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HEARING VOICES :
THE EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER'S TALE

An investigation into the experience of Early Years practitioners entering Initial Teacher Education

KAREN CHANTREY WOOD

Submitted in fulfillment of the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Nottingham Trent University
Faculty of Education

January 2002

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Hearing Voices : The Early Years Practitioner's Tale

The experiences of Early Years practitioners entering Initial Teacher Education are investigated through a project which enabled students on Higher National childcare courses in three Further Education colleges to progress onto a BA degree with QTS in Primary Education, at the local University.

The students were tracked throughout the process using questionnaires to elicit demographic data about their educational and employment backgrounds and interviews during both courses to ascertain their changing and developing experiences of teaching and learning, Interviews were also carried out with 'gatekeepers' within the University to provide an additional perspective.

The findings showed a more diversely qualified and experienced group of individuals, than had been previously thought. Their specific needs on entering ITE were identified plugging gaps in their knowledge and yet having their prior experience taken into account, both within the course and within school placements.

What has been learned from finally hearing the Early Years practitioner's 'voice' is that ITE needs to urgently address the lack of accreditation given to these students' prior experiences as they fundamentally alter and affect the students' perceptions and subsequent experiences. Failure to do this devalues the students, their fellows, their tutors and ultimately the teaching profession, where their diversity is desperately needed.

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THANK -YOU, THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU

Karen
January 2002

IN MEMORIUM

Beverley Fowkes (1952 - 1998)

INTRODUCTION

Focus

The thesis focuses on an investigation into the experiences of some Early Years practitioners wishing to enter Initial Teacher Education to study to become primary teachers. It examines the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of this group of individuals, in particular exploring how they perceive teaching and education, in the light of their prior vocational training and work experiences.

The individuals in question, are all in full-time employment as Early Years practitioners. This multidisciplinary term is used increasingly to describe someone who works with young children in the fields of either Education or Care. The "Early Years" is generally accepted amongst practitioners, to refer to children between 0-8 years of age, although 0-6 is also accepted.

All the practitioners were enrolled as students on programmes of study potentially leading to degree courses. They were involved in a project between three FE Colleges and Nottingham Trent University, in the East Midlands, developing links between a BTEC Higher National Certificate course and a Primary B.A. Honours degree.

The majority of the students are studying in the Further Education colleges, following a two year, part-time, Business and Technology Education Council Higher National Certificate in Early Childhood Studies course. The remainder are internal students at Nottingham Trent University, studying a one year part-time Certificate in Higher Education course following on from a one year part-time Specialist Teachers Assistant course. For the purposes of the thesis, the former group will be referred to as the BTEC HNC students and the latter as the STA/CHE students. Most students already hold an initial qualification for working with young children.

The thesis focuses on a time period which covers the life of the project from 1995 to 1999 and also examines some of the Early Years issues that have arisen since then, that have relevance to the findings.

Structure

The thesis uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gain as wide a perspective as possible on the issues under investigation. As the central focus of the research deals with perceptions, the emphasis is predominately qualitative. The diversity of methods and the emphasis, coupled with the size of the sample, place the research within what Robson (1993) categorises as the case study approach of 'Real World' research.

To determine student perceptions, questionnaires are used to clarify biographical details and identify similar types of experiences. This is followed by in-depth interviews, which are used to examine more closely the individual interpretations of those experiences. In the case of providers, interviews are also conducted to identify both institutional and personal understandings. Students who successfully used the 'Link' project to enter the university's B.A degree are also interviewed at the beginning and end of their course to enable any changes in perceptions to be identified.

Rationale

The last few years have seen a dramatic increase in the attention paid to issues relating to the Early Years Education. Following the implementation of the National Curriculum in schools, other new initiatives have to be addressed by practitioners at every level within the field.

One response to these national changes within the profession, has been to focus on the training of Early Years practitioners in the fields of Education and Care. This has been reflected in a number of reports (The Children Act 1989; The HMI report on the under-fives, DES 1989; The Rumbold Report, DES 1990; and the 'Start Right' report). The emphasis has been on improving standards and providing a diversity of training routes for a range of careers with children.
In 1993 the then Department for Education published Circular Number 14/93 entitled "The Initial Training of Primary School Teachers : New Criteria for Courses." This document heralded new criteria for the training of primary teachers and became the cornerstone of current practice in Initial Teacher Training establishments. Of particular relevance to the research, was paragraph 10c which stated -

> there should be a variety of high quality routes to QTS, reflecting the different backgrounds and qualifications of candidates and responding to the increasingly diverse needs of schools."
>
> p5

At roughly the same time, employers and qualified childcare practitioners in both the Health and Social Services were petitioning awarding bodies such as BTEC to provide further academic qualifications in the areas of childcare and education.

