absent; they were doing the bits but the bits didn't make a coherent whole. That was my conclusion after two years, and even after the second year which involved the new standards.

Martin links the 7306 assessment process with moves towards distance-learning programmes and the increase in ICT provision in teacher education. He is concerned that the quality of students' experiences will be eroded:

MARTIN: But there's the danger that they will loose that process of education. And we're getting that pressure as you know now from distance learning courses, from information and communication technology. There's lots of pressure in FE colleges; there's even some pressure on me, to move away from that process of education because they think it's cheaper in some ways to do the distance [learning]. I don't think it necessarily is, but some principals would see it as cheaper to move away from a whole morning of debate and discussion and analysis to 'let's do it down on the distance' and you can create a portfolio to show that you're committed to these competences. And already the TTA [Teacher Training Agency] are there as you know. So already

primary and secondary school teachers are partly being trained in that approach, so we have 36-38 competences that the students have to show, that they need. We've got a bit of that with the FENTO standards, and there's a bit of that when you write assessment criteria for a traditional Cert Ed essay, there are some hoops, barriers and some targets that you've got to hit. But it's the whole ethos of a course that is important, so if you've got a philosophy of developing teachers who are critical, analytical, reflective, thoughtful people – that's what I'm holding on to.

Those qualities that I want teachers to have, they could get lost in a programme that just is gearing their learning to hit particular outcomes, and if they can produce the evidence they get that particular competence and they have covered that. I know they try and cover it by going to range areas so they have to cover their competences in a lot of different contexts, and that's better than not having that, but it seems to me it could be limited learning.

Gayle highlights the notion of teaching as 'professional artistry and judgement', and suggests this might be lost on a competence-based programme:

GAYLE: Well, yes, I would suggest that perhaps there may be a tendency to see the practice of teaching in a very technical rational way, that it is the exercise of a range of skills, a technocratic approach, as opposed to developing an awareness of the idea of teaching as being an exercise of professional artistry and of judgement. So the role of the teacher, the broadest kind of conceptualisation of what it is to be a teacher, probably wouldn't be addressed on a competence-based programme – which I believe it certainly is on a non-competence-based programme which is well run.

Both Karl and Ralph responded to this question in terms of the main issues which emerged under the two previous questions, using phrases such as 'In one sense I feel I've answered that...' (Karl), and 'Well, as I've said too many times already...' (Ralph). They interpreted students' experiences on the 7306 as being shaped by the focus on assessment and the need to provide evidence of competences, as well as by the time-constraints imposed by the assessment structure.

Both respondents said that the course content – and thus the students' experiences – need not differ radically between the two courses, but it was clear that they felt that special efforts were needed to prevent the theoretical and reflective elements of the 7307 being eroded. Ralph, in explaining how the 7306 could be run more-or-less along the same lines as the 7307 by creating an atmosphere where 'they can still work in small groups, they can still learn from each other', made the following interesting reference to 'subverting the system':

> RALPH: [...] So I don't think the overall educational
> experience needs to be vastly different, but that is almost
> subverting the system. I mean, I freely admit that. I think it
> is quite possible to run a 7306 in a very tight, prescriptive
> way. You could, as I say, actually have no course input at
> all. You could simply set them some reading for the NVQ
> and look at evidence as and when it came in, and there are
> training organisations I'm sorry to say where that is actually
> being attempted and it's a lot cheaper, and I guess it's
> because they don't have the expertise to deliver the
> educational content.

When pressed to clarify the notion of subverting the system, he explained that he was trying to introduce into the 7306 the best aspects of the openness and dynamism of the 7307: 'So to that extent, I feel I'm still

meeting the needs of the students and that may be, you know, subverting the system. But only to that extent.'

This perspective is interesting when compared to Karl's comments made in the context of a general discussion on the external factors affecting the 730 series:

> KARL: [...] clearly the 7307 does allow us, as a course team and the course members who come on the course, to actually look at education in a highly subversive way. I mean, to again quote Schon, I mean you know this thing from Schon, that reflective practice destabilises institutions in a positive way, in a dynamic way, yea? Now that is, I find that very exciting. Now I can quite see that if course design is politically driven, then I can quite imagine that the paymasters and so on would want to expunge that kind of dynamic reflection-in-action approach on courses so I could see pressure being put upon departments and colleges to run 7306 courses rather than 7307. Also, as I touched upon earlier, it's cheaper in the long run to run a 7306 than it is to run a 7307.

It is intriguing to find both these respondents referring to 'subversive' educational features in the 7307 and the lower cost of the 7306 in the same breath, so to speak.

Dot noted that there was less cohesion within the 7306 groups than there was with the 7307 groups:

> At the beginning of the course the students were very much together but as they were progressing through and were working at different stages, they'd reached various stages through the course, then there was a little bit of splitting apart 'cause you had those who were achieving and making

good headway with their units with the competence-based course; you had others who were lagging a little bit behind. So but with the traditional type the group dynamics remained right the way through the group. And also with the competence-based course there needed to be a lot more one-to-one and encouragement towards the end of the course, so the group situation did break up as we went through the weeks.

Robert was not convinced that either the 'old scheme' (7307) or the 'new scheme' (7306) provided students with appropriate learning experiences. In the end, however, he seemed to feel that the 7307 was the more useful:

> ROBERT: Well I think to some extent you know the experience that I've had of students on these programmes has been that they you know they were doing the Guardian crossword and couldn't get 'one down' and never could and couldn't get started and then started not being able to see the point of it. I think their experience was very much like that of endless paper turning and churning over the meaning of meaning, especially in relation to PCs, range statements and all this stuff and it became, it lost the bit which if you like the former scheme had which was good....In the old scheme some people struggled with the, what I call the intellectual part of the programme, they struggled to write continuously, they struggled to cogently structure their arguments and all that kind of thing and thought it was a very brainy type of activity and they weren't, didn't have access to it, and some of them found that incredibly tedious. Not everybody, but some of them did. In the new scheme other people found it so incredibly trivial that you know it became, it was meaningless twaddle.

Tim's perception of students' learning experiences differed significantly from that of all the other respondents. He felt that there was more cohesion within the 7306 groups, and that their experiences were very positive:

> TIM: I think it was quite easy to see, as the year progressed
> it was very easy to see that the confidence of the 7306
> students was building weekly. You could see self esteem
> rising, you could see their confidence was building up and
> they were getting into the swing of things and it was a real
> progression. I don't think we lost many, I think we lost
> more on 7307 than we did on 7306....They all sort of knew
> each other and because they were on the 7306 of course they
> got to know each other more as well. The groups gelled
> together, they were very good at gelling, because they were
> all in the same boat and I do remember that.... But we had
> lots of problems with people in some of those [7307] groups
> but I don't think we had any problems with the 7306 groups,
> because they worked close to each other they were in contact
> with each other, every day if they wanted to, and they could
> pass information around very easily to do this you know, to
> sort of help people, other members of their group, to get
> stuff, you know 'remember you're going to be doing this',
> and all the rest of it.

Q4: What effect have these differences had on the professional knowledge of students?

Mick noted that this was 'the most difficult question you have asked...I *don't know* about their knowledge after the 7306'. With the 7307, one had a reasonable idea of what students saw as relevant and meaningful. With the 7306, one doesn't have the same level of confidence. 'We know less about 7306 people'. Progression to Cert Ed said more about the

recruitment needs of the institution than about the knowledge base of students. Most students did not complete the 7306; many more completed 7307. '7306 people struggle so much, they are disinclined to pursue further professional development; there's an horrific process of producing evidence'.

Karl and Ralph began their response to this question by referring to the Cert Ed course in rather different terms than Mick. The next stage of progression from the 7306 and 7307 courses is to the Cert Ed, and both participants identified ease of progression as a measure of the quality of the professional knowledge of students. Karl took the view that 7307 students progressed on to the Cert Ed more easily than 7306 students did:

> KARL: One thing that is highly noticeable is, in that
> particular context is, that 7307 people join Cert Ed without
> feeling the join whereas 7306 people find that quite hard
> because the whole, the Cert Ed course tends to be based
> upon the reflective practitioner model. So people who leave
> our 7306 really need to have some kind of induction, some
> kind of easing into, whereas the people who do 7307 it's
> quite seamless, the join is quite easy. So I think what comes
> out of this – and I haven't quantified this, this is my own
> feeling but I do have feedback from people who have gone
> to Cert. Ed – is that the level of professional knowledge, the
> depth of professional knowledge in the 7307 course is much
> more significant and much more fundamental than it is on
> the 7306.

Ralph states that his 7306 students have had no problem in progressing on to the Cert Ed, but he qualifies this by another reference to 'subverting the system':

> RALPH: The very first group that were successful, they
> were about 15 who were successful the first time, they went

straight on to the Cert Ed course and they've been very
successful. I have discussed this with my colleagues running
Cert Ed and they do not seem to be in any way unhappy with
the students who have come through. Now, as I say, that
may be because, to go back to the old phrase, that I
subverted the system in that they do have an understanding
of learning theories and planning and all the other issues that
one deals with, but what they won't have had is any
experience really at all in putting that together in any way
that took more than writing, say, a couple of sentences.

Finally, there was agreement between these two respondents that the knowledge base of students on the 7306 course tended to be restricted when compared to that of students on the 7307:

RALPH: In a teaching way the 7306 certainly does nothing
to broaden although, as I say, as a course team we try and
introduce them to all those issues. What they don't have to
do is then go away themselves and reproduce some material
which shows that they can actually string an argument
together in some lengthy form. It's a matter of here is a
piece of paper which provides evidence that I can do this,
here is an observation which shows that I can do that, here is
a personal statement, here's somebody else giving me a
witness statement. So yes, I think there is an element of that
in it. I mean narrowness potentially in it.

Karl expressed his perceptions of the differences in students' professional knowledge in terms of depth, reflection, profundity and professionalism:

KARL: I can think of many people who have done 7306
who are good practitioners who have the students' needs and
interests at heart, and who actually are very systematic and
conscientious in producing handouts and resources and all

those kinds of things, and think carefully about what they do. But the 7307, I think, creates a much greater depth. The word keeps coming up, a much greater reflective style. And therefore I think that the professional knowledge which the 7307 people have is more profound and I think tends to lead them on to, to more....So my feeling would be that in general people who do 7307 are more professional, they have, they have learned a degree of autonomy albeit in a relatively short period of time.

Fred responds to this question by saying that he has not met many students who have actually completed the 7306, and that 'a lot of adults are not used to being squeezed into certain shapes of boxes at precise times...'. He then considers professional knowledge in terms of students' readiness to pursue the Cert Ed programme.

> FRED: I know that colleagues within some of the colleges were concerned about the standard of written work that people were going to be asked to do if they went on to the Cert Ed. And that the 7306, by virtue of the fact that it was not asking them to write in sort of general prose style, was not giving them any grounding for that. That's all I can say on that; that's not first hand, that's what I've heard on the circuit, as they say, and it seemed to be quite a genuine concern. What one college did anyway, was to put on a kind of link session to try to kind of bridge the gap for people.

Martin couched his response to this question in terms of de-skilling and de-professionalization:

> MARTIN: And your biggest criticism could be of 7306 that it's a watered-down teacher training programme, that it's leading teachers or lecturers in to becoming learning supervisors, assessors, facilitators rather than barn-storming

teachers who will have some sort of idea of academic freedom there, that there's got to be room in universities and colleges for debate and discussion.

Gayle responds to this question in a similar vein:

> GAYLE: Yes, well I think that there is a problem in that a competence approach focuses strongly on the actual operationalising of skills in the classroom, and sometimes maybe doesn't develop an appreciation of the broader educational context. We don't just live in the classroom, we're not just in the business of quite simply delivering a lesson what method suits this bit of knowledge, we're in the business of understanding the broader context of education and the culture that it sits in, why particular policies impinge in particular ways on classroom practice and on us as practitioners. Now the development of that kind of understanding and the sort of sense of the tacit understanding you have about practice which is, you know, you know more than you can say, that is I think developed through a programme like the 7307. And there isn't that kind of emphasis – that isn't seen as important in a 7306 programme, as far as I could see.

Peter takes the view that the 7306 had a negative impact on students' professional knowledge because they were being asked to do two things at once:

> PETER: I think that with the [73]06 there was a negative impact. The time allocation of three hours a week was insufficient for them to I think effectively undertake a course of teacher training and undertake an NVQ at Level 3. It's only Level 3 in the first year; it subsequently became an option at Level 4. My experience with them was that it was

simply inappropriate to combine the NVQ Level 3 or 4 and a
teacher training programme in a three-hour-a-week package;
it was too much. There are two courses there. We got
driven by the NVQ units at the expense of the professional
development and the content required. The focus of
professional development was sidelined, I found, very sad to
say. And now that's been redressed.

[....]

The [73]07 asks candidates to reflect on their practice, to
develop their practice, to produce things in relation to their
practice which are then assessed by professionals in the
field. The training and development units do not do that in
the same way.

DOT: If you're looking at the academic side of education,
then I feel that students through the traditional route picked
up more of that than those on the competence-based route.
But if you're looking at students that are equipped for
organising their own programme, assessing students
achievements, building portfolios for students for the new
type of education, then the competence-based is stronger.

Prompt: Is there a suggestion there that the competence-based 730 would
be more appropriate for students who were actually delivering NVQ-type
programmes themselves, or is there more than that that you're
suggesting?

DOT: There are two things. I feel that a course of education
should have the academic traditional educational thread to it,
but there ought to be the opportunity for students to be able
to branch out into the competence-based training if they
wish. There needs to be students trained for the type of
teaching and the type of students they are going to be
working with; and programmes now are far more diverse

than they used to be so therefore there needs to be a generic underpinning educational understanding, and then at a later stage there needs to be a more directed [approach] into the ways that students will be delivering their courses and their assessments and monitoring of those courses.

TIM: I've got to say that they would be similar [the professional knowledge-base of students from the two programmes]. The knowledge that was delivered was similar knowledge. But the way in which it was delivered was different. But the end result was that what they gained out of it was to prepare them for teaching and learning, of course, in further education for instance. Consequently I think that the knowledge gained was probably the same. That's my opinion: I think the knowledge gained was the same.

Final Question: Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic?

As might be expected, this question elicited a wide range of responses. What most have in common, however, are expressions of concern about the relevance of a competence-based approach to the training of teachers in further and adult education. A sample of excerpts from each of the respondents appears below.

MICK: I didn't set out to subvert the system...but accepted the rhetoric and decided to make this work. How NVQs work should be determined by the values of practitioners.... But I'm much less convinced of that than I was. The whole project is philosophically flawed. It is inadequate and full of contradictions. It fails to achieve what it set out to achieve: national standards. There is a much greater variety of

standards in 7306 programmes than in 7307. The rhetoric of opportunity has excluded teachers, and assessment criteria have not empowered students. The whole 7306 programme is full of paradoxes, flawed.

MARTIN: It's worrying. You're connecting the whole debate about de-professionalization with the way we have been training teachers and I think that is true of the schools sector and the FE sector, and I don't see it actually getting any better. If I get really worried I hold on to the fact that the universities, FE colleges and partnerships are still producing lots of good Cert Ed people who are teaching really well in FE colleges and adult education institutions. I get worried when I hear rumours that the FENTO standards may be taken up by EDEXCEL, and somebody even mentioned City and Guilds last week, and may be turned into their version of a Cert Ed course which might undercut universities and might go for a shortened one- year professional development course rather than the full blown Cert Ed as we know it. So I do have those worries yeah.

GAYLE: I think that for some people, it's interesting, I've come across people maybe particularly people from St Mawgan, the air forces and services generally perhaps, who think that they desire a competence-based approach to teacher education 'cause it seems to suit their culture and their environment. And they look for something that is kind of more efficient and effective initially, and quite often it looks to them as though the 7306 will provide them with what they are looking for. But our experience tells us that ultimately when they engage with the 7307 or the more academic Cert Ed Year Two, that actually they develop a lot more understanding about themselves as a teacher and recognise that there is more to it than just being efficient in

the classroom and knowing your stuff and being sure that your method is right and that you are all powerful and all-knowing, and of course we know teaching isn't really about that entirely. I do think that there is a sort of a humanistic side to the 7307 which has never been lost and that this is a tremendous opportunity for practitioners, perhaps who are new especially to teaching, to talk to each other about the teaching situation – a pool of professional exchange and collegiality. That's why I'd go for the 7307 style. Though I'm sure it's possible to run the 7306 with you know add-ons all over the place to make it a different sort of programme in fact. But that's down to the individual practitioner, the person who's running it, having the capacity to conceptualise how that might be done.

