

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

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- Context: UK specific but might have implications for others
- ITT in PCET and the development of quals: A brief history
- The drive for professionalism: Policy influence and programme structure
- Impact of policy-driven structure: anecdotal and empirical evidence
- The problem with the drive for professionalism: empirical study
- Deconstructing professionalism: A case for procedural professionalism
- Conclusions and recommendations: Re-constructing professionalism

Specific context

- Focus is on the structure of the professionalization of the workforce in PCET in the UK
- Many features might be specific, but could also have implications for similar developments elsewhere

A brief history of the development of professional quals in PCET in the UK

- Standards for teaching and learning in further education (FENTO) developed in 1999
- A series of initiatives: the introduction of compulsory teaching qualifications for all new Further Education (FE) teachers (2001) Success for all, a blueprint for the reform of education in the sector (2002)
- Further Education Workforce Reforms (2007) 'integral to a policy to improve teaching and learning and to professionalise the PCET workforce'

The drive for professionalism: Policy influence and programme structure

FE teacher education developed as

‘standard driven’ (Ingleby, 2011:25) and ‘prescribed’ (Orr and Simmons, 2010:79, Lucas, 2004b and Nasta, 2007)

structure of training programmes demand a ‘professional element’

a specific standard prescribed and monitored jointly by the now outgoing agency named Lifelong Learning, UK (LLUK), Standard verification, UK (SVUK)

Professionalism tagged on to a specific module-- the professional development module

Impact of policy-driven structure: anecdotal and empirical evidence

- evidence of unease from both trainees and trainers on Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) teacher education programmes.
- central anchor for these problem areas has been the demand for professionalism (Bryan and Carpenter, 2008, Hale, 2008 and Lieberman, 2009).
nature and structure of mentoring in the professional development journey of trainees (Ingleby 2011)
- duality of trainees' identities (Orr and Simmons 2010)
- the effect of standards-driven requirements on the social processes influencing professional behaviour (Bryan and Carpenter 2009)
- A culture of performativity (Ball 2003)

The problem with the drive for professionalism: an empirical study—structure and methodology

- Convenient sample covering 54 participants covering the spectrum of PCET teaching
- Data collection: Questionnaire (three main foci : trainees' understanding of professionalism, impact of the drive towards professionalism and their perceptions of the sources of disharmony in their training programmes) and focus group interview
- Analysis: essentially iterative -(a synergy of mixed method approach and the method of data analysis.
- Questionnaire data were subjected to simple statistical analysis through the SPSS tool. The initial findings were then used as the springboard for iteration which informed the development of key themes tested out and revised during the focus group interviews

Findings

- Over 75% found the CPPD module most difficult
- 79.6% with less than 5 years experience-
- Over 5 years– 20.4%
- Even spread on why CPPD is most difficult including documentation, time, meta-language demand, over-bearing management and combinations of the above
- Impact include feelings of being overworked, helpless, lost and not unduly worried
- Tested out for significance in a paired test: **1.** experience and difficult module– significant **2.** experience and impact– significant
- Overall, minimal contribution to professionalization from trainees' view

Sample findings from focus group 1

- On why the CPPD module was found to be most difficult:
- ‘there are so many bitty parts to this module. You never really know what being demanded of you. It just hangs around your neck for ever’
- ‘How on earth are you ever going to demonstrate these in the reality of your class? ‘
- 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.
- Echoes Ball’s notion of performativity –trainees see themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation’

Sample findings from focus group 2

- What is difficult about CPPD?
- , ‘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’.
- ‘you cannot use your own language. It must be written in a particular way and if you don’t, forget it’.
- ‘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’.

Sample findings from focus group 3 : Impact

- 'it just wears you down, doesn't it'
- 'it just goes on and on forever'.
- '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'.
- 'you just get on with it don't you?'
- 'it is not any different from what your managers get you to do all the time'

Preliminary conclusions and recommendation

- The demand of professionalism is overbearing for trainees
- This demand is anchored to the standards imposed on the training programmes
- Majority of learners do not feel that their real professionalism is enhanced through the way in which the programmes are delivered
- The major problem areas are concentrated in the quest to provide evidence for procedural professionalism
- Recommendation: A need to re-construct the structure of our pCET professionalism programmes such that the procedural elements can happen post-classroom training.