By 1994, plans were well under way for BTEC to add to their portfolio of HNC/Ds with an HNC in Early Childhood Studies applicable to Early Years practitioners from all fields. At about this time, three local FE colleges approached the University with a view to forging links between these HNC courses and the Primary B.A course with Qualified Teacher Status. As HNC courses are accepted routes into degrees in other subject areas, the idea was to explore the viability of using this HNC as a 'high quality' route into Initial Teacher Training for Early Years practitioner students.

Discussions with providers in the three colleges indicated there was a great deal of interest at this time, in the new course. They reported the introductory meeting offered by BTEC was oversubscribed to the extent another meeting had to be organised. One provider estimated from her attendance at one of the meetings, that representatives from at least 50 colleges nation-wide were present and interested at that stage.

Following the pilot year, the new HNC course was offered nationally in September 1995. In order to offer any course, each College has to prove to BTEC they are firstly an appropriate Centre for BTEC courses in general. This is then followed by a lengthy application procedure stating the specific details of a particular course such as the subject content; whether staff are suitably qualified to teach the subjects and what assessment procedures will be used. The whole process of acceptance is made easier if the College is already an established provider of BTEC courses.

According to the providers involved in establishing links with the University, the decision to apply to provide the HNC course was primarily dependent on potential student numbers, staff availability and the extent of their experience with BTEC. Hence the two colleges offering the course from its inception in 1995, were those with large numbers of students at BTEC National Level, long established connections with BTEC and a large quantity of BTEC-experienced staff. These three factors ensured a steady demand for the course as well as a relatively smooth transition for staff and students regarding procedures and formats. The third college involved, made the decision to develop the course in 1995 and recruit for 1996.

The establishment of the BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies course resulted from demand by employers and qualified professionals. The development of STA courses and the University-validated CHE course was also due to current legislation and local demand. Across the country, Early Years professionals, providers and practitioners were determined to raise the status of those who work with young children.

At the 'Start Right' conference, Pascal (1995) called for urgent action requiring -

> The development and delineation of a well articulated and clearly understood framework of training and development for early childhood workers, which provides a continuum of professional development and career progression.
>
> Action Point 3

and that routes should be opened up into-

> award bearing early childhood courses and developing higher level NVQ's, modular degrees specialising in early childhood study which are multidisciplinary and cross the education and care divide.
>
> Action Point 4

As HNCs are already established routes into degrees at Level 2, the BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies, offers opportunities for progression to Initial Teacher Education, for the first time, to candidates with non-traditional or non-standard qualifications providing they also meet the subject specific criteria of the DfEE. The courses examined within the thesis clearly relate to the action points raised.

Content

The research monitors and tracks the development of those first perceptions and attitudes as the students move towards the Initial Teacher Education course, examing changes and progression. Following this the thesis details the national picture of provision for Early Years practitioners seeking to gain Qualified Teacher Status and examines more closely the role of providers of new routes. Subsequently, the findings are examined in the light of the dramatic changes in Early Years Education during the life of the inquiry. This is to identify possible ways forward for students and for the potential of establishing a dialogue with providers to discuss the policy issues raised by the findings and their professional judgements regarding the new routes for Early Years practitioners.

As the HNC and STA/CHE routes have only recently become available, no examination of the specific issues has previously been attempted. The comprehensive literature review undertaken addresses this by examining instead the general issues regarding similar courses offering some form of access to Higher Education degree courses.

The initial focus is on the exploration of students' perceptions. The questionnaires are used to establish the factual details of students' prior training and work experiences. The data from the questionnaires are in turn used to provide a structure for a series of in-depth interviews. The interviews are conducted to elicit students' feelings towards and their perceptions of, the areas of prior training, work experience, teaching and education. The use of a series of interviews is deliberate as it enables focus to be placed not only on 'attitudes to specific items' but also on what Powney and Watts (1987) refer to as the 'culture' in which these items exist.