FRED: I think that given a finite period of time you have got with students learning about enabling others to learn, that it's crucial that that time is given over to that very subject and that the written work embeds that learning and turns them into, as the book says, reflective practitioners. My concern is that that balance is lost, that in fact more time is lost on the courses and out of the student's time that the student has mentally given to the course, a lot of that is taken up with the pre-occupation in getting the forms filled and making sure that people have signed off the evidence properly and all that kind of stuff. And that's really where I think NVQs sap – I think that's the right word – sap learning time, genuine learning time. So that's my overall view of it.

KARL: I feel quite uneasy about doing the 7306: I mean that's obviously come through. I mean I personally, probably, If my career in teacher education for the remaining sort of years I've got as a teacher were to be teaching 7306 I'd probably opt-out of it, yeah? Because it doesn't generate

the same kind of vibe, same kind of feelings, the same kind
of enjoyment and fun that can be had through learning in a
reflective experiential way that the 7307 still does offer.
Yeah, I mean whether City and Guilds designed this all
those years ago when they set up the 7307, I don't know, but
the flexibility which is inherent in the 7307 does allow you
to really create a really good course, yeah, which can
develop year after year. I mean, obviously, just like you are,
we are threatened by cost constraints, time constraints and
all those kinds of things and if you can stay with it you do
have much more opportunity with the 7307 to run a good
course, a quality course.

RALPH: Right, well I think that one of the real drawbacks
for 7306 although City and Guilds have put together what
they call a Foundation Certificate 7306 or a set of units, it is
not just units, it's units and elements, which are almost
hopeless. That's my view because they aren't, they can't be,
there's no progression, they can't be carried forward very
easily. My experience is that there are many, many people
who either don't want to teach a great deal or are being
pressured to doing some qualification so that they can work
in adult education or just think they want to teach and really
7306, no part of 7306 in my view, meets their need and
that's basically where the Stage I 7307 benefits.

PETER: The whole concept of the NVQ is demonstrating
competence, actual practice. The whole assessment process
is around performance criteria. Theory is seen as
underpinning knowledge but there is no assessment protocol
for theory, and this is the nub of it if you like. People, it's
right that they demonstrate that they are competent although
the units themselves were so confusing that as assessors we
had no idea what we were looking for, as to what was

competent, because that wasn't explained appropriately. 'Can facilitate a small group' doesn't help or 'must lecture to a large group' doesn't help. It doesn't say whether it was a good lecture or a bad lecture. I can't remember the descriptors but they were very unhelpful with the specifics. It was up to us to interpret what was being suggested that we look for but without any clear guidance. In fact no guidance ever arrived, it doesn't exist. So the emphasis is on doing but then there is no guidance to an assessor on what that doing should be. There is a complete absence of emphasis other than by a notional 'underpinning knowledge should include', and then there are some descriptors. So what you exclude is a form of assessment that can check underpinning knowledge, that encourages the development of underpinning knowledge, because that isn't the focus of the assessment process. So you are driven in a way that is inappropriate at this level.

[Pause...]

I've just had a moment, Curran, to think about how I really did feel about it. I want to use words like I thought the whole process was awful, disgraceful, disgusting, that we had been forced into even *believing* this garbage. Interestingly it was explained to me that at the end of the first year, the first set of units, they were so bad, there was so much criticism from so many 730 tutors, that they tried to establish who had written them. The consultants that had written the first units were no longer to be found. They had gone. Nobody wanted *that* attributed to their business practice, it really was so appalling. And doesn't it say something about it that a Regional Verifier could agree that a centre could re-write the units to make them comprehensible, when that surely must have contravened NCVQ's own ethics on how NVQs should be used? But I did that.

Another respondent from City & Guilds explained the development of the 7306 as follows:

> When the then Government introduced NVQs to try to catch
> up with other European countries, notably Germany, in
> terms of work related qualifications, it was assumed that
> NVQs would be based in the workplace. However it soon
> became clear that due to a recession targets would not be
> met. Further education colleges were firstly allowed and
> soon encouraged to offer vocational courses with NVQ
> qualifications. To meet the needs of staff, training and
> assessing both in the workplace and in colleges, City and
> Guilds offered the 7306 and 7281 courses. These are based
> on identical training and development lead body (TDLB)
> standards.
> (City & Guilds official).

A third respondent said that City & Guilds 'thought that competence-based awards were the future; 7305 was their speculation what a competence-based 730 might look like'. There was also the issue that 'they thought they would provide more qualifications and make more money'. This respondent speculates on what might have been the case had there been a Lead Body for education:

> There were those in the early 1990s who thought it was a
> mistake not to have a Lead Body for FE or for Education in
> general. They may have been right because what we got was
> a clear training-led approach to accreditation for teachers
> using the TDLB standards. Had there been other standards
> informed by other ideas perhaps 7306 might have been
> usable. I doubt it – the NVQ structure itself was the
> problem.
> (City & Guilds official).

How did the existing FENTO standards for teaching and learning come into being?

Concerning the development of the FENTO standards, a respondent from FENTO wrote:

> The FENTO teaching and supporting learning standards
> came into being after a FEDA led national consultation
> process during 1998....The standards as finally drafted
> represented widespread views of practitioners throughout the
> country.
> (FENTO official).

Another respondent saw the development of the FENTO standards in terms of government policy:

> The current aims are to improve the quality of Secondary
> Education and to tackle the historical mess that is post-16
> education, including Further Education. Clearly a teaching
> force in FE trained/educated to at least an agreed standard
> (FENTO devised) is part of the strategy.
> (City & Guilds official).

Another respondent describes the FENTO standards in terms of their development from the earlier standards devised by FEDA:

> My understanding is that the NTO/FEDA originally
> commissioned a bunch of consultants (probably 'human
> resource development' specialists) to draft the standards and
> they drew heavily on TDLB. It was the process of
> consultation that caused them to make changes – losing
> 'Unit', 'Element', 'performance criteria' titles, even the
> expectation that those working towards accreditation would

need to demonstrate 'competence'....The current version [of the standards] is number eight or nine, I believe.
(City & Guilds official).

Why did City & Guilds withdraw the 7306?
The respondent from an NTO explained as follows:

> Several reasons. One is that many centres were ditching it and going back to the old 7307, there was, I suspect, lots of disgruntlement over the nature of the course, and of course FENTO was on the way. It should be remembered that the 7306 was based on the TDLB standards (this included D32 etc) and it is a moot point how much FE's needs were taken into account (hardly anyone from FE was involved in drafting TDLB standards) and how useful they were for FE.
> (NTO official).

One of the City & Guilds respondents noted that: 'As all new staff in FE, full time or part time, will have to be qualified to FENTO standards the 7306 NVQ model will soon have no currency and so will phase out'. Another respondent noted:

> C&G 7307 survived the announced withdrawal because some tutors declined to change and those who did change to C&G 7306 regretted it (with some exceptions). You could call it market forces – the 'clients' did not want 7306. And what's the point retaining 7306 now when C&G needs to make room for a FENTO-based award which has DFES support?
> (City & Guilds official).

Was the withdrawal of the 7306 linked to the introduction of the FENTO standards?

Two respondents indicated that they felt they had addressed this issue in their answers to the previous question. A third responded:

> You don't need two lots of 'national standards' for FE
> teachers and DFES is supporting FENTO, not TDLB. That
> seems to me the political answer. I don't know yet what
> precisely is the power of FENTO standards and why they
> might be preferred: if they are not units/elements of
> competence, and are not designed to be used as performance
> criteria, then do they have any greater significance than
> statements of Aims and Objectives, as currently stated for
> C&G 7307? Perhaps they will be gently introduced and then
> the screws tightened through verification regimes.
> (City & Guilds official).

5. DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study, based on twenty-two semi-structured interviews, are briefly summarised below under the headings of the interview schedule. The views of the majority of respondents are presented first, followed by the perspective of the one respondent (Tim) who found the 7306 to be extremely valuable, and another (Dot) who felt it had certain advantages over the 7307. The section ends with a summary of the supplementary interviews.

Ql: What do you perceive as the important differences between the 7306 and the 7307?

The key difference was perceived to be that of assessment of students' learning, and this was emphasised by all respondents. Assessment on the 7306 was seen as based on behaviourist principles, with an emphasis on the production of evidence of competence. This was contrasted with the more traditional 'aims and objectives' assessment model of the 7307. Respondents referred to threats to the 'reflective practice' element of the 7307, though from somewhat differing perspectives. Some identified threats to professional autonomy, while others stressed that the assessment criteria tended to dominate, to the exclusion of an emphasis on teaching and learning. Several took the view that there was a lack of underpinning educational theory on the 7306, due to the dominance of the assessment criteria.

Tim was alone in seeing the main difference in terms of the students who were attracted to the two programmes. Students on the 7306 tended to be unemployed, and had been out of education for many years. Students on the 7307 were generally employed, often fulfilling educational roles. He felt that 7306 students were generally more receptive that those on the

7307. He acknowledged that the 7306 was competence-based, but did not seem to see this as a particularly important point.

Q2: What effect have these differences had on your own practice?

The main issue to arise under this heading was that of constraints on time associated with the assessment structure of the 7306, which posed a threat to reflective practice. Respondents reported that the demands of the competence- based assessment specification left them with significantly less time for the theoretical or reflective elements associated with the more traditional 7307. A great deal of time had to be given to providing tutorial support devoted to the collection of evidence. Course delivery was 'skewed' towards the demands of the assessment criteria, at the cost of content. Some respondents indicated that it was 'still possible to deliver a quality course', but only by 'subverting the system'. For several respondents, this took the form of rewriting the assessment criteria in language which could be understood by the candidates. In one case, the lecturer gave students traditional essay and project assignments, and then identified for them the competences they had demonstrated. Many respondents said they had made a real effort to 'import' valuable elements of the 7307 into the 7306. Two respondents noted that different members of staff were required for the two programmes, but many more indicated that they had combined 7306 and 7307 students in the same teaching programme.

Tim felt that 7306 students needed much more guidance than did those on 7307. He felt he was more willing to help those on 7306 than those on 7307, because of the 'different cultures of the two groups.' Students on the 7307 tended to be more confident and independent, while those on the 7306 required more encouragement. He therefore found that there was a quite different approach to the teaching of the two groups. Dot felt the 7306 gave more scope for engaging students in meaningful activities than did the 7307.

Q3: What effect have these changes had on the learning experiences of the students?

Many of the issues of concern raised under Question 1 and Question 2 were reiterated here. There was a view that students found the 7306 to be a much less enjoyable course, due to the burden of paperwork associated with the assessment process. The assessment criteria encouraged students to take a 'minimalistic approach' to the course process. Many valuable elements of the 7307 were 'squeezed out' of the programme; microteaching exercises were cited as an example: City and Guilds took the view that 'simulation will not be acceptable'. Classroom practice was not seen to be at the centre of the 7306, where only two units out of twenty are concerned with this element of the programme. Teaching observations were devalued, and no overview of the teaching and learning process was taken.

One respondent noted that students' experiences were changed 'quite profoundly' by the 7306 process, in spite of the fact that he had re-written all of the units in order to make them more comprehensible and user-friendly. Another highlighted the notion of teaching as 'professional artistry and judgement', and suggested that this might be lost on a competence-based programme.

Tim emphasised that he could see the confidence of the 7306 students 'building weekly'. They tended to work better in groups than did the 7307 students. Retention on the 7306 was better than on the 7307. Dot took the view, in common with many other respondents, that there was less cohesion within 7306 groups.

Q4: What effect have these differences had on the professional knowledge of students?

There was a general sense that the professional knowledge of 7306 students was necessarily limited in terms of depth, reflection, profundity and professionalism. The knowledge base of 7306 students was restricted, and several respondents linked this with a calculated policy of de-skilling and de-professionalization. One claimed that he didn't *know* what was the professional knowledge base of 7306 students, while he had a fairly clear idea with those on the 7307. Several respondents noted that 7306 students tended to have more problems than did 7307 students, when moving on to Cert Ed programmes. Another theme that emerged under this question was that there was a very low completion rate on the 7306, and that students were unlikely to pursue further professional development. The 7306 was a 'watered-down' programme which tended to produce assessors and facilitators, rather than 'barn-storming' teachers with a concern for academic freedom. One respondent noted that the professional knowledge base of 7306 was necessarily diminished because they were being asked to do two things at once: a teacher training programme and an NVQ level 3 or 4.

Tim stressed that 7306 students had increased their knowledge to a much greater extent than had those on 7307. Many 7307 students felt that they 'knew it all' already, while those on the 7306 were eager to learn. Dot felt that the 7307 provided a better knowledge-base for students who were going on to teach academic subjects; the 7306 better equipped students for teaching competence-based programmes.

Final Question: Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic?

Most respondents expressed concerns about the appropriateness and relevance of a competence-based approach to the training of teachers in

further and adult education. There was a very clear sense from twenty of the twenty-two respondents that, in spite of their best efforts to make the 7306 operate successfully, the competence-based approach to the training of teachers in further and adult education was both flawed and unworkable.

Tim, on the other hand, focused on the qualities of his 7306 groups. They were enthusiastic and a real pleasure to teach. He regarded the 7306 as an extremely successful programme.

In the interviews conducted towards the end of the research process, there were a number of references to the recently established Further Education National Training Organization (FENTO) Standards for Teaching and Learning. Some respondents felt that these might lead to a 'hybrid' 730 programme which incorporated some of the better features of the competence-based approach.

The supplementary interviews

Clear links were established between the introduction of the 7306 and the government's agenda to raise the levels of skills and training in the UK workforce. The introduction of NVQs was initiated by the DE, without the involvement of the DES. The 7306 was based on TDLB standards which were not appropriate to the FE context.

The FENTO standards were introduced after a series of consultations with stakeholders in the FE sector, and have now replaced the TDLB standards. City & Guilds has withdrawn the 7306 because it does not conform to the FENTO standards, and because it was unpopular with 'clients'.

Contextualizing Practice

What follows below is a summary of the key readings from the Literature Review, showing their relationship to the main findings outlined above.

There was a clear recognition by all the participants in the study that the 7306 did conform to the NCVQ philosophy in that it was based on statements of competence. It was less clear, however, to what extent these competences were 'determined by those in employment responsible for maintaining such standards' (NCVQ, 1990, p. 1). The qualification was offered in discrete 'units', and there was an emphasis on the 'performance' requirements of employment. But there was no evidence to suggest that employers and educational institutions had worked closely together in providing learning opportunities as envisaged by NCVQ (1990).

'Assessment on demand' (NCVQ, 1990) was a feature of the 7306 identified by a number of respondents, but there was a clear sense that this feature was particularly time-consuming, and that it led to fragmentation of the learning programme. In several cases, programme leaders found that they needed to set deadlines for students in respect of specific elements of assessment. Failure to do this led to high rates of non-completion of the competence-based programme.

Accreditation of prior learning (APL), identified by NCVQ (1990) as a feature of competence-based programmes, was not referred to by many respondents. Where it was identified, the perception was that it had not proved workable in practice, and that the process of accumulating evidence for APL was more cumbersome and time-consuming than demonstrating competence in the context of the programme itself.

The kind of flexibility of provision envisaged by NCVQ (1990) involving individually tailored programmes of learning was perceived by a number

of respondents as a threat to group cohesion and to the group-learning activities characteristic of 7307 programmes. The NCVQ (1990) proviso that programmes 'should allow the separate assessment of individual units and not prescribe specific combinations of units to be assessed' (p. 5) was also seen by many respondents as a threat to the overall cohesion of the learning programme. Two respondents who had considerable experience delivering NVQ programmes – one in hairdressing and the other in engineering – found these features to be positive elements of the 7306.

Apart from the comments of these two respondents, there was virtually no support in the findings for the 'need to adapt existing provision within education and training and create a new infrastructure of training and assessment' (NCVQ, 1990, p. 5) in the training of teachers in post-16 education.

