

# **Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK**

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**Abstract:** Professionalism has assumed the level of obligation in both the training and practice of teachers in the Lifelong Sector (LLS) in the UK. Responding to the demands of professionalism has been seen both by teachers and trainees as a source of tension and distress. In effect, many practitioners and trainees in the field have become less enthusiastic and less attracted to work in the field because of the culture of performativity that some elements of professional demand attract and in some cases, fail to see themselves as professionals. This paper responds to this situation in two ways. First, it offers a new construct of understanding the multiple demands of ‘professionalism’ which categorises elements of professionalism into three categories of subject knowledge, pedagogical and procedural professionalism. Second, it reports the findings of a small pilot research on the disposition of trainee teachers towards the professionalism module of their training programmes.

Though only a pilot study, the research found a paradoxical relationship between trainees and professionalism as trainees felt less like professionals because of the demands and imposition of conditions of procedural professionalism. Also, the pilot study established that among the group investigated, the major source of tension and distress is the demand of procedural professionalism. Finally, the study suggests that trainees are better able to accommodate the demands through appropriate classification that is offered by the new construct.

## Resume

Dr Gordon Ade-Ojo has a career spanning three decades as a lecturer in the Higher Education Sector, a tutor in the FE sector and as a manager in the Further Education sector. His research draws on his experience across the two sectors in the analysis of policy and its implementation in a context of overlapping sectors. Gordon has published over forty peer reviewed articles in journals, monographs, chapters in books and books. He is currently a principal lecturer at the University of Greenwich in the UK where in addition to being the LLS Sector Network coordinator. He is also a lecturer and supervisor on the Masters and Doctoral programmes as well as programme leader on a number of teacher education programmes. Gordon is an academic associate of the University of South Africa (UNISA).

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# Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

## Introduction

Interest in the development and award of a specialist teaching qualification for teachers in the Post-compulsory education sector (Now referred to as Life-long learning and Skills sector: LLS) began gathering pace from the turn of the century. The earlier adventure into this zone culminated in the production of standards for teaching and learning in further education (FENTO) in 1999. Following this were a series of initiatives including policies such as the introduction of compulsory teaching qualifications for all new Further Education (FE) teachers (2001) and Success for all, which claim to present a blueprint for the reform of education in the sector (2002). On the face of it, these initiatives were all focused on the singular goal of professionalising the workforce in the sector (Ingleby, 2011, Orr and Simmons, 2010). This is particularly significant because FE teachers have traditionally located their professionalism in the context of their subject area know-how, and as such, ‘subject expertise rather than knowledge and skills in education would be the chief determinant of the quality of teaching and learning’ (Orr and Simmons, 2010:78, Harkin, 2005:166).

Resultant upon the policy context of Further Education Workforce Reforms (2007) which was ‘integral to a policy thrust intended both to improve teaching and learning and to professionalise the PCET workforce’ (Orr and Simmons, 2010:78)., FE teacher education, assumed what many have described as ‘standard driven’ (Ingleby, 2011:25) and ‘prescribed’ (Orr and Simmons, 2010:79, Lucas, 2004b and Nasta, 2007). This prescriptive and standard-driven feature of PCET teacher education is manifested in the structure of the training programme with the demand for a ‘professional element’ and a specific requirement that all such programmes must meet a specific standard prescribed and monitored jointly by the now outgoing agency named Lifelong Learning, UK (LLUK), Standard verification, UK (SVUK). The main source of evidence of professionalism is tagged on to a specific module which can be generically can be labelled the professional development module with its actual name varying from provider to provider. Consequently, the development of professional competence and provision of evidence of such a development is generally located within the professional development module of teacher education programmes.