From the factual information collected via the questionnaires and the responses given in interviews, the diversity of individual starting points from which students entered the HNC course is examined. The data encompasses experiential and academic starting points as well as emotional and intellectual responses. This provides a baseline from which changes or progress is assessed. Analysis examines regularities and patterns that arise in order to identify key themes. This is a continuous cyclical process as data collected is analysed and reflected upon in order to inform the next stage of data collection.

Subsequently, the focus for the thesis is on the providers of training and on a national survey of provision leading to Qualified Teacher Status for Early Years practitioners. Interviews are used to elicit perceptions of the HNC course and on the feasibility of the HNC and other routes into Initial Teacher Education. These interviews supply data about the views held by providers of training which, when set alongside the student case studies, generate a broader perspective. Analysis at this point focuses on establishing the key themes for the providers and for the students and on identifying significant matches between the two groups.

Finally, to extend the debate further, there is an examination of how the perceptions held by students and those held by the providers of training and the policy makers regarding new routes, inform a reflective dialogue, contribute to the professional judgements of the providers and facilitate the future development of these routes into Initial Teacher Education for Early Years practitioners.

Presentation

Initially the metaphor of a 'journey' was a fairly small tool that enabled me to manipulate certain ideas that were emerging from discussions with students who were using language such as ' routes' and 'avenues'. But as the research developed so did the metaphor, to the extent that it became increasingly difficult to restrict its use.

In an attempt to contain the imagery and yet still express these 'difficult journeys and where they converge', a different pattern to the writing had to be developed. Different forms of writing are being used increasingly in qualitative research as tools to unlock the multiplicity of levels of meaning involved in any individual's understanding of their own process of learning. In addition, they are used to examine how these processes relate, match, diversify from other individuals involved in the same learning experience. The journeys undertaken by the students and myself are not simple 'bus rides from home into the town centre'. Instead they have been challenging, fraught with potential crises yet full of wonder and excitement, revealing new insights in much the same way as physical journeys undertaken by avid travellers and explorers.

The experiences the students were undertaking as well as those I as the researcher was going through, took on the shape of an actual journey - a journey of learning with different embarkation points, different perspectives of the various routes and different destinations. For the students, their individual learning journeys have been done in the company of fellow 'travellers'. For myself, whilst there have been many companions at various stages, it has sometimes been a lonely, difficult road.

In an attempt to fix these points on the various 'journeys' encapsulated by the research, a 'word map' has been included at the start of each chapter which uses the language and metaphor of a journey in order to allow a different view of the writing and hopefully into the process of learning experienced by the students and myself. As all of us undertake journeys, physically, mentally & emotionally it is hoped the use of this language will resonate for the reader and allow deeper understandings of what has been experienced within the research inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

JOURNEYS & PILGRIMAGES

For many of us, the promise of a journey can be a thrilling prospect. Who has not woken in the half-light of dawn, with the suitcase packed at the end of the bed and felt the stirrings of excitement mingled with fear for what the next few days or weeks might have in store for us?

True, there are journeys that fill us with dread - a journey to work with a bullying boss, a journey to meet those who would do us harm, and the journey to bury a loved one. But for the most part, journeys are to be relished, enjoyed and laid down as fond, exciting, thrilling memories for the time when we can no longer undertake them physically.

It has always been so. Fairs with trading and all manner of commerce always accompanied the annual pilgrimages on Saints Days in medieval times here in Britain. In effect, all that has changed for the modern religious pilgrim, is the increased number of people who may be able to be physically present.

However, in an increasingly secular world, other important figures and events have replaced the saintly or spiritual figures and leaders of the world's religions. Now with telecommunications, we can also take part from a distance - we do not have to be physically present to be involved in a spiritual, mental or emotional way. This is evident in the way for example, we follow our countries to regular events like the Olympics and the World Cup, yet never leave our armchairs.

But what of the other journeys? The ones not bound by place or by our physical bodies? What about the ones we take to the depths of our souls, to the heights of our intellects and across the breadths of our emotions? These special, maybe even sacred, parts of ourselves mark out our uniqueness in the midst of other people. These journeys, whether spiritual, mental, emotional, or a mixture of all three, might well be termed pilgrimages... journeys to the sacred parts of ourselves.