A key element in the rationale for the introduction of NVQs is that they promote precision and objectivity in assuring outcomes, but that they do not impose an 'educational model' (Jessup, 1992). This view is echoed by Fletcher (1991), who maintains that NVQs have nothing to do with learning programmes.

The findings from the present study do not support this notion. Virtually all respondents – including the very few who supported the NVQ approach – took the view that the use of competence-based assessment affected the content, structure and quality of the learning programme in significant ways. Assessment of evidence of competence dominated the learning programme, and was extremely time-consuming. Many respondents reported that the emphasis on identifying and assessing competences on the 7306 resulted in the loss of important reflective elements (Schon, 1983, 1987) which were characteristic of the 7307, a diminution of emphasis on teaching and learning, and threats to professional autonomy. Another perspective was that the very great amount of time devoted to producing evidence of competence on the

7306 resulted in a lack of underpinning educational theory on the programme. Respondents found that they had less time to devote to what were seen as important educational issues, because of an exaggerated focus on assessment on the 7306.

Respondents reported a range of strategies used to overcome these perceived problems. Some re-wrote the assessment criteria in language they thought would be better understood by students. Others set traditional essay assignments, and then identified for students which assessment criteria they had met. A variety of strategies was used on the 7306 in order to retain what were seen as the 'valuable' elements of the 7307. The data are clear in demonstrating that respondents felt that the NVQ assessment model affected the nature of the learning programme in important ways, contrary to the expectations of Jessup (1991) and Fletcher (1991).

Jessup (1991) maintains that NVQs are independent of any specific learning programmes, but this was not borne out by the data. The majority of respondents offered the 7306 as a 'taught' programme where course members attended class sessions on a regular basis. In many cases, 7306 and 7307 students were taught together in the same sessions.

Jessup's (1991) contention that the NVQ focus on outcomes does not impose an 'educational model' on how people learn was not supported by the data. All respondents reported that assessment on the 7306 constituted the key difference between the 7306 and the 7307, and altered in significant ways how the programme was delivered.

Wolf (1995) argues, however, that the focus on outcomes has the specific purpose of entirely transforming the nature of education and training. Grugulis (2000) conducted a study involving more than 120 semi-structured interviews looking at the perceptions of candidates undertaking a Management NVQ at

level 4. She concludes that NVQ assessment drives out learning. Despite the claims that candidates can specify their own assessment routes, the 'evidencing' of competence invariably takes the form of a portfolio of evidence. Candidates found that working towards the NVQ was a distraction from developmental learning, and the skills required to put together a good portfolio had no relationship to those required of a good manager. The number of those successfully achieving the qualification was very low, and those who did not succeed were devastated – in spite of the verbal dexterity of the NCVQ's 'not yet competent'.

Jessup's (1991) claim that the NVQ approach 'demystified' assessment through 'open and explicit' assessment criteria which would be clear to both assessor and candidate was not supported by the evidence. Significant numbers of respondents reported that the major problem with the 7306 was that the assessment criteria were anything but clear. This was identified as a major problem, which caused confusion to both teachers and learners. The language used to specify outcomes was unclear, and tutors took a great amount of time and trouble trying to explain to students what constituted 'evidence' for specific elements of competence. This lack of clarity arose again and again in the data as a factor which mitigated against delivering what respondents saw as a 'quality' programme. Three respondents with backgrounds in NVQs, on the other hand, seemed to find that assessment was not a major problem on the 7306.

Wolf (1995), however, argues that misplaced theories of what could be achieved by competence-based assessment led NVQ assessors 'down a never-ending spiral of specification' (p. 130), which created huge resentment among practitioners. It also had an adverse effect on reliability and validity of judgement.

Jessup's assertion that 'lecturers will need to be more than subject specialists and think more about the process of assessment' (1991, p. 106) was supported in the data. Respondents reported that they needed to

focus greatly on assessment, at the expense of what they saw as issues of greater educational importance. Assessment dominated the 7306 programme. The NVQ model was seen as a problem rather than a solution, contrary to what Jessup had predicted. His perception that NVQs would be characterised by a 'clarity of targets and assessment standards' was clearly not shared by the majority of respondents.

Wolf (1995) maintains that CBET is based on the perceived need of all Western countries to change their traditional approaches to education and training. 'The idea of competence seems to offer a conceptual framework within which to rethink both content and delivery' (p. xii). She is very sceptical of the ability of competence-based assessment to deliver on some of its more ambitious claims. Assessment is not just a technical affair, as Jessup claims, but operates in complex economic and social contexts and within organizational constraints. She cites Smithers (1993) who sees NVQs as an unmitigated disaster, and Pennington (1992) who maintains that the competence movement wants to put all education under the control of government, industry and unions (Wolf, 1995, p. 128). Competence-based assessment embodies a revolution based on a rejection of, and antagonism to, organized education.

Jessup's (1991) notion that the 'knowledge' underpinning performance should not be taught separately from practice but would be acquired somehow through the experience of teaching was not supported by the majority of respondents. There was a clear view that the 7306 lacks a focus on the theories, concepts, principles and relationships which were of the essence of a quality programme of teacher education. This theme arose again and again in the data, and it was clear that respondents felt that educational theory needed to be taught, discussed and reflected upon. In a sense, this could be seen as the most significant theme to emerge from the data.

Raggatt and Williams (1999) provide a detailed examination of the development of CBET in the UK, and maintain that it is based on an ill-

conceived concept of competence. There is a historical weakness in vocational education in the UK, and the government's competence agenda was intended to raise the standard of training and skills in the workforce. Much of the early work was carried through the MSC's YTS scheme, and was driven by short-term political pressure.

The movement was fraught with difficulties and ambiguity. NVQs were heavily criticized for their narrowness and job-specific skills. GNVQs were criticized after their introduction in 1993 for their heavy burden of assessment and high drop-out rates. Knowledge and understanding were marginalized in NVQs. The much-criticized narrowness of NVQs is linked to NCVQ's technocratic approach and the government's emphasis on training programmes for the unemployed. Vocational qualifications are now heavily regulated by the state, whose central powers have grown dramatically.

A number of the perspectives and concerns discussed above are reflected in the literature on competence-based education and training (CBET). An Employment Department study (ED, 1993) identified problems with competence-based assessment similar to those that emerged from the present study. These included concerns with the amount of paper-work (and, thus, time) involved, and the issue of the reliability of assessments. Jessup has argued that we 'should forget about reliability altogether and concentrate on validity, which is all that matters' (1991, p. 191). Prais (1991) argues that this is essentially wrong, and that we have to concentrate on both reliability and validity (p. 87). While the absence of reliability of assessment in CBET in not specifically referred to in the data, it could be argued that such an absence could contribute to the problematic nature of the NVQ assessment model identified by virtually all of the respondents.

Denvir (1989) has noted that the form which assessment takes does affect fundamentally the nature of learning programmes. Bloomer (1994) also maintains that there is ample evidence to show that the NVQ assessment

model had radically changed the nature of the courses to which it has been applied. Both of these views are supported by the data in the present study.

Many respondents in the research reported that they had difficulties in understanding the meaning of statements of competence on the 7306 programme, and therefore had problems in explaining them to their students. Hyland (1997) suggests that definitions of competence are vague, and there is confusion over the relationship between competence, knowledge and performance. He also argues that CBET is based on behaviourist theories involving a narrow range of capabilities – a point made by a number of respondents in the present study – and that this results in ambiguities in learning and assessment. CBET employs an instrumentalist framework and is therefore not able to accommodate the skills and qualities associated with professional roles. There is a narrowing of focus, leading to a loss of theoretical content and a de-skilling of professional roles. These notions are clearly reflected in the perspectives of a large number of respondents in the present study.

Beaumont (1996), in a study for the DfEE, found that there was a good deal of justified criticism of the CBET assessment model, while Tuxworth (1989) argues that CBET is not superior to other forms of education and training. These views also find support in the data.

Stark and McAleavy (1992) provide an account of how a traditional, academic Advanced Diploma in Education (FE) was rewritten in the light of NCVQ developments, in 1989. The course team took the view that trainee teachers could best be prepared for 'NCVQ changes' in further and adult education by experiencing a competence-based programme for themselves. Though there was initial resistance to the new model, it was gradually accepted by staff who had become increasingly dissatisfied with the skills-based focus which had been a feature of previous programmes (particularly the notion of micro-skills). Some earlier teacher training programmes had decontextualised important features of

professional learning so that integration into the work-role context was problematic. Students had to be proactive in respect of assessment criteria; this was essential to the achievement of professionalism.

The course team identified and developed the competences for the programme, in consultation with the Education and Library Boards, the Department of Education and the colleges involved in the programme. Competences were based on a functional analysis of the teaching occupation and its tasks and duties, rather than being derived from the area of management performance (Boyatziz, 1982) which resulted in much broader competences. Great emphasis was placed on the need for students to be 'proactive' in the context of taking responsibility for their own competence. Where students experienced difficulty in understanding what evidence was required, some competences were rewritten.

While it had been intended that individual students should be allowed to demonstrate their competence only when they were ready to do so (based on the assumption that they came into the programme with differing attitudes and levels of skills and experience), this was found to be unrealistic in practice. Students were therefore required to have completed a specified range of competences by the end of the first year of the programme. The programme included the writing of two essay assignments, though this was later reduced to one essay because of the complaints of students who felt that the writing of assignments to specific deadlines was not in keeping with NCVQ philosophy, and who 'felt threatened' at having to write essays.

Stark and McAleavy (1992) acknowledge that the competence-based approach had been subject to considerable criticism on the grounds that it constituted a mechanistic and anti-humanistic model of learning (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). However, they took the view that the NCVQ model had moved beyond the performance based models which originated in the United States.

This enthusiasm for the competence-based approach to the training of teachers in further and adult education was not reflected in the perspectives of the majority of practitioners in the present study. Most found the approach to be narrow, restrictive and mechanistic. There was little evidence in the data to suggest that practitioners were dissatisfied with traditional programmes (eg, 7307), although a few respondents did suggest that the NVQ approach obliged them to consider more carefully which elements of their programmes were most important. There was virtually no support for the notion that traditional programmes decontextualized important features of professional learning. On the contrary, traditional programmes were seen as fostering professionalism.

There was also little recognition of the value of competences based on a functional analysis of the teacher's role. Respondents generally took the view that the role of the teacher involved elements of indeterminacy, inspiration, spontaneity and creativity which could not be adequately captured by behavioural competences. There were three exceptions to this perspective, all involving the three practitioners whose professional role involved the delivery of NVQ programmes. Stark and McAleavy's (1992) suggestion that competence-based programmes better prepared teachers to deliver NVQ programmes received virtually no support in the findings – with the exception of two of the three respondents mentioned above.

Stark and McAleavy (1992) put great emphasis on the importance of students being 'proactive' in taking responsibility for their own competence. Many respondents in the present study found this to be a highly problematic aspect of the NVQ approach to teacher training: students had great difficulty in understanding the language in which competences were couched, and what would constitute 'evidence' that the competences had been achieved or demonstrated. This was seen as a major weakness of the 7306.

Another problem which emerged from the data was that of the 'assessment on demand' element of the NCVQ philosophy. Like Stark and McAleavy (1992), many respondents reported that they had to abandon that central notion, in favour of students being required to produce evidence of competences to set deadlines. This was due to the impracticalities of allowing each student to proceed at their own pace. The halving of the essay-writing requirement of the programme (from two essays, to one) reported by Stark and McAleavy (1992) is recognizable in the findings in terms of a perception of a general 'dumbing-down' of academic content associated with the competence-based 7306 programme.

A competence-based Cert Ed programme was devised by six further education colleges in Cheshire, because existing schemes did not meet the needs of Cheshire teachers, as reported by Maynard (1995). She acknowledges that the programme was beset with a number of the difficulties identified by critics of CBET, but maintains that these were overcome. The programme 'works' within the frame advocated by Schon (1987) and others. The competence model enables the learner to adapt, be flexible, and change according to context because it focuses upon reflection on practice. 'The ability to draw on and learn from experience to meet new situations (Schon, 1987) is encompassed within this model thus reducing the risk of task analysis or the somewhat reductionist approach encompassed by NCVQ' (Maynard, 1995, p. 131).

Maynard's (1995) perception that reflective practice is a feature of CBET approaches to teacher training was not supported by the majority of respondents in the present study. On the contrary, most saw the 7306 as constituting a threat to the reflective elements of the 7307. Threats to reflective practice, and problems associated with assessment, were the two most common themes to emerge from the data with respect to the competence-based approach.

Hyland (1992) addresses the NVQ-model 7306. It employs a narrow, technicist approach which leads to deskilling and erosion of autonomy. There is also a loss of breadth and quality. The sole motivation in designing the 7306 was to ensure compatibility with TDLB standards. It is inappropriate to model teacher education on the occupational requirements of lecturers rather than on the knowledge, skills and values required to promote and enhance qualitative practice. Management's interests are well served by CBET models, but education and training programmes are trivialised and occupations are increasingly de-skilled through the deployment of narrowly defined prescriptions.

Again, much of the data from the present study supports these criticisms; there were a few specific references to de-skilling and the fact that 7306 programmes appealed to management because they were less costly to run that the 7307, though the latter was not a common theme.

Chown (1992) maintains that the application of TDLB standards to the training of teachers is ill-conceived and misguided. The notion of competence as applied to the C&G F&AETC is not defined clearly. An NVQ level 3 – lacking the breadth and depth of the C&G7307 – might encourage managers not to support staff to undertake the full Cert Ed. Should the AFHE sector reject the NCVQ model of teacher training, this could have a serious effect on the credibility of NVQs generally. Acceptance by the sector of the competence-based model could thus be seen as a political imperative.

The majority of respondents concurred with these notions. A few respondents did note that progression to the Cert Ed was problematic for 7306 students. City and Guilds have withdrawn the 7306 from their course profile (see below), and the majority of respondents have clearly rejected the competence-based model.

Chown and Last (1993) argue that the TDLB standards (at least at level 4) do represent statements of what competent, professional teaching entails.

However, they fail to take account of much of what teachers do and why they do it (i.e., reflective practice). The NCVQ model is too inflexible to accommodate this reflective professional process. They regard the move to TDLB/NCVQ models with grave misgivings. Reflective practice is an interactive process which does not lend itself to the prescriptive outcomes associated with competence-based programmes. 'Competent behaviour is linear and one-dimensional; it is impersonal, mechanistic and atomistic rather than dynamic and interdependent' (p. 20). Training must reflect the complexity of teaching.

As has already been noted above, the failure of the CBET approach to accommodate reflective practice was a major concern of respondents. Teaching was seen as a complex, contingent activity, characterised by uncertainty. Reflective practice is a key element of effective teaching, and teacher training programmes which neglect it are inappropriate.

Chown and Last (1995) argue that the 'D' series of assessor's awards (which are a feature of the 7306 programme) are characterised by 'excessive and labyrinthine bureaucracy, and the use of confusing language, and lecturers do raise doubts about the extent to which the assessment procedures required for the award match the reality of assessment at college or in the workplace' (p. 8). They seriously misinterpret the real nature of assessment. Traditional Cert Ed programmes encourage students to work together in groups, across disciplines and organisations, resulting in an overview of the whole sector. NVQ models neglect this.

The D32 and D33 assesors' awards were designed by NCVQ to train practitioners to assess competences on NVQ programmes, and are a component of the 7306. Several respondents refer to these in the data, and they take a similar view to that of Chown and Last (1995). The process of acquiring the D qualifications is characterised by the same kinds of problems associated with other CBET models. The problem of the loss of group work in CBET models was noted by some respondents –

particularly in the context of students who are undertaking differing assessments at different times. However, the few respondents who favoured the NVQ model did not see this as a problem: one reported that there was good cohesion within teaching groups, and that students worked well together and supported each other.