As might be expected of such a standard-driven and prescribed programme, there have been evidence of unease from both trainees and trainers on Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) teacher education programmes. While this element of unease has been variously isolated and related to specific elements of the programmes, there is no doubt that the perceived central anchor for these problem areas has been the demand for professionalism (Bryan and Carpenter, 2008, Hale, 2008 and Lieberman, 2009). Illustrating these individualised elements, Ingleby, (2011) explored the nature and structure of mentoring in the professional development journey of trainees, Orr and Simmons (2010) review the duality of trainees’ identities, while Bryan and Carpenter (2009) dwelled on the effect of standards-driven requirements on the social processes influencing professional behaviour. In the context of the mono-dimensional foci of these studies, there are two clear issues that need to be addressed. First, there has been little exploration of the role that the structure of training programmes play in reinforcing these elements of tension for PCET teachers and trainee teachers. What is it about the nature of the programmes that contribute to the emergence of these areas of tension? In this respect, the focus, in my view, needs to be placed on the content and processes stipulated within the framework of the programmes. Second and also deriving from the perceived importance of the training stage, very little has been offered in terms of the perceptions of trainees engaged on these programmes. For example, very little has been offered in terms of trainees’ views on the elements of their professionalism module that has been the source of much of their problem. Finally, these studies have not comprehensively responded to this problem area through an exploration and theorization of the differing perceptions of what constitutes professionalism. Central to

this is the question; can we justifiably classify what we demand of our trainees through the imposed structure of our programmes as genuine elements of professionalism? Have we, for instance, been imposing the elements of what, for instance, has often been classified as ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2003) as a false discourse of professionalism?

Developing from the ongoing, this paper is anchored onto two central goals. First, the desire to introduce the element of trainee voice and second, the desire to re-evaluate the structure of PCET teacher education in terms of content and process so that a clear proposal could be made in terms of remedying the seemingly inevitable tension

# **Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK**

that the demand for professionalism appears to be imposing on both the PCET teacher education programmes and the trainees who study on them. In order to achieve these goals, this study will carry out the following. It will draw from an original empirical research to identify trainees’ views on the nature, sources and structure of the problems they face in respect of the demand for professionalism. In explaining the findings of the research, it will revisit and re-theorise the concept of professionalism and drawing on the two initial foci above, will offer suggestions on how the concept of professionalism can be deconstructed and reconstructed in the context of PCET teacher education.

## **Research design: Sample, methods of data collection and analysis.**

**Sample** The participants all study on a Professional Graduate Certificate (PGCE) programme offered by one university in the UK, although they study in different local colleges. This means that they are all exposed to the same programme content and processes as dictated by the awarding body, the University of Greenwich. The sample group was made up of fifty four (54) trainee teachers who are also employed in the PCET sector. This means they are open to the demand of what is generally termed dual professionalism (IFL, 2009, Orr and Simmons, 2010) and subject to an examination of the impact of emergent issues in the two contexts of work and training. Although the number of subjects in the sample group might be considered small, it was felt that this number was adequate for a number of reasons: In the first instance, the group formed a ‘typical and convenient sample’ (Kerr 2009: 280). Convenient because the researcher’s management role on the programme delivered by a Network of colleges, makes access to the sample of trainees quick, easy and available (Anderson, 1998, p124) and typical because it represented the expected ‘norm’ of PCET teachers (Anderson, 1996, p124) in terms of career aspiration, age range and work history. Furthermore, the sample group was reasonably representative of PCET provision in the UK, as most provider types in the spectrum were represented. Twenty six members of the group taught in mainstream further education colleges, twelve taught in services education including the Prison, the Police and the Fire services, nine in adult community education centres, while the remaining seven taught with private training providers. Although there was a form of uneven distribution in terms of gender with only nineteen members of the group being males, this was considered representative of the gender distribution pattern in the FE sector where teachers are predominantly female (Cara, Litster, Swain, and Vorhaus 2008, Ade-Ojo 2011).