For us, thoughts of 'pilgrimages' conjure up images of individuals going against the tide, having deeply-held spiritual, often religious beliefs in a largely secular world. For actual pilgrimages for example, to Lourdes or to Mecca, there appears to be much hustle and bustle attached and plenty of commercialism.

Witness too, how individuals can say where they were when Kennedy was assassinated, or can remember their responses to the death of the Princess of Wales in a similar way. And now sadly and more globally, how the tragic events of September 11th in New York have affected us all.

The objects of veneration may have changed for many individuals, but the need to undertake journeys, perhaps even to follow a pilgrimage of sorts, is still a powerful urge in many of us.

For the students in the inquiry, the need to embark on a new quest, to test out their dreams and ambitions about teaching and to learn more about themselves; their abilities and understandings, was more than simply doing a course of study - it was a learning journey of discovery.

CHAPTER 1

STARTING POINTS

Whenever a group of individuals undertake a real life journey together, there is a specified meeting point such as a railway station or an airport, from which the travellers, embark upon that journey. However, within hours of that start, as conversations grow and friendships develop, individuals share the tale of their own particular journey to arrive at that embarkation point. Hence for every shared journey there are many individual starting points. This chapter deals with the variety of starting points of this inquiry, and examines them in terms of the settings, the timing and the individuals involved.

CHAPTER 1

Starting Points

Introduction

This inquiry is very much a product of the time in which it is set, as well as a complex sum of the experiences of the individuals involved. It is a study of a particular group of people in particular educational fields at a particular point in time. As such, it is arguable whether the findings could ever again be replicated or indeed whether repeating the study would serve any useful purpose. The inquiry serves firstly as a series of 'snapshots' to show the 'highs' and 'lows' of individuals' perceived experiences and secondly as demonstration of how those experiences might be interpreted. The value of the inquiry lies in the 'snapshots' being available for revisiting at a later date, with the potential for reinterpretation.

But why was the inquiry undertaken at all? Initially the answer has to be because there was a local need to know more about Early Years practitioners - why some of them wanted to train to become teachers and how this might successfully be achieved. It stemmed from the need to have firm evidence about this group of individuals, that in turn would enable a link to be created between two courses in different institutions. This 'need to know' predates my own involvement in the research and developed from events occurring in the fields of Early Years Education and Vocational Education at the time.
At this point it might be advisable to clarify just what I mean by terms like Early Years practitioners, Early Years Education and Vocational Education. Trying to define precisely what constitutes any of these areas is already difficult and consequentially other definitions relating to the area, such as the title of the individuals who work there, are also hard to establish.

There is still great debate about definitions depending upon the setting being discussed and the backgrounds and understandings of those involved in the discussion.

At the start of the nineties, Pascal et al (1991) stated -

> In particular we have defined:
>
> - Early Years as covering the period from birth to 8 years of age
> - Education as embracing a function of care but noting that care does not necessarily embrace an educative function.
> - Teacher as referring only to those who have received a period of focused professional teacher training post-18 which receives official recognition as meeting certain specified standards.
>
> (Introduction p3)

This was a useful starting point, so for the purposes of this inquiry I intend to use the phrase 'Early Years Education' to cover the educational experience of children aged from 0-8 years old across a variety of contexts, providers and services. Hence 'Early Years practitioners' or workers, are those adults involved in the practice of working with these children in this diversity of settings.

Whilst I am still comfortable with these definitions and can point to other instances of the definitions I use, such as the DfEE/DfES using the 'eight year old' as a cut off point for initial teacher education courses (3-8, 5-11, 3-11) and local councils having 'under-eights' officers, I am aware there are changes to these criteria evident in Early Years literature. In their recent work, Abbot & Pugh (1998) state the training group responsible for the development of the ideas contained within their book believed

> ...that the early years from birth to 6 years should be seen as a distinct phase, in which care and education are combined, and for which specialist training is required
>
> Forward xiii

However as the inquiry deals specifically with Early Years workers training to become teachers on ITE courses that use the 'eight-year old' as a defining age, I will continue to use the 0-8 age range when discussing early years. The other definitions used are explained below.

By 'Vocational Education' I am refering to a particular aspect of the educational experience involved in gaining qualifications for individuals aged from 16 years and over. One of three types of Post-16 education, academic, vocational and occupational, it is most commonly delivered within a Further Education college and is designed to equip individuals for a future trade or profession. Many, though not all, Early Years workers hold qualifications in childcare that have been achieved in this way.