Bloomer (1994) maintains that NVQs triggered transformations in learning and teaching, which radically changed the nature of courses. NVQs offer no adequate model of professional practice or professional competence for dealing with the dynamic and complex knowledge and skills that professional practice entails. What are the implications of CBET for the promotion of professional competence in teaching, or for the creation and maintenance of teaching as a profession? There is no indication that NVQs contribute to the enhancement of teachers' professionalism. Rather, they promote a view of teaching as technicianship acquired through the mastery of a range of technical skills. The 7306 makes no demands of 'extended professionalism', but is confined to technical skills of 'hand-to-mouth' practice or 'restricted professionalism'. The 7306 fails to locate education in the wider contexts through which it might be understood and through which teachers might develop the critical awareness so necessary for professional competence.

The notion of 'professionalism' is a complex and contested one, and this is reflected in the data from the present study. There was rather less precision in respondents' accounts of their perception of students' professional knowledge than was the case with the other interview questions. However, there was broad agreement with the views expressed by Bloomer ((1994). There was a clear sense from the data that respondents regarded students from the 7306 as having a significantly less well formed sense of professional identity than those from the 7307. The 7306 was seen as a 'can do' programme which failed to address the complexity of the knowledge and skills implicit in professional practice.

Hoyle and John (1995) argue that knowledge and responsibility are generally cited as the distinctive qualities of a profession. Although the definition of a profession is contested, knowledge, responsibility and autonomy are generally agreed to be central. In teaching, professionalism is seen in terms of teachers' knowledge, the significance of autonomy, and the values and attitudes entailed within the notion of professional autonomy. The notion of professionalism can be used to tease out some of the complexities of teachers' practices.

Knowledge, autonomy and (to a lesser extent) values, were all themes which emerged from the data. The 7307 was seen to foster these, while the 7306 did not.

Hoyle and John (1995) maintain that knowledge validated by research in the human sciences should be applied in practice, but many practitioners failed to apply the specialist knowledge of the researchers. For others, the indeterminacy of the classroom did not allow for the application of a set of predetermined prescriptions. Educational research has produced a considerable body of professional knowledge that can help teachers think about and remedy the classroom problems they face. Schon's work has had a major impact on how we think about professional knowledge in teaching. The notion of intelligent performance and the stress placed on professional judgement offers teachers the chance to recapture the agenda on professionalism.

There was little reference in the data to an awareness of the importance of educational research in enhancing teachers' professional knowledge. However, the perceived importance of reflective practice has been highlighted above, and was seen as a key element of professionalism.

The workplace autonomy of teachers has been considerably undermined in the past twenty years, according to Hoyle and John (1995). Practitioner autonomy is central to the idea of professionalism. Professionals work in uncertain situations where judgement is more

important than routine; they should be free from political and bureaucratic restraints. Those who argue against autonomy maintain that professional practice is predictable and readily subject to evaluation; claims to autonomy are merely strategies to avoid accountability. Professional autonomy is undermined in organizations such as schools, where the collective purposes of the organization necessarily set limits to the autonomy of teachers. Education is characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity, and this argues for a higher degree of autonomy for practitioners.

Threats to professional autonomy associated with the 7306 were noted by several respondents. It was also evident from the data that respondents undertook to deliver the 7306 due to institutional pressures rather than because of their own professional judgements.

Finally, Hoyle and John (1995) argue that responsibility towards clients is an essential component of the idea of a profession. Responsibility and autonomy are inextricably linked. The practitioner's actions must ultimately be guided by the set of values which place a premium on client interests. The exercise of responsibility requires that teachers have the necessary degree of professionality. A culture of professionality has emerged in teaching over the past twenty years, and teachers participate in a wide range of CPD.

Responsibility and values, though perhaps implicit in the notion of reflective practice, were rarely referred to explicitly by respondents.

Post hoc reflection has long been a feature of teacher training programmes. Professional artistry (Schon, 1987) is an important element, involving the kinds of competence that practitioners sometimes display in unique, uncertain and conflicting situations of practice. Schon's notions of *knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* are integral to professionality. In so far as these elements of professionality can be transmitted, they are most likely to occur in collaborative settings

for personal development. There is a range of ethical issues (derived from Erault, 1994) which would indicate the breadth of what is entailed in teacher training; some policies severely limit the depth and scope of teacher education.

The importance which respondents attached to the notion of reflection has already been noted. It has also been seen that respondents regarded the depth and scope of the CBET approach to teacher training to be severely restricted.

Chown (1996) maintains that there are three characteristics of professional practice: ethical values, autonomous pragmatism and the pursuit of expertise. NVQs cannot provide an account of these. The effect of CBET approaches in teacher education is a reconceptualisation of teaching and learning as technical procedures. This represents a threat to the autonomy of both teachers and learners.

These notions of professionalism have been considered above, and are broadly supported by the data from the present study. Chown (1996) notes that there is often a tension between the requirements of the institution and what the practitioner perceives as the best interests of the student. This is reflected in several respondents' comments about 'subverting the system' in an attempt to import into the 7306 what were perceived as the best elements of the 7307.

Chown (1996) identifies continuing professional development as an important element of professionalism. This can be linked to some respondents' comments on the failure of many 7306 students to progress onto the Cert Ed.

Chown (1996) argues that CBET programmes of teacher training ignore the crucial issues of reflective practice and the complexity of the teaching role. As has been discussed above, this is a view supported by many of the respondents in this study.

Finally, Chown (1996) argues that the behaviourist psychology which underpins NVQs leads away from autonomy and towards technical prescription. Again, we have seen much support for these notions in the data.

The difficulty that most respondents experienced when commenting on students' professional knowledge may be explained by Eruat's (1994) contention that professionalism is difficult to define and that it is perhaps best seen as an ideology. He stresses the importance of knowledge in the professions, and considers its relationship to competence.

Eraut notes that the early development of CBET in the United States was linked to behaviourist notions of coupling training to detailed specifications of need, and that the profession given the greatest amount of attention was teaching. He traces the development of CBET in the UK, and notes the move to include qualifications at the professional level in 1989. Establishing the standards for the professions was done by lead bodies, to the virtual exclusion of experienced educators. We have seen this concern reflected in the data from the present study, in references to the TDLB standards which informed the 7306.

NVQs were performance-based rather than knowledge-based, but by 1991 NCVQ acknowledged that, certainly with professional qualifications, competence did not always imply knowledge and understanding. Eraut (1994) argues that the problem of the ambiguous treatment of knowledge in the NVQ system could be addressed by the notion of 'capability evidence'. By this he means 'a basis for developing future competence, including the possession of the knowledge and skills deemed necessary for future professional work' (p. 208).

Functional analysis results in a fragmented representation of competence. Standards derived from functional analysis may be used as the foundations of programme design, but they do not constitute a design.

Professional action is complex, and models are needed which reflect this complexity.

The narrowness and over-specification of the 7306 has been noted by many respondents in the present study, and Eraut's efforts to link professionalism with an extended notion of competence may provide a way forward for the future.

Hodkinson and Issitt (1995) note the development of CBET in the UK in the early 1990s, and cite Jessup's concern to set out statements of competence to replace the 'generalised and lose concepts of standards which has prevailed in educational circles in the past' (Jessup, 1990, p. 2). This shift to competence-based standards constitutes a challenge to professionals. Under the welfare state, professional activity was supported by bureaucratic structures which were often prescriptive and paternalistic. Criticisms of the quality of professionalism in teaching and social work grew in the 1970s and 1980s, and 'new right' agendas rejected the 'nanny state' and argued for the need to free up individual responsibility and choice.

As a result of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, colleges were removed from LEA control, and funding devolved to the TECs, the FEFC and the NCVQ. Professionalism was reconceived in terms of the 'market forces' ideal-type, where the practitioner is seen as a technician. Where the old professional was legitimated through academic education, the new technician gets better training to achieve against performance indicators. A key element of the market ideal-type is the NVQ notion of competence. Education becomes an engineering problem: the product can be improved by measuring and improving the efficiency of the production line.

Hodkinson and Issitt refer to plans to adapt the TDLB standards for teaching qualifications in the post-16 sector, and note that while we may be dismissive of NVQ policy, the system has highlighted a number of

weaknesses in the old model. This is the 'challenge of competence'. Teacher education programmes were often front-loaded, and struggled to link theory and practice effectively. There was some support for this view in the present study.

Under the NCVQ, competence would bridge the gap between theory and practice, giving precedence to practice. Knowledge, understanding and skills would be incorporated in a holistic view of performance. The model ultimately fails, but this does not absolve us from addressing the problems it has identified. The authors suggest that a new conception of competence may be a way forward.

Hager and Gonczi (1996) compare the Australian model of CBET with that in the UK, and find the UK model deficient in many of the ways identified in the findings of the present study. But they argue that a competence-based approach to the assessment of professionals is often more valid than more traditional approaches.

They refer to an integrated or holistic approach to competence which incorporates ethics and values as elements of competent performance, and which recognizes the need for reflective practice. The Australian Teaching Council, in collaboration with education professionals, has identified five major areas of competence in its teaching standards: teaching practice; students' needs; relationships; planning and evaluation; and professional responsibilities. These have been further analysed into elements of competence following the UK model, but with far less disaggregation and far fewer elements.

Mere observance of performance is not appropriate for the complex world of professional work. Hager and Gonczi (1996) argue that competence-based assessment strategies for the professions require a variety of assessment methods, including the indirect assessment of knowledge. A breadth of evidence is required if assessors are to make sound inferences that professionals will perform competently in a wide variety of

situations. It could be argued that the approach advocated here addresses many of the issues identified in the present study.

As noted in the findings of the 'supplementary interviews' in this study, the FENTO standards for teaching and learning are intended to replace those of the TDLB. The standards were first published in December 1999, and were produced only after numerous consultation exercises with stakeholders from the FE sector (among others). The standards are not written using NVQ terminology, and the term 'competence' does not figure prominently. They put great emphasis on the importance of underpinning professional values, and in this sense they appear to resemble the Australian model discussed by Hager and Gonczi (1996). Furthermore, they may represent a step forward in the development of a new conception of competence, as advocated by Hodkinson and Issitt (1995).

City & Guilds have produced a draft version of a new 730 programme which incorporates the standards. It would be interesting to observe how it is received by the respondents in this study, and by stakeholders in teacher education generally.

Limitations and Modifications

The interview group sample in this study was constrained by geographical factors, but it was reasonably representative of practitioners across three counties in the South West of England. It could be argued that the principal sample should not have been restricted to practitioners in the FE sector, but it is difficult to imagine locating others outside the sector who would have had experience of delivering both the 7306 and the 7307.

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It was intended to conduct only face-to-face interviews, but an opportunity presented itself to conduct interviews by e-mail as well, with practitioners in other parts of the UK. Towards the end of the research

process, telephone and e-mail interviews were conducted with representatives from City & Guilds, FENTO and another NTO. This broadened the research base, and provided triangulation, thus increasing confidence in the findings. Undoubtedly, it would have been advantageous to have interviewed a larger sample.

The face-to-face interviews, though time consuming, provided much the richest of the three sets of data, because of the opportunity to use prompts and probes to elicit perspectives in detail. The e-mail responses tended to be rather brief, and there was of course no opportunity for prompts or probes, while the one telephone interview proved difficult to transcribe. The method of conducting interviews via e-mail seems to have promise, however, as a quick way of collecting data. Not all practitioners responded to my e-mail requests, while each practitioner approached in person agreed to be interviewed.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research ultimately depend on demonstrating that the research methods used are fit for purpose. Consistent efforts were made to control for bias by always asking the same questions in the same way, and by framing the questions in as neutral a way as possible. The threat of bias was also ever before the mind during the process of data analysis. This was to ensure reliability.

Validity was sought by building rapport and trust with respondents, formulating questions to cover all of the research questions, the use of prompts and probes, and the selection of a sample that was fit for purpose.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has gone some way in demonstrating the effects of using an untested model for the training of teachers in further and adult education. While the study does indicate that the NVQ model is not an appropriate

one for a programme of teacher education, it must be admitted that the model has attempted to codify what teachers do. The recently published FENTO standards for teaching and learning in further education represent an attempt to combine the best elements of traditional and competence-based approaches, and reached their final form only after a considerable amount of consultation with practitioners in the FE sector.

The standards may go some way in helping to develop a more integrated and holistic model of competence as suggested by Wolf (1995), Raggatt and Williams (1999), Hodkinson and Issitt (1995), Eraut (1994) and Hager and Gonczi (1996). An interesting area for further research might to chart the development of the new 730 programme, which is based on the FENTO standards.

It is interesting to note that City & Guilds announced in December 1999 that they were withdrawing the 7306 from their portfolio of programmes. The reasons for this change of course might be usefully examined.

Another possible area for research would be to ask why City & Guilds and NCVQ did not anticipate the kind of reception that the competence-based programmes were going to receive, and the many objections which were likely to be put forward, and why there was so little consultation with stakeholders in the FE sector.

The views of students on competence-based teacher training programmes could also be looked into, as well as the issue of what role competence-based programmes might have in the context of closer European integration.

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Appendix 1 – Full Transcript of a Face-to-Face Interview

Interview with 'Karl', who is Head of Education within an Arts and Humanities Department in a large College of Further Education

29 July 1997

Introduction:

I: Can you give me an account of your professional role in teacher education and also of your role in delivering the 7306 and 7307 courses?

R: Yes sure, I'm the head of an education section within an Arts and Humanities Department in a large College of Further Education, that involves running the Certificate of Education course, City and Guilds 7307 course and City and Guilds 7306 course. I have a staff of six full-time tutors and three part-time tutors who teach on, who run those courses. I have been running the courses, for oh, I've been running education courses for about ten years, and have been involved in them for about thirteen years. The Cert. Ed. I've been doing for four years, the 7307 for the whole period that's for the twelve years and the 7306 for three years. Yeah?

Question 1:

I: Great, that's lovely. Then if we can go to the first major question or first key question. You've taught both the 7306 and the 7307 courses; what do you perceive as the important changes in the 7306?

R: OK, yes well then obviously I would preface my answer by saying that the changes are both positive and negative, and I leave that for perhaps a later evaluation. Yeah, I mean, obviously an important change is that the assessment structure has become far more focused in the context of the new course structure. The assessment structure is highly prescriptive and lays down quite clearly what students have to do. The focus upon competences obviously makes a fundamental difference to the course. Ah, where the 7307 had the, there was a greater opportunity for teacher autonomy, a holistic approach which embraced a wide range of

theories of learning. The 7306 course if very much in the sort of technocratic curriculum tradition and is largely based on behaviourist principles and it's quite hard to avoid that. So in that sense those have been the most important changes. Whether you think that is good or bad is obviously part of personal preference.

It's very much, I think, a fundamental change in the way in which we have been, we have run our 7306 in that the 7306 is very much a product-based model and the 7307 is a process-based model and I think that, that is a very fundamental difference.

Prompt: Can I ask you to just elaborate on that a bit, the distinction between product-based and process-based?

R: Product-based, because I mean product-based model is based on the competences, yeah, the student has to demonstrate his or her competence on the basis of certain performance criteria, yeah, where and ... sorry I'll just say that again: it's, it's product-based because the focus is upon achieving something at the end, yeah, there is a focus upon being competent in a particular area and because there is a wide range of competences that have to be achieved, yeah, the time spent on process development in a more integrated approach related to students is more difficult to achieve. I mean that's the way I see the difference, yeah.

Prompt: Then what, can you contrast that for me with the 7307.

R: Yeah, the 7307 because, yeah, there is less of a focus upon the assessment structure there is much greater opportunity for reflection, there is much greater opportunity for the students, on the course, through the course to reflect on their practice. There is, they are not constrained by a particular assessment model so therefore, they are less concerned about the accumulation of evidence to indicate having competence in a particular area, and they are encouraged much more to reflect upon their practice in an ongoing kind of way, yeah, so if you take for example the

learning cycle of experience, reflection, theorising and then new action
there is a greater opportunity within the 7307 model to work on that
learning cycle, whereas in the 7306 there is less opportunity to do that
because there is a much greater emphasis on at various stages of the
course providing evidence that they can do a particular task, without
really asking the students to reflect upon that particular task completion.

Prompt: Can I ask you how on the 7306, what form does this
demonstration of competency take?

R: Generally it is written down, in the vast majority of cases it would be
written, there would be a written statement of completion but in terms of
say for example you were asking them, say for example they would be
asked to demonstrate their competence at conduction a discussion or
using suitable question-and-answer techniques. Then obviously the
observation, teaching practice observation, would be a way in which that
could be done, yeah. But in terms, it, the competence in that respect,
doesn't, there is no need for the course member, the student to reflect
upon that practice: it's very much, well they asked open questions or
closed questions, or whatever, and that is as far as it goes. There is no
real, thorough-going analysis of, of evaluation of that procedure as to
whether that was good or bad.