## **Data collection methods: Survey questionnaire and focus group interview:**

The data for this study was collected through a combination of survey questionnaire and focus group interview methods. The focus group interview was used as a supplement to the survey, as it provided the opportunity to further explore issues raised through responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed around three main foci namely: trainees’ understanding of professionalism, impact of the drive towards professionalism and their perceptions of the sources of disharmony in their training programmes. Around each of these foci, a few simple questions were asked. In using these two data collection methods, cognisance was taken of their limitations. In the case of the questionnaire survey, the established problems of low survey return rates and high item non-response rates (Atteslander 2000, Churchill & Iacobucci 2005) were considered. However, because the subject group was a ‘convenience group’, this problem had limited significance, as all members of the sample group responded to the questionnaire. The focus group interview was employed in this study in spite of limitations such as the ‘unnaturalness of setting’ and the loss of focus (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 288, Ade-Ojo, 2009 and Ade-Ojo and Sowe, 2011), In the context of this study, this method was chosen in recognition of the fact that group interaction is one of the prominent features of the learning culture into which the participants have been socialised. As such, the interaction was effectively among the participants rather than with the interviewer, thus leaving room for the views of the participants to emerge.

## **Research approach and data analysis methods**

The orientation of the research is essentially iterative (Lucas, Nasta and Rogers, 2011). This orientation facilitated a synergy between the paradigmatic allegiance to a mixed method approach and the method of data analysis. Drawing from the principles of mixed method approach (Cresswell, 2003), the study employed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. Data collected through the use of a questionnaire were subjected to simple statistical analysis through the SPSS tool, in order to identify patterns of distribution and their significance. The

## **Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK**

initial findings were then used as the springboard for iteration as they informed the development of key themes which were then tested out and revised during the focus group interviews. The subsequent findings were then subjected to a simple form of content and discourse analysis. In both cases, the responses presented by the subjects were examined to see how notions were constructed by the choice of words and language forms used. This method was chosen for two reasons. First, in addition to providing the opportunity for the researcher to ‘discover, and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention’ (Webber 1990, Stemler 2001:1), it also allowed ‘inferences to be made’ using the inherent tool of conceptual analysis (CSU 1993-2009). Given that the focus of the present research involves the identification of individual perceptions from which inferences about groups and institutions are expected to be made, this method was considered to be highly suitable. The data collected through focus group interviews were first codified using simple semantic signification. Following this, the data was then analysed in order to establish the semantic import of the range of responses which then formed the basis for analysis. The result is that the data in this study is presented through a combination of statistical and textual media.

### **Theorising professionalism: a de-construction**

The debate around the concept of professionalism has endured in academic discourse and has consequently thrown up a variation of perceptions. However, a lot of the contemporary studies in this area have tended to focus on the implication of professionalism in various contexts and have been silent on the crucial issue of what constitutes professionalism. Illustrating this contextualised dimension of engagement with professionalism, Lucas and Nasta (2009, 2010) offer us a model of theorising the mediation of ‘state-imposed professionalism’. A similar theme is explored in Lucas, Nasta and Rogers, (2011) with a focus on how standards for teachers are translated as they move between the context of policy makers, regulators and practitioners’ (p.5). Consequently, the crucial question of the real nature of professionalism has remained largely unanswered in relatively current engagements with professionalism.

Historically, the concept of professionalism has been presented in a most elusive form. Indeed, that element of elusiveness is reflected in the twenty three traits (and counting) that have been included in its various definitions (Millerson, 1964 and Hughes, 2000). Nonetheless, the definitions and characterisations of professionalism can be summed up within the framework of two general thematic headings. First, professionalism reflects a lengthy period of training in the subject matter, that is, training in a body of abstract knowledge (Goode, 1960, Hughes, 2000). The second, which is often referred to as the trait perception of professionalism, focuses on the establishment of a particular way of delivering services which reflects a mode of functional relevance for the relationship between professionals and their clients (Barber, 1978, Hughes, 2000).