The phrase 'Teacher Education' would typically encompass all the educational experiences and qualifications for individuals wishing firstly to enter the teaching profession and secondly to maintain their professional expertise. In particular it focuses on Initial Teacher Education i.e. on gaining entry to the profession. There will be further discussion of these definitions within the following chapters.

Settings

In the early 1990's a great deal of change occured in Further Education and the field of Vocational Education was affected like many others. The introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) had a massive impact on the subjects that were studied and on the various levels that were available.

The traditional Further Education examining bodies like RSA, City & Guilds, BTEC and NNEB had to reassess the courses they were responsible for, and adapt existing courses or develop new ones to fit with the new qualifications. The intention at this point, from government, was to streamline the range of post-sixteen qualifications to create a 'National Framework' of qualifications, which allowed movement between academic, vocational and occupational qualifications.

The new qualifications were aimed at distinct groups of individuals. In the case of NVQs, this was those individuals already in employment, who had no formal qualifications with the course being primarily based in the workplace. GNVQs, on the otherhand, were college based and aimed at individuals not in employment. The GNVQ courses offered workplace experience of the area being studied, in the form of placements where individuals could operate primarily unsupervised.

This 'unsupervised' aspect created difficulties for those wishing to work in the area of childcare. If you were unqualified but employed in a childcare setting, then the necessary police checks, should have been made prior to employment to ensure your suitability to work with children. Hence even if you worked unsupervised with those children, the fact that you had been employed through the correct procedures ensured the children's protection. As a consequence, different examining boards were able to create NVQs in Childcare & Education across a range of levels.

In the case of individuals not employed in the setting but merely visiting on placement, it was much harder to ensure procedures to protect the children in the setting. In the light of revelations of abuse and neglect, the Children Act (1989) had brought great changes to procedures concerning just who was allowed to work with children. The issue that had relevance to the GNVQs was that those individuals who were not employed, such as students or volunteers, would not be left unsupervised with children. As being unsupervised was almost a prerequisite for GNVQs, the examining bodies decided instead to adapt their own qualifications to the levels being created within the 'National Framework'.

The phrase 'National Framework' whilst employed by the government and examining bodies since it appeared in about 1994/95, has yet to become a streamlined entity that is easily understood by all. There is still great confusion about which qualifications are equivalent to one another. There is understanding of NVQs by those in sectors of industry or commerce that use them, but limited understanding of some other qualifications. Certain areas of business have traditionally used qualifications from one examining board and still disregard equivalent qualifications from other boards. On paper the boards and government are claiming equivalence for qualifications, that in practice are sometimes ignored by employers, government officials and other educators.

A number of different manifestations of the framework have appeared in various documents. One version appeared in GNVQ Briefing produced by NCVQ in June 1995 (see Appendix 1) whilst another was contained within the Summary Report of the Review of Qualifications for 16-19 year olds produced by Ron Derange for SCAA in March 1996 (Appendix 2) the current version is available on the QCA website. (Appendix 3 and http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/framework)

This ignorance is caused partly by confusion and partly by the historical evolution of some courses in some subject areas. This is particularly true to the area of Early Years and has direct relevance to this inquiry.

To compound the confusion within the colleges about qualifications in the early nineties, there was an added problem with Early Years and training - the sheer complexity of the field.

In 1990 the Rumbold Committee (DES 1990), examining the quality of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, described this complexity in paragraph 147, as

> The context in which young children are educated is marked by diversity and change. ...there are three broad spheres of activity: care (sessional and day); health; and education. There are three separate sectors of provision: public; private; and voluntary. A great variety of staffing groups - including teachers, nursery nurses, playgroup workers and childminders - are responsible for the delivery of the services. Each service has its distinct ethos & aims which are necessarily reflected in patterns of training. Yet a good measure of interaction between them is essential both for quality and for the effective use of available resources.
>
> p19

Within all this confusion, yet another course, the BTEC HND / C, emerged, from an established examining body, purporting to fill a gap in the academic progression of Early Years practitioners.