Prompt: So would I be being reductionist in asking if what's emerging is
an opposition or contrast between publicly observable behaviour full-
stop, on the one hand, and reflective practice on the other.

R: The, I mean the opportunity, ... I think there are, obviously the
performance criteria are clearly prescribed and they have to be fulfilled to
enable the students to successfully complete. The reflective practitioner
model which comes through very strongly in the context of the 7307
obviously through my encouragement and the course team's
encouragement there is the time and opportunity to encourage students to
engage in the reflective practitioner model, but because of the the, highly

prescriptive competences that are there that evidence has to be developed for, or produced for, the time for reflective practice, certainly through the course is minimised because there is this whole notion of building up the portfolio of evidence, yeah, without, you know, it is much more a quantitative thing; it's almost like, I've got this wheelbarrow full of evidence, yeah, is that OK, yeah. There is less time, less opportunity. I think the differentiation is, clearly, there are only so many hours, course hours, available, yeah, and because of the product-based focus of the 7306 there is, I won't say an obsession, but there is a great considerable need to consider have I got enough evidence for this particular PC rather than how good is it.

Question 2:

I: This leads us nicely into the next question I'd like to ask you which is: what effect have these changes had on your own practice?

R: I think, I've as far as possible in delivering the course tried to deliver the 7307 and 7306 courses in the same kind of way, and obviously I would want to encourage students to reflect upon their practice and consider the processes to look at what they are doing and evaluate in an ongoing way; but what seems to happen on the 7306 course is that increasingly as they go through the academic year the students want to know whether they've got enough evidence for a particular competence, yeah, have they fulfilled the performance criteria; so it doesn't seem to be so much that they are engaged in reflection on their practice, or evaluation of what they are doing but more, 'have I, have I fulfilled the criteria for the course', so I've increasingly offered up more and more course time, tutorial type time for example which would be a kind of structural change, not in terms of encouraging students to reflect and open up and so on but to actually look at their portfolio, to consider the evidence, to say well yes, this is, there is sufficient evidence here which enables me to suggest well yes you've fulfilled this particular performance criteria. That, I, I feel that has made a substantive change in the two courses. Yes, where, whilst you want to expand upon things, you

want to encourage the students to engage in discussions and so on in a genuinely reflective and opening-out kind of way. At the end of the day they are wanting you to say to them, is my evidence OK, yeah, I think that really makes a tremendous difference. That, there, that the need to, are we talking about, not talking about professional knowledge at this stage are we?

Prompt: No.

R: No, OK. So I think in terms of the development of their professional knowledge, I think that people on the 7306 are often limited, yeah, that, that the opportunity of, on the course, to develop their professional knowledge doesn't happen so much. Because there is this concern there is this need to look at what they have done, in the work-place to see if that's OK for the course, yeah. In personal terms I think that can have quite a distressing, certainly, yeah, a pressurising effect on the course members because they are, they, they, become very concerned with the accumulation of information. They only focus upon things which are specific to the assessment criteria. Yes, without sort of opening themselves out to diversity of choice and a whole range of different kind of approaches to things, yeah. They, they, tend to be because they feel very time constrained they seem to be very focused upon getting it done rather than opening out to why their influences and considering whether different points of practice might be suitable to a given situation.

Prompt: So how does that kind of situation compare with your practice on the 7307?

R: Very, very different in the sense that we run the 7307, OK there are ten assignments with the 7307 courses, core assignments and there are the college-based assignments but they are very open and very expansive. There is a great deal of opportunity for us to discuss, for the students to do peer-evaluations, to diversify, to even follow particular trends; we even have a situation where students do their own reading, and they bring

in papers and we have discussion. There is a great opportunity to diversify, yeah, which, and that because the 7307 assessment structure is open, as you obviously know. OK, they have to do a course design, for example, but the course design can be whatever they want, yeah, I mean, I mean as long as it resembles some, some sort of form it's OK. Whereas the competence-based model is much more focused, it's much more prescriptive, it pins them down and I feel that, yeah, I've found running the two courses, and I've actually run them side by side, It's quite a difference. I mean I've even moved to the point this last year where our course teams, I've had two different course teams running the two different courses because it creates a high schizophrenic kind of, you know you have to move from one way of thinking, one form of practice, yeah, on the 7307 to the 7306. So this last year we ran it we actually had, two different course tutors running the 7307 and 7306, yeah, because otherwise you'd get a high level of confusion.

Prompt: But you've run both courses side by side?

R: Yeah, yeah, every year, that I've run, I mean on average, I've run three or four 7307s each year and I have done now for the last five or six years. Prior to that we had, we ran 7307 but we only tended to run one or two groups. For the last three years, we've run one 7306 per year. The 7307 has been in the majority and the whole sort of culture of our course team has been focused towards the more expansive, reflective practical model. It's been quite an effort for us to move, I won't say back, move across to the 7306 model. I mean we assumed when we started out that we would be able to run the courses in the same kind of way, and that only the assessment structure would be different; but it hasn't worked out that way. The demand from the students on the 7306 has been, as I said earlier, yeah, to get us to look at their evidence much more. Am I doing this right? Whereas on the 7307 I'd be saying to them 'what is right? let's unpack this, let's consider what might be good or bad practice', whereas on the 7306 they, 'is this right?' there is a much greater demand to do that.

Prompt: Can I ask you about your subjective experience of the different, the difference in delivering the two courses.

R: Yeah, I mean, I mean as you have obviously guessed from what I have said I don't feel very happy about the 7306. I've as I have probably said to you before in informal discussions, I've run the 7306, not really because there has been a great deal of market demand. We don't get many people coming in asking for the 7306 specifically. In fact, two of the 7306 courses I ran for Plymouth City council who were running NVQ-type courses and actually wanted people to be conversant with the NVQ competence-based model. I personally feel, *personally* feel, that education and teacher education should be about reflective practice that opens students up; opening the learners up to a wide range of different models of learning, to consider different processes of learning, to look at different theorists, to engage them in debate and discussion and to come out at the end to have perhaps more of an enquiring mind rather than to be following a particular model. I mean, hence I find that the 7306 is essentially technocratic in its style where as I think our 7307 and certainly later in the Cert. Ed. Is post-technocratic. If you can talk about pre-technocratic, technocratic and post-technocratic, I would certain put 7306 in a very much in a technocratic model, the sort of behaviouristic kind of style whereas the way in which we try to run the 7307 is that of the post-technocratic. I mean, I certainly we draw, we draw heavily on humanistic models and experimental learning models and so on to get the course members to consider their own practice. So, subjectively I'm, I find the 7307 type model that we have developed over a number of years much easier to deal with, yeah. And our course team does generally as well.

Question 3:
I: OK well, this then leads us on to the next question, which is: what effect have the changes, that is the change to the 7306 or perhaps the, is

that a good way to phrase it? What is the effect of the change to competence-based model on the learning experiences of the students. I know you sort of touched on that already.

R: In one sense, in one sense I feel I've answered that because I think it constrains. I really feel in terms of the learning experience it constrains, the 7306, that it doesn't allow them to open out to learn in a diversity of ways so I think, I don't even feel.... Take a very simple example, I don't even feel, that if they are doing the 7306 there is a limited opportunity for them to look at for example Behaviourism - take that as a kind of way of describing learning. There is very little opportunity, or very little time, or very little need within the structure of the 7306 to even consider what pattern of learning the course that they are on is in a sense moulding them into, yeah. They don't, there isn't the need, there isn't the time to reflect upon that so I feel that that has a very limiting effect upon their knowledge and obviously in a kind of knock-on way that would have a limiting effect upon the knowledge base of their own learners in the future and so I think that's the word 'constraint', I would really emphasise that it really does constrain them. Clearly if I have enough time then I would I'd try to introduce them to different learning styles and experiential modes and so on, but whilst they don't say it explicity you almost sense them saying 'do I need to do this, do I need to know this', yeah, which has a kind of undermining effect in a sense, they don't yes, OK, you can look a the range indicators and the underpinning knowledge stuff that 7306 prescribes and you can say well OK, you should make reference to them, but the reference is only a passing reference, it's not, it doesn't have any kind of profundity or depth. So I think in terms of their professional knowledge and development I think it severely impedes it because there is also, though at the moment because I'm sort of course manager I've been able to retain the course hours for 7306 at the level that they are at the moment, which is comparable to the level of the 7307. But there could be, I can see that there will be a time in the future where I'm going to have to reduce the hours because much of the evidence they collect they don't collect in college they collect in the work-place, yeah.

So my paymaster could actually say, well hang on a minute, if they are collecting their evidence abroad, yeah, why do they need to have all these hours here, yeah. So there's that, there's that kind of whole ethos has a great, has a considerable effect upon their professional knowledge.

Prompt: With reference to learning experiences, student learning experiences, it feels as though I'm picking up that on the 7306 students maybe working quite individually from one-another.

R: Invariably that is the case. I mean we set up a number of college-based assignments where they do pure evaluation, pure observation, group assignments but again that works far more successfully on the 7307 than it does on the 7306 because most of what, most of the evidence collection is done in their workplace, yeah. Unless they happen to be working in, say, in a nursing context or with the same employer together they tend to do that on their own so learning is very individuated, whereas on 7307 whilst they are in the same individuated kind of work situation the ethos of the course is very different, where the whole practice on the course is to do with group collaborative learning, the experience of being in a group, there are a lot of group assignments, there are a lot of micro-teaching experiences which they are actually working together. We set group assignments where they go away and work as a group in their own time. The rather personalised and individual nature of learning which the 7306 seems to encourage is, it doesn't happen on the 7307, there is a sense of working within a group, yeah, and reflecting on a diversity of practice, evaluating peer's work and son. Which 7306 again, doesn't ask for. So in that sense professional knowledge can often be on the 7306, a discrete form of knowledge, yeah, a kind of personal knowledge which is rarely given the opportunity to be challenged in a professional or constructive kind of way. That is not to say that we don't have discussion, that's not to say that we don't have, ah, seminars, and work where people are encouraged to sort of divest of their practice but again we come back to the time factor, yeah, where the opportunity to do that is less. I'm not trying to paint a totally black and white here, they are not

radically different, but there is definitely an area, definitely a space where 7306 tends to prescribe a focus upon the assessment material rather than a diversity.

Prompt: Right, if I can just probe a little bit more. You mentioned learning theories as a particular area that perhaps wasn't being attended to on 7306 as much as you would have liked it to be. Are there any other specific areas that come into that category?

R: Well, I mean I think that is the major area. I don't like the idea of learning theories *per se*. I, I feel that the kind of learning theories approach is quite arid. I think that the learning theory has to be considered in the context of the methodology that it spawns, the assessment structure that it spawns, the resource space ad so on that it spawns. I think that the need to evaluate methodology or methods and techniques of teaching and learning are focused upon less on the 7306. Again I mean for example take the example I used before: the student has to show competence in the use of question-and-answer techniques. There is no attempt to place the use of question-and-answer in a given context, yeah. So whether the question-and-answer was a kind of pouncing kind of type or whether it was highly emphatic one-to-one supportive kind of questioning isn't really considered. It's something like, the competence is something like 'the appropriate use of question-and-answer techniques'. Now obviously if you have a good tutor-tutee relationship you can discuss the appropriateness and therefore begin to evaluate. But the need to do that is not so great on the 7306 as it is upon the 7307. Yeah, so you could imagine that in a formative assessment model which you would look at question-and-answer techniques drawing on affective areas and emotional areas and supportive areas but you can imagine on the 7306, well how much has this student learnt, that is, their cognitive development, their skills development and that would be it. So I feel that learning theory is important but it's what it spawns in terms of methodology as well and I don't think 7306 looks at method in that kind of way. It assumes a particular methodological type.

Question 4:

I: OK, well let me come to the fourth question which you have been, sort of, knocking on the door of, and that is: what effect might these changes have had on the professional knowledge base of students?

R: Yeah, I mean obviously that is something which is hard to quantify empirically. We get a lot of feedback as you obviously do, and I get a lot of feedback from graduates of 7306 and 7307 cos' many of them go on to Cert. Ed., one thing that is highly noticeable is, in that particular context is, that 7307 people join Cert. Ed. without feeling the join whereas 7306 people find that quite hard because the whole, the Cert. Ed. course tends to be based upon the reflective practitioner model and I suppose if anything our 7307 approximates much closer to the Cert. Ed. than it does to the 7307 so, in that sense.

Prompt: To the 7306?

R: To the 7306, our Cert. Ed. Courses, our 7307 course is closer to the Cert. Ed. model, yeah, then the 7306 is. So people who leave our 7306 really need to have some kind of induction, some kind of easing into whereas the people who do 7307 it's quite seamless - the join is quite easy. So in that sense their professional knowledge is different. That's an area which we can observe, because I obviously have contact with all three courses and I can see the transition models there, so in that sense the 7307 people who join Cert. Ed. are advantaged, yeah. I would say, and this is largely opinionated but it does describe the kind of people who do leave our courses, that by and large the people who are successful on 7307 tend to move on from simple classroom practitioners into course management duties whereas 7306 people tend to be skills-based people who tend to stay in the classrooms, or workshops or wherever, yeah, and it's almost as if they've found their own kind of, their own level. I'm not, that sounds somewhat elitist but do you know what I mean? There is a, it's almost as if they've found the course that they want, their own

awareness, when they began the course was that the 7307 was going to lead them into slightly different direction to the 7306. So I think coming out of, and I haven't quantified this, this is my own feeling but I do have feedback from people who have gone to Cert. Ed., is that the level of professional knowledge, the depth of professional knowledge in the 7307 course is much more significant and much more fundamental than it is on the 7306. It's not, it doesn't necessarily follow that the 7307 person is a better classroom teacher. It doesn't necessarily follow, I can think of many people who have done 7306 who are good practitioners who have the students' needs and interests at heart, and who actually are very systematic and conscientious in producing hand-outs and resources and all those kind of things, and think carefully about what they do. But the 7307, I think, creates a much greater depth. The word keeps coming up, a much greater reflective style and therefore I think that the professional knowledge which the 7307 people have is more profound and I think tends to lead them on to, to more, yeah?

Prompt: You seem to be saying, or I thought you were saying, that perhaps 7306 people were better prepared to deliver, or were more suitable to deliver, competence-based courses?

R: I mean that tends to be the case because I mean you obviously learn through the practice, you learn through your own learning, yeah, and I think a lot of, certainly a lot, of the three years we ran the courses, sorry, the two years, the people who, 95% of people doing the course were themselves teaching NVQ type courses, yeah. So in that sense they are better prepared for it. I would say that people who do 7307 would find doing an NVQ-type course quite difficult, yeah. People who do 7306 would find teaching an NVQ course reflectively easier, yeah. Having said that I feel that the people who have done 7307, because of it's generic nature, have a much greater opportunity of teaching a wider range of courses, yeah, where 7306 people I don't feel would easily say slot into teaching 'A' Level Psychology, I mean I think that they would find that particularly hard. I mean the particular, the whole practice is summative

it is leading towards a particular goal. There is a high level of linearity, there is, it's highly structured. It's a vehicle of support, almost, for people have, who lack security, it doesn't really put people in what Schon describes as 'the swamp', yeah. On the 7306 you have a structure which carries you through - it's highly structured. So my feeling would be that in general people who do 7307 are more professional, they have, they have learned a degree of autonomy albeit in a relatively short period of time, yeah. They have, we put them on the course, we put them in Schon's 'swamp', yeah. We encouraged them to sort of grapple around and deal with difficult concepts, we stretch them and we push the, so we would imagine that when they go out into the wide world they would be more capable of dealing with a diversity of situations then would be the person who had done the 7306. I can't quantify that, yes, only through looking at people who have gone on to Cert. Ed., yeah. But that would be my feeling.

Prompt: OK, well that's taken us through the four official questions. I just would like to ask you one final one and then give you the opportunity to add anything you want. And, I think the final question is something like: why do you suppose that the 7306 was introduced at all?