In the context of the deconstruction I propose here, particularly in the context of teacher education, I offer two terms, content professionalism and pedagogical professionalism to represent the two typologies identified above. With the former, the emphasis is on the degree of knowledge that the ‘professional’ has acquired in their specialist subject area before (s)he can qualify to be classified as a professional. But, as Hughes (2000) points out, that knowledge base alone is not sufficient for the execution of the role that an engineering tutor, for example, has to carry out. With the latter, the emphasis is on the professional’s competence in the productive procedures of their profession. The combination of the two accounts for what the IFL UK (2009) refer to as dual professionalism. A tutor in the context of the PCET sector in the UK, therefore, is not considered a complete professional unless (s)he is able to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence in the two areas. This may be one of the reasons why there has been so much demand on trainees and practitioners in the field in terms of professionalism.

While most constructs of professionalism appear to take into account the two elements identified above, I argue that there is a third element which is often either overlooked or conveniently subsumed under the second typology highlighted above. For this strand of professionalism, I use the term ‘procedural professionalism. Although several studies in the literature have verged on some of the features of this strand of professionalism, none has really integrated it as an independent variable in their construct of professionalism. That, in my view, is one of the reasons why professionalism in PCET teacher training has been so vulnerable to the dictates of standard-driven regulatory quasi-government agencies. Within this strand of professionalism, I identify competences in a range of routine

## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

activities in the execution of the professional’s roles which serve as an evidence base for meeting various elements of standard demanded by policy. This element of so-called professionalism is, therefore, an instrument through which what Ball, (2003) calls ‘performativity’ can be monitored.

Drawing from anecdotal and empirical evidence (Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2003, Maxwell, 2004), it is evident that this strand of professionalism is most held responsible for the problems encountered by trainee teachers, teachers and teacher educators in the process of developing professionalism. There are two possible explanations for this. First, because this element is subject to mediating regulatory bodies (Orr and Simmons, 2009), there is no standard expectation which can be developed in the same way as content and pedagogical professionalism can be. The second factor hinges on the fact that this element of professionalism relies mostly on professionals being able to provide evidence of instances of performance. This again echoes the discourse of performativity and shrouds professionalism with the cloak of subjectivity. Decisions as to the quality and adequacy of evidence of instances of performance is often subject to the views of individuals and, therefore never really has a standard form against which it can be objectively valued. As a result, there are myriads of evidence types in various context of practice that are imposed on trainee teachers.

Developing from the de-construction above, there are two key points to acknowledge here. First, it is important that we recognise that there are three strands of professionalism in the development of teachers: content, pedagogical and procedural The second follows; once we recognise the existence of the thir strand, we must have a dialogue on where this strand fits in within the framework of teacher education. **Data findings and discussion**

The first set of data presented was generated from the quantitative analysis of findings from the questionnaire. The questionnaire, in addition to mapping out general distributional patterns of gender, experience and nature of provision in which participants practise, is focused on three key issues: the most difficult components of training, perceived reasons why the components are considered difficult, and the impact of the difficult components on trainees. The findings are then analysed through the use of the SPSS statistical tool in order to get a straightforward distributional pattern and in some cases, a comparative configuration of the patterns. The findings presented statistically were then used as drivers for emergent themes which were then explored through focus group interviews. The findings from interviews together with the statistical data are subsequently discussed with existing theoretical paradigms and frameworks utilised to explain some of the emergent patterns and themes.

### General distributional pattern of participant

**Table 1:VAR00002 Gender distribution**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	19	35.2	35.2	35.2
female	35	64.8	64.8	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in table 1 above, the distributional pattern of participants indicate 64.8 percent female and 35.2percent male. This is not significant for this study because it falls within the range of expected pattern of gender distribution in the FE sector in the UK (Ade-Ojo, 2011, Hamilton and Hillier, 2006). As such, the researcher can rely on the views provided by the participants as representative of the general workforce in the FE sector

**Table 2: VAR00003 Experience of participants**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid less than 5 years experience	43	79.6	79.6	79.6

## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

more than 5 years experience	11	20.4	20.4	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 above shows the distribution pattern in terms of experience of participants. This is considered significant because pre-research postulations suggests that experience might be significant in terms of how trainees cope with

**Table 3: VAR00006 Type of provision**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid mainstream FE college	26	48.1	48.1	48.1
services	12	22.2	22.2	70.4
adult and community centres	9	16.7	16.7	87.0
private trainers	7	13.0	13.0	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

the demands of their training and the ways in which they respond to it. As such, this variable is central to the paired sample tests carried out in this analysis.