Historically, the training pattern for those working in the Early Years began back at the turn of the century with the creation of the National Nursery Examining Board (NNEB) which offered a course to train 'nursery nurses' and 'nannies'. Initially the courses were to train young girls to work in big houses looking after the children of the house from birth until adulthood. They lived as servants, often in the nursery along with their charges. The courses initially were practically based with great emphasis on discipline & decorum and 'knowing one's place'. The job often imposed a life of spinsterhood, as marriage often resulted in losing your job.

Obviously the whole practice of young girls looking after children had been going on long before qualifications were on offer. Our fictional literature is littered with references to wet nurses, nannies, nursery nurses, and governesses that were responsible for the key character in a story. They have been both vilified and exalted in many classic English novels, such that most of us have a mental picture of a nanny or nursery nurse that either grew old alongside the children in her care, or else married the master of the house and became the children's step-mother !

This mental image, reinforced by drama productions on television, (Jane Eyre, Berkeley Square etc.) and films, (Mary Poppins, the Sound of Music) is a very difficult one to break away from. However, the variety of jobs available to Early Years workers and the standard of training they receive in the nineties, bears little or no resemblance to this outdated mental image. One or two private colleges do still offer the discipline, duty, decorum and uniform, but also offer modern day thinking on childcare. It tends to be from these colleges that nannies for the British Royal family are recruited.

The NNEB Diploma was offered, unchallenged by any other qualification, until well into the 1960s and 1970s. The course had developed into a two year full-time course with both practical and academic elements.
Although the academic element of the course had increased substantially over the years there was still more emphasis placed on the practical application of the work.

At this stage, it could be argued that the course was still about training individuals in certain skills with a little grounding in knowledge and understanding thrown in for good measure. In some ways this reflects notions about the job of working with young children being basically about minding them rather than educating them.

Whilst the course was still used in the private sector for nannying, there was increased recognition of the qualification in care, health & education employment. Not only was the qualification recognised within these three 'spheres of activity' as Rumbold (DES 1990) named them, but it was also possible to move and work between the 'spheres'. This meant many different employers were familiar with, recognised and accepted the qualification. Even now, nearly thirty years later, there is still a reluctance by some employers to recognise the newer qualifications despite their equivalence or higher status.

In the 1970s a new examining board, the Business and Technical Education Council or BTEC was formed from the amalgamation of two other training boards. As their title suggests, BTEC were involved in various areas of vocational education and as such had a range of courses at different levels. There were three main levels - First Diploma, National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND). These Diplomas were full time courses although part-time versions containing fewer units or subjects were available as Certificate courses. The difference between a BTEC HND and BTEC HNC would be that the latter would have been studied part-time and included fewer units.

Progression through the levels resulted from successful completion of the previous level. It was also possible to enter at any level with the appropriate equivalent qualifications. Hence it was possible to enter the National Diploma either with a First Diploma or with 4 GCSE's at grade C or above. This was also true for the HND / C where entry was secured with a successful National Diploma or 2 "A' levels at C or above.

BTEC offered a range of business and technical courses prior to the creation of their courses in caring services. The levels and their equivalents were already agreed nationally with universities, who accepted BTEC National Diploma and HND / C candidates for subjects like computing, engineering and business studies. The first courses offered in caring services were at National Diploma level i.e. needing 4 GCSE's at C or above for entry and being equivalent to 2 "A" levels on successful completion.

The original names for the courses BTEC created, in some ways reflected the old understandings of the job. They were - National Diploma in Caring Services (Health & Social Care) and National Diploma in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing). The Health & Social Care course focused more specifically on other age groups whilst the Nursery Nursing course focused on children.

However, some Further Education colleges only offered the Health & Social Care course. Students in those colleges who wanted to work with children had to make sure all their placements were in childcare settings and they adapted their assignments to use children as the focus group. By building in flexibility like this, BTEC unwittingly contributed to the subsequent confusion.

From the creation of the BTEC National Diploma in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing) course in the late 1970's / early 1980's, further education colleges had a problem. On paper (and in prospectuses) it appeared that the colleges were offering two competing childcare courses both of which were diplomas, i.e. at the same academic level. In practice, the NNEB Diploma required no entry qualifications unlike the BTEC Diploma that required the 4 GCE / GCSE's. Prior to the creation of the BTEC Diploma, the NNEB Diploma course had accepted all suitable individuals, including those with four or more GCE / GCSE's. Colleges then started to cream off the more academic candidates from NNEB Diploma applications and placed them onto BTEC Diploma courses. Unfortunately employers in some areas were suspicious of the new course and consequently refused to accept it by refusing to interview students with the BTEC qualification.