R: I mean, I'm convinced that it has a political feel to it. I'm convinced that it's, for a start it fragments learning. I mean, breaking learning down into highly specific competences. The thing we touched upon earlier, the highly individualised nature of learning, yeah, that tends to divide people up, so I feel there is a highly political dimension to it all. That, that sounds like a conspiracy theory I know which seems quite transparently so to be the case to me. I mean I'm, I don't know if it was divised in that kind of way - it tends to, 7306 tend to create creatures who are not troublesome creatures, yeah, and I think that is, personally from the point of view of learning, I think that is bad personally. For me, people who learn should be troublesome creatures. It's like infants who ask questions all the time. Yes, it's good and I would want to encourage all my learners to ask as many questions as possible. I feel that, that enquiry, enquiry-

based approach is really, really important so I feel that there is an underpinning political dimension to it. Yes can I just stop here....

Yeah I think, I mean I can only really reinforce the point that I've already made, it doesn't encourage the people who do the course to in any way problematise their experience. It doesn't encourage them to reflect upon their own practice. It doesn't encourage them to examine things in any kind of depth. Right. It encourages them to see learning on a highly linear kind of structure. In many senses it doesn't really encourage them to focus on *learners*, it really encourages them to look at, it's a teaching model rather than a learning model. I feel that it's a model that says there are tablets of stone, yeah. So it's very much based upon moulding the learner into a pre-determined shape and my feeling is that if you mould the learner into a pre-determined shape which, a course which has aims, *objectives, targets or competences, it does that invariably, yeah, and that* concerns me greatly is you know who says the learner should be moulded into that pre-determined shape, yeah, so it has to me a definite political feel to it. I'm quite happy to say political with a small 'p', yeah. I'm quite happy to say that.

Prompt: What's going to happen to the 7306 in the reasonably near future?

R: It's, it's hard, there are two ways of looking at it. In my own experience recruiting, recruiting students the demand doesn't seem to be particularly great. Because it's quite, we, I've devised a route which is becoming quite popular now. People to do the 7307 which the general feeling is seems to be, that people want to do the 7307, they realise it's a more valuable course in the sense of the course practice is more fun, more expansive and so on as we've been discussing, and then <u>do</u> and pay a little extra and do the TDLB D32/33 courses, yeah. So a lot of people are moving towards that. So there is no great demand for the 7306, yeah, and I don't know how much longer it will run it. I think what really, it depends very much on City and Guilds and government initiatives, yeah,

because clearly the 7307 *does* allow us, as a course team and the course members who come on to the course, to actually look at education in a highly subversive way. I mean to again quote Schon, I mean you know this thing from Schon, that reflective practice de-stabilises institutions in a positive way, in a dynamic way, yeah. Now that is, I find that very exciting, yeah. Now I can quite see that if course design is politically driven, then I can quite imagine that the paymasters and so on would to expunge that kind of dynamic reflection-in-action approach on courses so I could see pressure being put upon departments and colleges to run 7306s than 7307. Also as I touched upon earlier it's cheaper in the long run to run a 7306 than it is to run a 7307, yeah. We know that sort of market effect. I don't know, I would like to think that the 7307 would stay in the frame. But I don't know.

Prompt: OK, well, as far as I'm concerned that's all I need. Is that OK with you? Is there anything....

R: I feel quite uneasy about doing the 7306: I mean that's obviously come through. I mean I personally, probably, If my career in teacher education for the remaining sort of years I've got as a teacher were to be teaching 7306 I'd probably opt-out of it, yeah?

Because it doesn't generate the same kind of vibe same kind of feelings, the same kind of enjoyment and fun that can be had through learning in a reflective experiential way that the 7307 still does offer. Yeah, I mean whether City and Guilds designed this all those years ago when they set up the 7307, I don't know, but the flexibility which is inherent in the 7307 does allow you to really create a really good course, yeah, which can develop year after year. I mean, obviously, just like you are, we are threatened by cost constraints, time constraints and all those kinds of things and if you can stay with it you do have much more opportunity with the 7307 to run a good course, a quality course.

Appendix 2 – Example of an E-mail Response

Doctoral Interview with 'Vincent', 'Central College',
Tyne and Wear
24 April 2000 (via e-mail)

Introduction: Can you give me a brief account of your background in education and your experience with the 7306 and 7307 programmes?

I entered Further Education in Sept 1978 and worked within a large Auto-Engineering Department. Levels of work included delivering on craft, technician and management programmes.

I started teaching on the C & G 730 programme in 1985 and I was made Subject Leader for Education and Training programmes in 1986. I was also the Staff Development Officer at the college at this time.

We piloted the C & G 7305 (later to become the 7306) and I now deliver and assess the 7306 and the 7307 as a common programme. The input is common whilst the assessment is specific in order to meet the necessary requirements. I also moderated/EV on both programmes for City & Guilds

Q1: What do you perceive as the important differences in the 7306 & 7307?

The main difference in my opinion is the method of assessment and the 7306 provides greater opportunity to employ APL (in theory). The 7307 programme works well as a development process, whilst the collection of the masses of evidence by some EVs [on the 7306] can become a barrier to "real" learning and development.

Q2: What effect have these differences had on your own practice?

Initially, the units, elements and PCs within the 7306 tended to drive the programme in many instances, and in my experience still do for some deliverers. This appears to have had the effect of reducing the programme and knowledge content. I also found that achievement of the separate units did not necessarily collate with the development of a good all-round practitioner. I also feel that the 7306 programme has enabled some deliverers, facilitators, whatever, to operate at a very low knowledge level.

However, by delivering and assessing the two programmes within the one group, both sets of students appear to gain from each others' experience and the overall learning experience becomes much fuller.

Q3: What effect have these differences had on the learning experiences of students?

This depends upon the individual student and what they want to gain from the programme -- a qualification, or a learning experience and a qualification. In some cases students are really confused by the criteria, whilst in others students try to use the criteria to minimise learning. Less emphases [is] placed on knowledge and understanding, more on the collection of evidence. Students often think that because they are teaching they must doing it right and ignore the personal development aspect.

Q4: What effect have these differences had on the professional knowledge of students?

I feel that it has been reduced; they appear to be able to teach without having a broad knowledge and understanding. Their teaching sometimes

becomes a little like painting by numbers, or in this case teaching by numbers, hence limiting the curriculum for their students.

Sweeper: Is there anything else you would like to say on this topic?

I feel that as the 7306 programme has progressed, many practitioners have been able to accommodate the requirements and fit them into the requirements of the various teaching and learning situations. However, others tend to use the standards in order to limit the curriculum. Hence the question must be asked "Is the attitude of the teacher trainer a more important factor than we think?".

Hope the above is helpful and aids you in your endeavours. Best of luck with your research and if you require further info or any clarification, don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards
Vincent

Appendix 3 – C&G 7307 Scheme Pamphlet

Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate

Scheme pamphlet

7307

Contents

Introduction

1.1 The scheme described in this document is the 7307 Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate.

1.2 The certificate is designed for full time and part time teachers who are practising or intending to practice in further and adult education or those wishing to take up part time teaching and training of personnel in commerce, industry, the public service or the voluntary sector. It is aimed at

- part time teachers in further and adult education

- full and part time teachers preparing for the route to full certification

- intending part-time teachers in further and adult education, provided they are adequately qualified in the subject they intend to teach by virtue of holding an appropriate professional or other qualification (the decision as to what constitutes an appropriate qualification is at the discretion of the centre). Appropriate levels of achievement in Key Skills may also be used on entry (see Appendix 2)

- training personnel in HM forces, commerce, industry or public service.

References throughout this scheme pamphlet to 'teachers' will be taken to include trainers, facilitators and all candidates of the 7307 scheme.

1.3 The Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate consists of two components:
7307-001 Integrated coursework and teaching practice Stage One
7307-002 Integrated coursework and teaching practice Stage Two

The course consists of two stages:
Stage One – a minimum of 40 hours of study and practice
Stage Two – a minimum of 120 hours of study and practice.

The scheme attracts 60 Credit and Transfer System (CATS) points.

Overall minimum hours of teaching: 30, of which a minimum of 12 hours should be supervised.

1.4 Candidates must enter through a City & Guilds registered centre. Approval of a scheme will depend on

- evidence of a suitably qualified and experienced tutorial team who are themselves normally engaged directly in teaching adults

- evidence of adequate resources and opportunities for teaching practice

- a satisfactorily integrated programme of assessment both for coursework and teaching practice

- provision for the admission of all suitably qualified applicants, irrespective of subject background and specialist training requirements, subject to limits of size of the learning group.

The approved scheme should cover the requirements of both Stage One and Stage Two of the entire programme.

1.5 Overseas candidates should contact City & Guilds International.

Purposes

2.1 The purposes of the 7307 scheme are to provide a thorough preparation for post-sixteen teaching and training. It is intended as a qualification which will equip a wide range of teachers to support learners. It is already established nationally as the foremost qualification for teachers in post-sixteen education and training.

The scheme aims to provide a preparation, in two stages, for progression to the Certificate of Education or PGCE courses, entry to Higher Education courses or alternative specialist training programmes. In addition, it provides a body of knowledge, skills and understanding which may be used in portfolio building for NVQs in Training and Development up to and including Level 4.

2.2 The scheme is designed to enable candidates to

- adopt an integrative approach to the theory and practice of teaching and training

- reflect on their own experience, practice, skills and potential for development

- build up knowledge of principles of learning, teaching, assessment and evaluation

- apply a range of methods and techniques of teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation, exploring such innovatory approaches as may be appropriate

- analyse their own students' abilities, potential and learning needs

- develop their own communication and inter-personal skills

- design, organise and evaluate teaching and learning programmes

- adopt an innovative approach to collecting and using a wide range of teaching and learning resources, including developing their own skills in the use of Information Technology

- develop an awareness of their professional role, the essential value systems which underpin it and the legal requirements for carrying out that role.

The framework of aims and objectives which underpin these purposes is in Appendix 1.

3 Scheme structure

3.1 The scheme recruits a wide range of candidates who are currently involved in post-sixteen teaching and training or intend to be. Changes in vocational education mean that the scheme could also be adapted for teachers of pre-sixteen students and vocational subjects to students in the 14-16 age group, providing that current regulations about qualified·teacher status are modified.

3.2 7307 is the major initial teacher training qualification in post-sixteen education and training. It is also closely linked with both the Certificate of Education (FE), for which it attracts a rating of up to 60 CATS points, and the 7306 Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate which leads to an NVQ at Levels 3 and 4.

3.3 The scheme is designed on the basis that the majority of candidates will attend part time for a minimum period of 40 hours at Stage One and 120 hours at Stage Two. These minimum requirements, defined either as tutorial time, attendance time or guided study time, are designed to ensure quality and should also apply to the many other variations in organisation of the 7307 programme which exist.

3.4 These variations take account of candidates' needs and include

- intensive modular approaches (for companies or the uniformed services) providing they meet the minimum hours required (these modules could be structured to facilitate claims for CATS points)

- distance learning modes, using self-learning packages (an example is included in Appendix 4)

- weekend attendance plus work based tutorials (for some Community Education schemes)

- parts of the scheme achieved by flexi-study (eg the Study in Depth)

- various approaches to the scheme overseas, including intensive full time study and more formal assessment.

3.5 The scheme has grown on the basis that it can satisfy these wide needs without losing its quality. In the future, even wider demands are expected as the vocational curriculum expands. It could be adapted, for example, to training teachers in secondary schools who are teaching vocational subjects for students in the 14-16 age group and it could be used for training higher education staff if a mandatory training requirement is introduced.

3.6 A further feature, already in evidence in some centres, is the growing use of computer based training, including the Internet. As the scheme encourages innovative practice, the use of a combined approach of face-to-face tuition, computer-based learning and distance learning is to be encouraged.

3.7 Teaching is an essential element which must be undertaken and supervised in both Stage One and Stage Two, whatever the mode of delivery. A total minimum of 30 hours of teaching or training must be recorded and documented during the programme which should include approximately 4 hours for Stage One and 26 hours for Stage Two. Of this, 12 hours must be supervised at Stage Two and some supervision must be given at Stage One. Documentation should include action plans and evaluations and should be recorded in a Teaching and Learning File for assessment and internal and external verification.

3.8 Course tutors, organising tutors or scheme tutors have a crucial role to play within the scheme structure. Amongst other duties, their tasks may include

- co-ordinating a team of tutors and assessors in delivering and assessing the programme which may include internal moderation or verification

- adopting the role of internal verifier in ensuring standardisation of approaches to practical teaching, including the work of mentors, work based assessors and others to whom some supervision has been delegated

- recruiting and guiding candidates in their choices of options and giving advice on Key Skills

- preparing candidates for external verification and liaising with examinations officers

- liaison with the external verifier and regional offices of City & Guilds

- preparing and advising students on their progression routes.

3.9 Approval and verification is based upon a centre's fulfillment of essential criteria in respect of

- management systems and administrative arrangements

- physical resources

- staff resources

- assessment

- quality assurance and control

- equal opportunities and access.

  Following approval, verifiers will be required to monitor all aspects of the scheme as laid down in the scheme documentation.

Stage one

4.1   Stage One will consist of at least 40 hours, 4 hours of which should be teaching practice. It is intended to be a basic introduction to teaching and training. It serves several purposes, both as an in-service and a pre-service programme, for a wide clientele in post-sixteen training.

4.2   Candidates who successfully complete Stage One will receive a Certificate of Unit Credit issued by City & Guilds and a Profile issued by the centre.

4.3   Evidence towards Stage One for those wishing to proceed to Stage Two may be accepted by centres where candidates can demonstrate, by appropriate prior experience or by completion of a similar programme for a similar award, that they have fulfilled the requirements of the scheme.

4.4   The content of Stage One is based upon helping candidates to meet their immediate needs of preparation, delivery, assessment and evaluation. In addition, candidates may wish to commence any of the Stage Two tasks from the Teaching Study. They should be able to produce a folder of work which reveals their initial ability to

- describe, and reflect on, their current role, responsibilities and capabilities

- understand basic principles of teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation processes applicable to their own situation

- prepare for teaching by organising learning resources and session plans

- engage in micro-teaching exercises

- undertake at least one teaching and learning session with students

- conduct assessment of achievement appropriate to their student group

- evaluate their own development as a teacher.

4.5   Candidates as a minimum should produce:

- session plans or individual action plans

- a course outline

- a teaching resource

- a report by a tutor on an observed session

- an assessment activity

- a micro-teaching exercise

- a self-evaluation related to their Personal Development Journal.

Candidates may also commence work on Stage Two if appropriate. A Profile will be issued by the centre as a summative record of achievement at Stage One, similar to the Stage Two Profile, unless agreed otherwise with the candidate (see para. 8.1).

4.6   Whilst the intending teacher may not have a contracted class to enable an observations visit to be made, it is expected that such intending teachers will be able to teach a class either on a voluntary basis, as a visiting teacher, or by some similar arrangement. The negotiation and planning entailed will be a valuable part of their Stage One.

5 Stage two – core

5.1 Stage Two is based on a core and options model. It consists of at least 120 hours of study, experience and practice in demonstrating a range of teaching and learning skills with the necessary underpinning knowledge and self-evaluation. Approximately 26 hours of teaching practice should be included in the 120 hours of study.

5.2 Stage Two is designed to enable a wide range of candidates to undertake teaching and learning tasks relevant to their situation. These will be revealed in teaching and training in diverse situations including teaching large or small groups, instructional work, one to one coaching and supervision, distance learning, computer assisted learning, resource based learning and a range of contexts.

5.3 Stage Two seeks to develop candidates' abilities to

- analyse their own abilities and assist them to develop their existing skills and knowledge

- understand their students' needs, backgrounds and aspirations

- understand basic principles of teaching and learning in relation to their existing teaching and in their receptivity to alternative ideas

- demonstrate in their planning, delivery and evaluation regard for equal opportunities and health and safety legislation

- develop their skills in devising programmes and schemes of work, based upon consultation with students or upon the requirements of examining bodies

- adopt a systematic approach to planning learning sessions by reference to a variety of methods and develop innovation in their teaching and training

- design, make and use a range of teaching and learning materials, using their own creative and Information Technology skills in designing and making such resources

- develop their Key Skills (see Appendix 2)

- provide underpinning knowledge for City & Guilds 7306

- understand and apply communication skills in their teaching and training

- design and apply appropriate means of assessing their own students, based on an informed choice from the methods available

- evaluate their own teaching and learning, reflecting on their own role, organisation and professionalism.