Table 3 above shows the various types of provisions within which participants work. This is considered significant because it is conceivable that the nature of their work location might inform the way in which they respond to the demands of training. As such, this variable will be subjected to a paired sample test for correlation. The distribution pattern conforms with the general distribution pattern of FE provision in the UK with mainstream FE colleges representing close to 50%.

### The difficult components of teacher training programmes

**Table 4: Difficult components of teacher education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid CPPD module	41	75.9	75.9	75.9
Theory related courses	7	13.0	13.0	88.9
pedagogy related courses	3	5.6	5.6	94.4
a mixture	3	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in the table above, 76 percent of participants reported that they find the CPPD component of their training most tedious. CPPD is a module that is specifically designed to help trainees provide evidence of their professional development. More importantly, the module is used to account for the range of LLUK demands in terms of professionalism. Some of the criteria demanded by LLUK as evidence of trainees meeting the professional values and practice include; ‘encourage the development and progression of all learners through recognising (AP 1.1), valuing and responding to individual motivation, experience and aspirations, use opportunities to highlight the potential for learning to positively transform lives and contribute effectively to citizenship (AP 2.1), apply principles to evaluate and develop own practice in promoting equality and inclusive learning and engaging with professional standards (AP 3.1), implement appropriate ways to enthuse and motivate learners about own specialist area (CP 2.1)’ (LLUK, 2007:14-15), and a range of eleven other criteria. On the teacher education programme under

## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

investigation here, trainees are expected to provide evidence of these rather verbose criteria through the CPPD module. This naturally attracts a range of paperwork, use of specialist meta-language and endless hours of brainstorming. More importantly, evidence of achievement is often subjective, as the views of the tutor are supreme regardless of the trainee’s rationales and intentions.

As indicated in the table, a minority of participants identified other modules including the theory based module, pedagogy based modules and a mixture of modules as the more difficult aspects of their training. It is significant to note that the combination of participants with this view is less than 25%. As such, it was considered this theme was worthy of further exploration during the interview.

The main focus in respect of this theme during the focus group interviews was why so many participants considered the CPPD module as the most difficult. A number of points emerged from the interviews in this respect. First, many

**Table 5: Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	VAR00003 - VAR00007	-.204	.683	.093	-.390	-.017	-2.190	53	.033
Pair 2	VAR00006 - VAR00007	.537	1.463	.199	.138	.936	2.698	53	.009
Pair 3	VAR00003 - VAR00005	-1.111	.861	.117	-1.346	-.876	-9.478	53	.000
Pair 4	VAR00006 - VAR00004	-1.593	1.743	.237	-2.068	-1.117	-6.714	53	.000

trainees felt that it was so demanding because of the ‘bittiness’ of the criteria. One participant said ‘there are so many bitty parts to this module. You never really know what is being demanded of you. It just hangs around your neck forever’. Another point emerging from the interviews was the distance between the theoretical demands and the reality of practice: ‘How on earth are you ever going to demonstrate these in the reality of your class?’ Another view was the fact that some participants see the module as a tool for managerialism: ‘Your managers, who cannot really teach these classes go around with clipboards looking for evidence that you have met these criteria. It is just killing. They forget that you are actually training’. The last comment is very insightful in that it draws attention to two central issues in the theorisation of professionalism. First is Ball’s (2003) concept of performativity in which he decries the terror of performativity and its impact on the teacher’s soul. According to Ball (2003:1, abstract) performativity ‘requires individual practitioners to organize themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation’ It would seem that this trend that Ball describes in the context of practising teachers is seen as replicated on trainees and as such, elicits similar responses from them. Similarly, the allusion to managerialism echoes the argument of Ingleby, (2010: 15) that standards-driven education has become imposed on aspects of PCET teacher education. One could argue that the response of participants in this regards is a bye-product of that imposition. A final point offered by participants

## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

in respect of the choice of CPPD as the most difficult component of their programme is its seemingly non-defined structure. One participant who typified this view said ‘you just don’t know what they are asking for. You simply jump through the hoop whenever any demand is made of you. You cannot on your own identify what these demands are’

Because of some of the views expressed by participants in these interviews, particularly the suggestion that it is a replication of the imposed principle of performativity, it was felt that it was necessary to see if there was a correlation between the findings in terms of difficulty of modules and years of experience. If indeed, we could justifiably claim that the view on CPPD was informed by the translation of work routine to the training setting, there is a possibility that the years of experience of participants might be significant. This was tested through the use of a paired sample T- test between years of experience and the difficult component of their training. The finding is presented below in table 5 below which also contains other paired sample T-test between variables that were considered significant.

Table five below presents the overall result of four pairs of variables which have been subjected to a paired sample T-test because of the view that some of the variables might significant in terms of their impact on other variables. The first line which reports the result of the Paired sample T-test between variable 003, years of experience and variable 007, modules found most difficult, indicates that the relationship between the two variables is significant with a 2-tailed significant figure of .033. In effect, this suggests that trainees who have had over 5 years experience before embarking on their training do not generally find the CPPD module as difficult as their colleagues with less than five years experience. This can be seen as an affirmation of the argument that part of the problem that trainees face in respect of this module is the fact that it is structured to replicate the tedium of performativity at work, and so, the more experienced trainees are already familiar with.

### What makes CPPD difficult?

**Table 6: VAR00004 difficult elements of CPPD**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid documentation	7	13.0	13.0	13.0
finding evidence	9	16.7	16.7	29.6
time	11	20.4	20.4	50.0
meta language	11	20.4	20.4	70.4
overbearing management	7	13.0	13.0	83.3
combinations	9	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in table 6 above, there are a wide range of reasons from documentation through attitudes, to meta-language for considering the CPPD module as difficult. One conclusion that can be drawn from this is the fact that none of the reasons provided relate to actual pedagogical or subject area knowledge. In effect, this lends some credibility to the argument offered earlier in this work on de-constructing professionalism, that there is a need to acknowledge three elements of professionalism, particularly the need to acknowledge an imposed element of procedural professionalism. It would seem that what participants were acknowledging here was the demands of procedural professionalism. This again formed a basis for identifying a theme that was explored through the focus group interview with the findings presented below.

Central to the contributions of participants in respect of the feature of CPPD they most resented was the issue of imposed form of presenting evidence. This tied in with the issue of paperwork and time spent on creating evidence.



## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

It would seem that one of the major problems for trainees is the fact that there is a demand that their evidence is provided in a particular form using a specific language form. One participant said, ‘Even when you have tried and done all these things, you have to write your evidence using a million and one different forms and you must write your reports and documents in a particular way’. Another said ‘you cannot use your own language. It must be written in a particular way and if you don’t, forget it’.

Another explanation emerging from the focus group interviews was the issue of seeing the relevance of these activities in practice. Linked to this is the issue of different perceptions of what should be prioritised. In the view of participants, many of the demanded elements of CPPD are mere exercises in ticking the box, as they do not see the real importance of doing them to their learners. This was linked to the notion of time being wasted on irrelevances rather than spending time on actual teaching and learning. One participant said, ‘why do I have to write out an ILP. Is it not sufficient that my students and I know what we want to address. The time we spend writing out these useless ILPs could be better spent with students or even creating resources. The problem is that your tutors want to see these in your folder, just like your managers do too’. Again, this echoes the argument around the replication of work ethos in training setting which is driven by the nature and structure of LLUK criteria.