5.4 The core is based upon an integrated Teaching Study which should relate as much as possible to teaching undertaken. The Teaching Study may include work started in Stage One.

5.5 Candidates are required to organise their work in a systematic way. They should aim to produce

- a Course Folder containing all the tasks in the Teaching Study and options

- a Teaching and Learning File which should contain

   - a record of all teaching undertaken for the 26 hours, with full documentation

   - a record of the 12 supervised hours (including observation reports, lesson plans, tutorial records and other relevant material)

   - candidate evaluations of the lessons under supervision

- a Personal Development Journal, which is a means of showing personal reflection and evaluation (see Appendix 3).

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  – candidate evaluations of the lessons under supervision

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They should aim to produce them in a variety of ways, including:

- audiotape
- videotape
- disks
- charts
- the other graphical forms supported by appropriate evaluation, as well as traditional written accounts.

5.6 **The teaching study**

The precise content of the following tasks will be negotiated between tutor and candidate; the tasks are not necessarily sequential.

Task	Evidence
Identify a learning group or a series of individuals.	This will be the focus of the candidate's study.
Analyse and describe the composition, background and motivation of the group or series of individuals.	Candidates should show how the information was gained.
Observe and evaluate the performance of an experienced teacher.	Candidates should show evidence that there has been discussion with the experienced teacher and evaluation after the session.
Plan, present and evaluate a typical session with the group or an action plan for an individual session.	Candidates should give an indication of content, purposes, outcomes, strategies, assessment and feedback. The evaluation should include a review of the alternatives considered. The session should be an observed teaching session.
Design, use and evaluate a teaching or learning programme with a group or individual.	The timescale for the programme should be approximately one term or at least 12 hours, a short course or a series of individual sessions to be evaluated as a whole. The choice of programme should relate to the candidate's teaching to facilitate assessment visits. The programme should have overall aims and objectives, outcomes or competences and a scheme of assessment. It should be evaluated as a whole programme.
Produce an assessment task relevant to the teaching which is marked and analysed.	This should be an appropriate instrument to the work undertaken by the student and can either fit with the course/programme designed by the student or the validating body requirements. The work should be marked and the results analysed.
Identify and discuss the significance of relevant principles of learning as they relate to the candidate's teaching.	Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of these principles and their application to teaching.
Design, use and evaluate teaching and learning resources used within the programme.	Candidates will be expected to show how the resources are relevant and effective in teaching their client group or individual. This should be demonstrated in an observed session.

Task	Evidence
Identify and comment on teaching and learning strategies used within the programme.	Candidates should identify the major characteristics of each chosen strategy, giving a rationale for their choice, and should review alternatives.
Identify and analyse some significant processes of communication encountered whilst teaching the programme.	Candidates should analyse both verbal and non-verbal communication by means of case studies.
Write or present a study in depth of an issue of educational importance associated with the programme.	This study should be negotiated early in the course and be relevant to educational issues, local or national. It should be well organised and referenced, in report, essay or visual form. It should give candidates the opportunity to express ideas, reflect on their values and form valid conclusions. A typical written piece should not normally exceed 2000 words.

The core should provide ample opportunities for candidates to maintain a Personal Development Journal (see Appendix 3) and to claim evidence of competence in Key Skills (see Appendix 2).

5.7 Teaching

Teaching, and its supervision and assessment, relates both to the core and the options. It builds upon the teaching assessment in Stage One and should be negotiated with the tutor from the outset. Both candidate and tutor will need to strike a balance between observing those sessions which are part of the Teaching Study and those which may be part of an option, although there is scope to combine the two.

The Teaching and Learning File should include records of all sessions from the minimum 30 hours of practice, but the focus for assessment will be on the 12 hours agreed with the tutor.

The assessment of teaching need not be considered in terms of strict supervision of the 12 designated hours, but rather a negotiated programme of selected visits, spaced at intervals over the period of Stage Two, to allow for maximum development and effective support and feedback. Supervision entails the approval and continuous monitoring of 12 designated hours, which should have session plans and evaluations. At least 6 hours of actual observation, excluding feedback, is needed to cover the requirements. Other recent teaching which has been assessed and reported upon may be used from sources such as appraisals, inspections and NVQ assessments, to be documented fully in the Teaching and Learning File. Some of the Teaching Study (5.6.4 and 5.6.8) should be assessed as part of the teaching observation. Centres should not use mentors exclusively for this activity.

Criteria for assessing teaching will need to be based upon the generic skills set out below. In addition to these, other criteria may apply to specialist bodies such as teachers of sport, dance or movement, and teachers of deaf and visually impaired people. There are many voluntary bodies and associations whose specialist needs can be met alongside the core criteria for the 7307 scheme.

5.8 **Guidelines for the assessment of teaching**

The following core criteria apply to the teaching of large or small groups or individuals. Candidates will demonstrate that they can

Plan and organise

- show evidence of planning
- communicate objectives to their students
- relate sessions to a learning programme
- relate their chosen material to students' learning needs
- create a safe and effective learning environment.
- design and use a suitable range of learning resources.

Present and deliver

- establish and maintain good rapport
- behave appropriately and in a professional manner at all times
- demonstrate appropriate equal opportunities behaviour and anti-discriminatory practice
- show adequate command of the subject
- relate the material to varied student abilities
- use strategies appropriate to the size and needs of the group
- manage teaching and learning resources and activities effectively
- use appropriate written and spoken communication.

Assess

- monitor student progress
- assess student achievement, using appropriate methods
- give feedback to students in a positive manner.

Evaluate

- evaluate their own teaching and learning.

Administer

- complete necessary administrative tasks.

6 Stage two – options

Stage Two options are based upon the same underlying principles outlined for Stage Two – Core and the assessment requirements. Tutors are encouraged to integrate the options with the core in their overall scheme and should be able to assess both as part of their teaching.

Candidates are required to achieve a pass in TWO options.

It is not expected that a separate programme of teaching and learning will be needed by centres to cover all the options, but rather that candidates will negotiate their options with their tutor at the outset of Stage Two. Tutors will either give tutorial assistance or facilitate specialist tuition where possible, or direct candidates to other programmes, visits or extra experience as suitable.

Candidates will be expected to organise their work, drawing their material from a variety of sources which may include other training programmes, before presenting it for assessment and verification. Options are particularly suitable for candidates to work collaboratively in groups and to form self-help groups.

Candidates should also negotiate with their tutor to indicate how their work on their option may be assessed. This might be within teaching.

Options are designed to suit a variety of purposes, allowing candidates to extend and develop issues and topics already addressed in the core.

Candidates and tutors are encouraged to use the options to suit individual needs and to add extensively to the following list:

Suggested options

- Information Technology for teachers
- Assessor Awards, D32/33 or GPA units
- Counselling and guidance
- Learning needs and support
- Distance/Open/Flexible Learning
- Marketing
- Designing new courses/adapting NVQ programmes
- Resource preparation
- Organisation and management of their own institution
- Development of own Key Skills and/or those of students
- Key aspects of adult and community education
- Resource based learning
- Additional TDLB units (maximum two)
- Other training awards
- (Each NVQ unit will be the equivalent of one option).

Assessment of options

General criteria of assessment applicable to all Stage Two work will apply. Additional criteria for each of the two options undertaken will be that they should include:

a brief outline of the purposes, methods and expected outcomes of the option

product evidence from the option, eg a portfolio, report, video, open learning materials, computer evidence, etc.

a brief evaluative summary of learning gained from undertaking the option.

As a general guideline, approximately 65% of the course programme should be dedicated to the core units and 35% of the course programme should be dedicated to the two options.

Internal verification

Internal verifiers will sample assessments on an agreed formula with the external verifier. Options which are NVQ based will need to be separately registered with a centre approved to offer the relevant NVQ qualification.

External verification

External verifiers will need to be aware of how the options are assessed within Stage Two. External verifiers will need to examine whether the assessment criteria have been met.

7 Assessment and verification

7.1 Assessment of the candidates' achievement in 7307 will be the responsibility of a designated tutor, assisted in many centres by a tutorial team. Further assistance may be sought from other trainers, work-based assessors, mentors, specialists and other appropriately experienced and qualified personnel, but subject to final assessment by the tutor.

7.2 Assessment will be based on a Pass/Fail basis for the two components:
- teaching
- course work, core and options.

The assessment of teaching will be based on the assessment of a period of 12 supervised hours of teaching. Assessment of coursework will be based on both the core and options.

7.3 To facilitate assessment and verification, work should be arranged as

a Course Folder containing all the tasks in the Teaching Study and options. A copy of the Stage One Profile should also be included, or other evidence where the candidate was exempted from Stage One:

- a Teaching and Learning File, to include full records of all 30 hours of teaching

- a Personal Development Journal

- a Profile.

Refer to Section 5.3 for more details.

7.4 The external verifier will sample the assessment process from time to time following internal verification, not necessarily at the end of the course, and may choose to sample any aspect of coursework or teaching. The verifier will also sample work from Stage One of the programme.

External verifiers will need to satisfy themselves that the chosen options have been suitably assessed according to the criteria set out in Section 6, but it will not be necessary for them to approve the options beforehand.

7.5 Tutors may decide whether to base their 7307 scheme of work on the Aims and Objectives model or on the Training Cycle, both of which are a means to an end, which is to deliver the programme's requirements in two stages, as outlined in Section 2.

All assignments, including options and the assessment of teaching, are subject to external verification.

7.6 Candidates are entitled to challenge both individual assessments and overall assessment, which are subject to the conditions laid out in the appeals procedures set out in Appendix 5.

Appendix 4 – C&G 7306 Scheme Pamphlet

7306 – Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate (NVQ)

Contents   **Page**

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the new standards-based 7306 Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate is to provide professional development for teachers and trainers in post-16 education and training. Both 7306 and the well-established 7307 course have attracted a very wide clientèle, ranging from intending teachers to those with many years' experience. To meet these needs, the new scheme has been constructed on a flexible, unit-based pattern, aligned to national standards.

You can enter at either level, or, as your career changes, progress from Level 3 to Level 4.

1.2 NVQ Levels

The 7306 scheme will be offered at NVQ Levels 3 and 4, and also at Foundation level.

City and Guilds are offering the following:

a) **Foundation certificate in teaching and training**
   This will consist of 11 elements, covering basic teaching skills, suitable for those wishing initial support in their teaching or new to teaching. Success in these 11 elements can be carried forward as part of the units of the Level 3 award.

b) **City and Guilds 7306 – NVQ Level 3**
   This consists of 7 core units and 3 optional units, and the options include the assessor awards.

   The units relate to a wide range of teaching skills including

   ● diagnosis of needs

   ● planning and presentation of sessions

   ● assessment and evaluation.

c) **City and Guilds 7306 – NVQ Level 4**
   This consists of 7 core units and 5 optional units. These units cover the full range of professional skills for the teacher or trainer including, in the core, in addition to the skills required at Level 3,

   ● curriculum design

   ● review and evaluating learning programmes.

   The assessor and internal verifier units are included in the options.

1.3 Candidates

Candidates for these qualifications are drawn from the full range of post-16 education and training, and the pack has been designed to meet the needs of a wide range of teachers and trainers, including those from education, the public services, business, the professions, the uniformed services, and those intending to enter teaching and training.

1.4 The 7306 approach

The starting point for the 7306 and the main focus throughout is the individual candidate's own needs. There is, therefore, strong emphasis on initial needs analysis by means of a thorough induction process. The candidate's choice of units can then be matched to his/her teaching role and development needs, expressed as an action plan. This choice in turn determines the most appropriate NVQ level (or Foundation Certificate) at the outset.

Your programme will be drawn up to include tutor-led sessions, micro teaching or other simulations, tutorials, group activities and assessment of practical teaching. The essence of competence based learning is that all these learning situations, and many more related to individual circumstances, will provide evidence to match against the units and elements in the programme.

The assessment framework allows each individual to determine his/her professional development. Your choice of units may evolve if your role changes, offering you greater flexibility.

There follows a list of all the units and elements open to you.

In addition to these competences, there are a series of underlying themes and concepts which are integral to all units:

- Principles of Learning

- Equal Opportunities

- Communication

- Self Reflection.

Further guidance on these themes is included in the pack.

2 7306 Qualifications Structure

2.1 Foundation Certificate in Teaching Training and Development

Unit/ Element	Title	Credits to NVQs	
		Level 3	Level 4
A221	Identify available learning opportunities	Core	–
A222	Identify learning needs with individuals	Core	–
B222	Design training and development sessions for learners	Core	–
B331	Prepare materials and facilities to support learning	Core	Opt
C211	Establish rapport with learners	Core	Core
C231	Give presentations to groups	Core	–
C232	Facilitate exercises and activities to promote learning in groups	Core	–
C241	Demonstrate skills and methods to groups	Opt	–
C242	Instruct learners	Opt	–
D112	Conduct formative assessments with learners	Opt	Core
D113	Review progress with learners	Opt	Core
E232	Improve training and development sessions	Core	–
E312	Identify self development needs	Core	Core

NOTE: Achievement of any 11 of the 13 elements will be required for the certificate

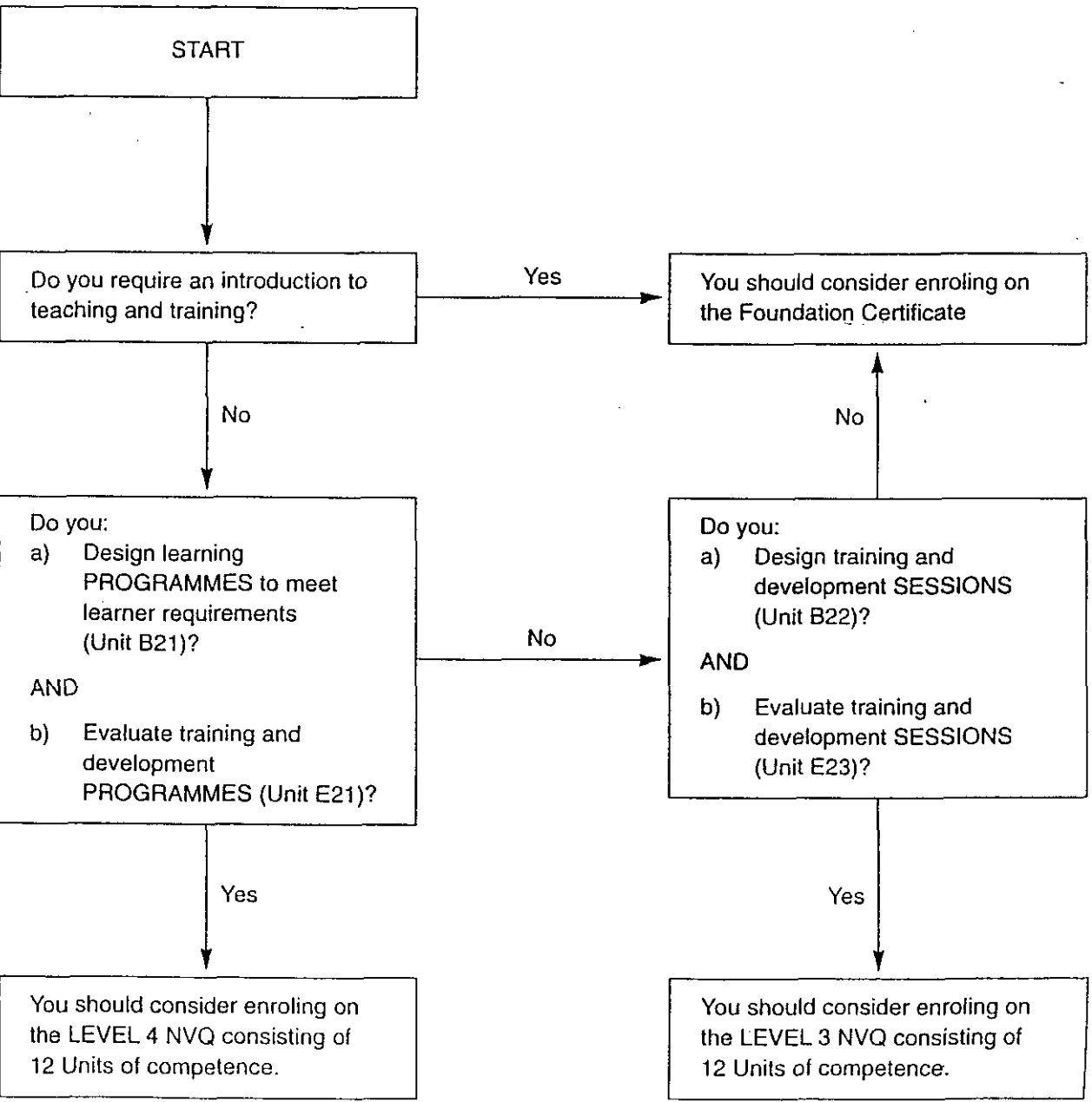## 2.2 7306 Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate

NOTE: Level 3 Training and Development: All cores are mandatory: candidate needs the 7 core units plus any 3 units from the options.

Level 4 Training and Development (Learning): All cores are mandatory: candidate needs the 7 core units plus any 5 units from the options.

No	Unit Title	Level 3	Level 4
A21	Identify individuals' learning aims, needs and styles		Core
A22	Identify individual learning needs	Core	
B21	Design learning programmes to meet learners' requirements		Core
B22	Design training and development sessions	Core	
B31	Design, test and modify training and development materials		Opt
B32	Design, test and modify information technology (IT) based materials		Opt
B33	Prepare and develop resources to support learning	Core	Opt
C11	Co-ordinate the provision of learning opportunities with other contributors to the learning programme		Opt
C21	Create a climate conducive to learning	Core	Core
C22	Agree learning programmes with learners	Opt	Core
C23	Facilitate learning in groups through presentations and activities	Core	
C24	Facilitate learning through demonstration and instruction	Opt	
C25	Facilitate individual learning through coaching	Opt	
C26	Support and advise individual learners		Opt
C27	Facilitate group learning	Opt	Opt
D11	Monitor and review progress with learners	Opt	Core
D21	Assess individuals for non-competence based assessment systems	Opt	Opt
D31	Design methods to collect evidence of competent performance		Opt
D32	Assess candidate performance	Opt	Opt
D33	Assess candidate using diverse evidence	Opt	Opt
D34	Support and verify the internal assessment process		Opt
D35	Monitor and assure the quality of the assessment process		Opt
D36	Advise and support candidates to identify prior achievement	Opt	Opt
E21	Evaluate training and development programmes		Core
E22	Improve training and development programmes		Opt
E23	Evaluate training and development sessions	Core	
E31	Evaluate and develop own practice	Core	Core
E32	Manage relationships with colleagues and customers	Opt	Opt
E41	Develop training and development methods		Opt
MCI SM2	Contribute to the planning, monitoring and control of resources	Opt	
MCI Unit 3	Recommend, monitor and control the use of resources		Opt
MCI SM3	Contribute to the provision of personnel	Opt	
MCI Unit 4	Contribute to the recruitment and selection of personnel		Opt
MCI Unit 9	Exchange information to solve problems and make decisions		Opt

2:3 Which qualification should I enrol for?

The type of qualification you achieve will depend on the nature of your teaching and training role and the type of evidence you are able to bring forward from your realistic work environment as illustrated below.

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│            START            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐   Yes    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Do you require an introduction to ──────►│ You should consider enroling on │
│ teaching and training?      │          │ the Foundation Certificate  │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
              │ No                                    ▲ No
              ▼                                       │
┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Do you:                     │   No     │ Do you:                     │
│ a)  Design learning         │ ────────►│ a)  Design training and     │
│     PROGRAMMES to meet      │          │     development SESSIONS    │
│     learner requirements    │          │     (Unit B22)?             │
│     (Unit B21)?             │          │ AND                         │
│ AND                         │          │ b)  Evaluate training and   │
│ b)  Evaluate training and   │          │     development SESSIONS    │
│     development             │          │     (Unit E23)?             │
│     PROGRAMMES (Unit E21)?  │          │                             │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
              │ Yes                                   │ Yes
              ▼                                       ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ You should consider enroling on │      │ You should consider enroling on │
│ the LEVEL 4 NVQ consisting of │        │ the LEVEL 3 NVQ consisting of │
│ 12 Units of competence.     │          │ 12 Units of competence.     │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
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3. Assessment Guidance

3.1 How will I be assessed?

When you are assessed, the assessor/tutor is gathering **evidence** about your performance in the workplace so he/she can judge whether you are competent or not.

3.2 Performance criteria

What you do in your everyday work as a teacher/trainer can provide a great deal of evidence about how you perform in the workplace. **Performance evidence** is seen as the primary source of evidence for making a judgement of your performance against the Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate.

There are a variety of sources of **performance evidence** and these are described below.

3.3 Direct performance evidence

a) Observation
You will be assessed teaching in a workplace or teaching placement by your assessor/tutor for this certificate.

b) Products of performance
Actual "outputs" of your teaching performance, eg lesson plans, materials, student assessments, student development plans, evaluation of lessons, preparation notes, can provide readily accessible evidence which you can include in your portfolio of evidence.

3.4 Indirect Performance Evidence

a) Witness testimony
Line managers, mentors, other tutors, colleagues etc can provide evidence about your teaching performance. The witness testimony can be oral or written, but it must **directly** relate to the standards and refer specially to achievements against one or more elements.

A witness testimony can be in support of past experience or provide evidence of current performance, but it is very important that your witness is reliable.

b) A personal report
A personal account of your teaching performance and preparation can provide a useful source of evidence.

The personal report can be in written form, or it may be oral as part of an interview with the assessor/tutor.

The personal report should include:

- details of the action taken

- reflections on actions taken

- knowledge of what is done and why

- information on planning.

Simulations are special assessment occasions arranged within the workplace or away from it, for observing specific elements. They can be projects, assignments, role plays and case studies and may be necessary because the element, although essential for competence, does not occur frequently as part of a normal teaching activity. Simulations can also be used if the opportunity for gathering performance evidence is limited.

3.5 Supplementary Evidence

a) Questioning
The assessor may use questioning to probe for further evidence of your ability to perform competently.

b) Knowledge Tests
The assessor will ask you to produce other forms of evidence which demonstrate your underpinning knowledge, eg learning/teaching strategies, questioning techniques, external influences on education etc.

c) Assessment of TDLB Assessor Units (D32 and D33)
If your students are not working on GNVQ/NVQ programmes then you will need to take part of the syllabus you are teaching and break it down into a competence format, ie unit, element and performance criteria.

3.6 Historical Evidence (Accreditation of prior learning)

Your past experiences may provide a great deal of evidence towards the 7306 Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate. This evidence can be recognised and will justify a claim for credit provided it is authentic and meets the following criteria:

- **Relevance**
  the evidence presented is relevant to the elements/units of competence

- **Retention**
  the evidence presented indicates that the competence has been retained to the present day.

3.7 Roles and responsibilities

a) Candidates
It is the responsibility of the candidates undertaking this qualification to ensure that they are

- ready for assessment

- able to identify the elements and performance criteria that are about to be assessed

- able to present appropriate evidence of prior achievement and current competence.

b) Assessors
It is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure that

- agreement is reached on the evidence presented of prior achievement

- an assessment plan is agreed with the candidate

- the candidate is fully briefed on the assessment process

- he or she follows the assessment specification given by City and Guilds

- the candidate receives prompt and accurate constructive feedback

- if the candidate has demonstrated competence by meeting the performance criteria, all relevant documentation is completed

- if the candidate has failed to demonstrate competence against the performance criteria, a new assessment plan is mutually agreed.

c) **Internal Verifier**
It is the responsibility of the internal verifier to ensure that

- all assessors follow the assessment specification given by City and Guilds

- the accredited assessor receives prompt and accurate constructive feedback

- the accredited internal verifier ensures that all assessors interpret the national standards consistently

- the centre's documentation meets the standard required by City and Guilds

- all candidates' achievement records meet the requirements of City and Guilds

- he or she acts as the guardian of the standards.

d) **External Verifier**
It is the responsibility of the external verifier to ensure that

- all internal verifiers follow the assessment specification given by City and Guilds

- the accredited internal verifier receives prompt and accurate constructive feedback

- the accredited internal verifier ensures that all assessors interpret the national standards consistently

- the centre's documentation meets the standard required by City and Guilds

- all candidates' achievement records meet the requirements of City and Guilds

- he or she acts as the guardian of the standards for the awarding body.

Appendix 5 – Summary of the FENTO Standards

The standards

The standards consist of the following three main elements:

- professional knowledge and understanding
- skills and attributes
- key areas of teaching.

Professional knowledge and understanding

The knowledge and understanding required to perform effectively as an FE teacher are arranged in three categories:

- **domain-wide knowledge** applicable across all areas of professional practice
- **generic knowledge** relating to each standard
- **essential knowledge** relating to specific aspects of each standard.

The **domain-wide knowledge** is listed here. **Generic knowledge** appears in the introduction to each of the key areas of teaching. **Essential knowledge** is listed under each of the standards within the key areas.

FE teachers and teaching teams should have **domain-wide knowledge** and critical understanding of:

a   the place of FE within the wider context

b   the aims, objectives and policies of the organisation in which the teacher works

c   professional knowledge in their own subject area

d   learning theory, teaching approaches and methodologies

e   social and cultural diversity and its affect on learning and on curriculum development and delivery

f   the social, cultural and economic background of individual learners and the implications of this for learning and teaching

g   ways of ensuring that linguistic diversity is valued and accommodated within programmes of learning and teaching

h   current national and international initiatives and how they are interpreted within the strategic plan of the organisation

i   current developments within their own specialist vocational or academic area of expertise and ways of keeping up to date with such developments

j   the concept of inclusive learning

k   learners' entitlements and issues related to the autonomy of the learner

l   the broad range of learning needs including the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the facilities and arrangements that are available to help meet these needs

m   the characteristics of effective learning

n   how to measure effectiveness against a diverse range of quality indicators

o   what constitutes best professional practice

p   ways of analysing and using key information to inform teaching and learning

q   effects of change on the FE sector and teachers' own practice

r   methods of assessment

s   information technology and how it can be used to extend and enhance learning

t   ways of ensuring the currency and effectiveness of technical and educational competence and sources of professional development

u   models of curriculum development and how they can be applied in their own area of work

v   sources of funding and teachers' own contribution in accessing such funding.

In addition to the skills related to specific aspects of competence there are a number of generic personal skills, including inter-personal skills, and personal attributes, that should inform all aspects of teaching within FE.

Personal skills

Teachers and teaching teams should display the skills of:

- analysis
- evaluation
- monitoring and reviewing
- planning and prioritizing
- setting objectives
- managing time
- research and study
- critical self-reflection
- identifying, interpreting and applying specific knowledge to practice
- problem-solving
- creativity
- decision-making
- handling conflict
- establishing effective working relationships
- communicating effectively with groups and individuals with specific reference to:
  — preparing effective written materials
  — listening and questioning skills
  — explaining ideas clearly
  — providing constructive feedback
  — contributing to group discussions
- working collaboratively with others
- networking
- interviewing
- negotiating
- managing themselves
- managing change
- presenting and delivering information.

Personal attributes

Teachers and teaching teams should possess and display:

- personal impact and presence
- enthusiasm
- self-confidence
- energy and persistence
- reliability
- intellectual rigour
- integrity
- appreciation of FE values and ethics
- commitment to education and to learners' progress and achievement
- readiness to adapt to changing circumstances and new ideas
- realism
- openness and responsiveness to others
- acceptance of differing learning needs, expectations and styles
- empathy, rapport and respect for learners and colleagues
- assertiveness.

Key areas of teaching

Standards have been developed to cover all the major areas of activity.

a Assessing learners' needs

b Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals

c Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques

d Managing the learning process

e Providing learners with support

f Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements

g Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice

In addition to these, there is an underpinning competence of meeting professional requirements which supports and informs all other processes. This has been expressed as a set of values and principles, separate from the other statements of competence but implicit in all the standards.

h Meeting professional requirements

Summary of the key areas of teaching

a Assessing learners' needs

This involves being able to:

a1 identify and plan for the needs of potential learners

a2 make an initial assessment of learners' needs.

b Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals

This involves being able to:

b1 identify the required outcomes of the learning programme

b2 identify appropriate teaching and learning techniques

b3 enhance access to and participation in learning programmes.

c Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques

This involves being able to:

c1 promote and encourage individual learning

c2 facilitate learning in groups

c3 facilitate learning through experience.

d Managing the learning process

This involves being able to:

d1 establish and maintain an effective learning environment

d2 plan and structure learning activities

d3 communicate effectively with learners

d4 review the learning process with learners

d5 select and develop resources to support learning

d6 establish and maintain effective working relationships

d7 contribute to the organisation's quality-assurance system.

e Providing learners with support

This involves being able to:

e1 induct learners into the organisation

e2 provide effective learning support

e3 ensure access to guidance opportunities for learners

e4 provide personal support to learners.

f Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements

This involves being able to:

f1 use appropriate assessment methods to measure learning and achievement

f2 make use of assessment information.

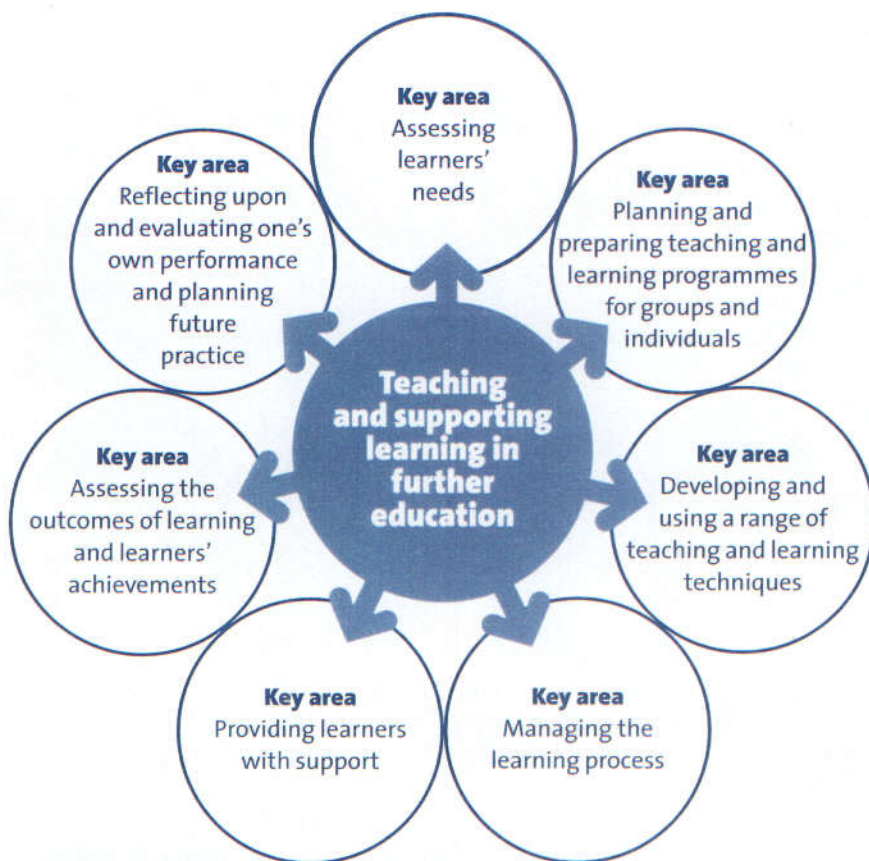**g Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice**

This involves being able to:

g1 evaluate one's own practice

g2 plan for future practice

g3 engage in continuing professional development.

h Meeting professional requirements

This competence underpins all other competences. It involves being able to:

h1 work within a professional value base

h2 conform to agreed codes of professional practice.

Key area
Assessing learners' needs

Key area
Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice

Key area
Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals

Teaching and supporting learning in further education

Key area
Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements

Key area
Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques

Key area
Providing learners with support

Key area
Managing the learning process

Meeting professional requirements
An underpinning competence that supports and informs all other processes