### Impact of the demands of CPPD on trainees

**Table 7: VAR00005 Impact of demands on trainees**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid overworked	15	27.8	27.8	27.8
helpless	16	29.6	29.6	57.4
lost	14	25.9	25.9	83.3
not unduly worried	9	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

This focus sought to establish the impact of the tedium of the demands of the CPPD module on trainees. As indicated in table 7 above, participants offered a range of impacts, most of which have psychological manifestations. It is interesting, however, to note that some participants (16.7%) did not feel unduly worried. This provided a theme to be explored during the focus group interviews. Was there something peculiar to trainees who reported that they were not unduly worried? In addition, it triggered the quest to carry out another comparative analysis to see if any of the other variables was significant in this respect.

Opinions emanating from the interviews were focused on two broad themes. For those who felt that the CPPD module had a negative impact on them, arguments revolved around psychological wariness, fear of failure and a seeming never ending demand on their time. One respondent said ‘it just wears you down, doesn’t it’ while another said, ‘it just goes on and on forever’. More instructive, however, was the view that the timing was simply wrong. Many participants felt that at the time that they were just getting their heads around the principles and theories, the demands of professionalism in the CPPD module is not only at the wrong time, but also lacking significant context. One such participant said ‘you are only learning about differentiation and other such things, but they immediately want you to demonstrate how you have planned it out in a lesson and how it affected your learners. Is not enough to talk about it? but you’ve got to provide documentary evidence. That is what is killing’.

For participants who did not feel unduly worried, the emergent theme was familiarisation with the process. In essence, many felt that it was something they had done for many years and are, therefore, no longer wary of it: ‘you just get on with it don’t you?’ and ‘it is not any different from what your managers get you to do all the time’. This again introduces the element of replication of work culture into training through a standard-driven curriculum. The differences in opinion reported above prompted a comparative analysis of variables and as indicated in table 6 pair 3

## **Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK**

above, variable 0003, years of experience was found to be significant for variable 0005, impact on trainees, as it has a two-tailed significant figure of .000.

### **Other paired tests.**

The result of a paired sample testing to see if there is a reciprocal significance between variables is worth reporting, as it is considered as significant to the context of this study. Variable 00006, type of provision and Variable 0007, modules that participants find difficult, were subjected to a paired sample T-test. The result indicated that there is a significant relationship between the two with a two-tailed significance figure of .009. Participants who work in mainstream FE colleges have a sizable representation amongst those who found modules other than CPPD difficult. This might suggest that the nature of mainstream colleges is such that these participants have become more familiar with the procedural elements of professionalism than their colleagues from non-mainstream provisions.

Through the combination of statistical pattern and qualitative data from the focus group interviews, it was evident that the CPPD module could be seen as the more difficult and demanding part of FE teachers’ training programmes. This on its own is perhaps not a cause for concern. What rings alarm bells is the perception that the elements of this module are not particularly useful and are simply a way of replicating work ethos in training, responding to what Ingleby (2010) refers to as ‘bureaucratic education’ and standards driven education. Do we go to these lengths because we are convinced that a module like this on the teacher education programme is beneficial to trainees?

The alarm raised by participants in this study about the usefulness of LUK imposed standard is not in isolation. In a recent study, Lucas, Nasta and Rogers (2011) explored the views of teacher educators on whether the state-dictated standards evident in the teacher training programme have the ‘desired effect’. They conclude on the basis of the evidence provided by teacher educators that ‘there is little evidence of the enriching of the experience of trainees on ITT courses’ (p1). Based on findings such as the one reported by Lucas et al (2011) and the current study, it becomes imperative that the structure of the so called professionalism-driven teacher education programmes be reviewed. An attempt at doing that will be offered in the next section as a recommendation from this study.

### **Conclusions and recommendation**

The findings from this study established two central points: the CPPD module constitutes the most problematic module for trainee teachers in the PCET and the vast majority of trainees experience negative impacts from their engagement with this module. Given that the goal of professionalism is desired by all stakeholders, teacher educators, trainees and policy makers, it is crucial that we explore the reason why the module within which teacher professionalism is developed carries so much negative ambience. I offer two potential explanations for this; the structure and expectations of the module. As suggested in the analysis of data, the structure of the module in terms of its content can be described as standard-driven. This means that the module itself is designed to respond to policy standards rather than actual professional standards. While there is nothing particularly wrong with responding to the requirements of a policy-driven set of standards, there is a valid question about the context in which such requirements are imposed. Drawing from the metaphor of the choice between Asclepius and Hippocrates invoked by Downie and Randall (1999) and further reinforced in Ingleby (2011), the question to be asked is whether it is desirable to entertain the audit driven philosophy embodied by Hippocrates or the alternative reflection-driven philosophy embodied by Asclepius. The answer to this question must reside with all stakeholders including trainees, policy makers and trainers. Nonetheless, it is plausible to argue that the standard-driven nature of the CPPD module in particular echoes the misgivings and apprehensions that have been chronicled in the analysis of other elements of the PCET teacher education programme (See e.g. Coffield, 2004, Lieberman, 2009, Lucas et al, 2011 and Ingleby, 2011). These studies have all concluded in part by questioning the legitimacy of imposing education as an ‘aspect of bureaucracy’ (Ingleby, 2011:15).

## Deconstructing and reconstructing professionalism: The ‘professional’ demands of the PCET teacher education programme in the UK

The bureaucratically imposed structure also makes a demand on the expectations on the CPPD module. In this regards, I make recourse to theory for explanation. I draw from Ball’s concept of performativity to account for this situation. . Drawing from Ball’s construct in the analysis of the expectations on school teachers, Boxley, (2003) offers the argument that performativity reigns supreme when the personal characteristics of teachers are embedded into professionalism. According to him, ‘Evidencing capability in this regard rests upon claiming personal qualities which include such immeasurable descriptors as ‘Respect for Others’, ‘Conceptual Thinking’, ‘Initiative’, ‘Holding People Accountable’ and ‘Understanding Others’. This has necessitated the construction of a relationship between ‘*personal characteristics*’ and performativity. It is a similar attempt to relate training to performativity that has raised the expectations imposed on trainees in PCET teacher training and which is responsible for the negative impact on trainees.

How then do we resolve this problem? I argue that many elements of what is demanded by this culture of performativity are essential for professional teachers. However, the crucial question is whether these are characteristics that can and should be developed in the context of training. This brings to the fore the argument offered earlier in this work about the need to deconstruct the concept of professionalism into three. In my view, many of the characteristics demanded of trainees under the general classification of professionalism should really be classified as procedural professionalism. If we accepted this deconstruction, where and when do we cater for the development of these elements? I argue that this is something that is better addressed post-ITT. In the current framework for professionalism of PCET teachers, there is a requirement to achieve the Qualified Teacher in the Lifelong Learning and Skills sector (QTLS). Achieving this status requires applicants to provide evidence from their practice. This is distinctly different from the imposed situation in which trainees are required to provide evidence about issues they sometimes have very limited understanding of. In essence, I argue for a reconstruction of the structure of PCET teacher education such that evidence of what I call procedural professionalism to be relocated within the framework of QTLS. Such a reconstruction will achieve three things. First, it would allow trainees the space to internalise the theories they have learned, it would allow them to contextualise the theories in the reality of practice and also enable them to provide evidence for their QTLS status. Adopting this structure has more merit than the half way house approach which in addition to reducing the time available to spend on developing subject and pedagogical professionalism never really provides suitable opportunities for developing procedural professionalism.

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