As an examining board BTEC had evolved as a development of other organisations in Scotland and hence was well known there and in the North of England with a range of employers. NNEB had primarily been based in London and the Home Counties and although its influence was more widely spread across England & Wales, it was only with employers in the childcare field.

The other significant advantage held by BTEC was the established relationships it had with Universities and Higher Education Colleges in terms of the acceptance of its qualifications as appropriate standards for entry into Higher Education.

It was this latter aspect that has been a particular issue for the individuals involved in this inquiry. As has already been touched upon, the courses offered by different Further Education colleges varied according to location, demand and staffing and recognition by local employers. In colleges which offered both courses, this was reflected in the numbers of students enrolled on the two courses. In the middle to late 1980's one of the FE colleges involved in the inquiry had 90% of its full time childcare students enrolled on the NNEB Diploma and only 10% enrolled on the BTEC Diploma.

With this type of divide being typical, some students were given poor advice about the potential for career and course progression. Many NNEB Diploma students were unaware until they applied years later for Higher Education courses, that their course carried no equivalence in terms of 'A' levels. They therefore had no chance of being accepted onto degree programmes requiring a minimum of 2 'A' levels for entry. Whilst BTEC Diploma students did have the 2 "A' level equivalence, the need to raise standards generally meant some degree courses had pushed their entry requirements to 3 'A' levels.

It was within this confusion that BTEC decided to respond to demands from students, tutors , employers and the government to affect some changes to its courses. Firstly it began by adapting the courses to fit the new framework. The old BTEC National Diploma in Caring Services (Health & Social Care) disappeared to be replaced by the BTEC GNVQ Advanced in Health & Social Care.

Then the board began to change names. The old BTEC National Diploma in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing), prevented from becoming a GNVQ course by the Children Act, became instead the BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies. Gone was the long hated misnomer of 'Nursery Nursing' - a change that better reflected the climate of the nineties and the changes to the job of working with children.

At the same time, this change of name mirrored the move in the field of Early Years, to address the changing roles of individuals working with children by agreeing a term that would describe all workers. One term that appeared was 'educarer' This was described by Abbott & Rodger (1994) as

> ...a term coined to describe those adults who provide both care and education, services which cannot be separated when working with young children.
>
> p3

This sentiment had originally been expressed by the Rumbold Report (DES1990) as

> Care and education for the under- fives are complementary and inseparable
>
> para 8

Another more general term of 'early years practitioners' or 'early years workers' has more recently been adopted in some literature (Abbott & Pugh 1998) and in discussions at conferences.

In addition to the changes to courses and names, BTEC decided to add to its portfolio of courses dealing with childcare. Whether the board had always intended to do this or whether the additional course arose out of demand from past students and tutors is unclear.

The most obvious form of progression for successful National Diploma students had always been onto the Higher National Diploma or Certificate. In 1993 /4 BTEC started to develop the HND / C course with a view to it being on offer in FE Colleges from September 1995.

It should be pointed out at this point that the amount and nature of change being experienced in vocational education was not uncommon in other areas of education during the same time period. From the late eighties onwards, there was a steady stream of changes. Within primary and secondary education there was a new Education Reform Act (1988) which was closely followed by the introduction of the National Curriculum and then SATs and new style inspections in the form of OFSTED.

Within teacher education and particularly Initial Teacher Education (ITE), there were new guidelines about who was eligible to enter teaching in the form of Circulars14/ 93 and subsequently 4/ 98, and what standards they had to achieve in all subjects in order to become a primary teacher. (Circular 10/ 97)

Arguably though, the greatest changes prior to and during the life of the inquiry has been within the field of Early Years Education. Firstly there was the introduction of the Nursery Voucher scheme. This meant changes in all the 'spheres of activity' to ensure other childcare settings met the criteria regarding education necessary for qualification for Nursery Vouchers. Then there was the subsequent dismantling of the scheme and often the loss of childcare facilities where previously there had been at least some as in the loss of playgroups in rural areas such as Nolfolk and Suffolk as widely reported in the local press at the time. (Appendix 4)

The National Curriculum in schools finally filtered down the age ranges resulting in the 'Desirable Outcomes', a set of skills, knowledge and understandings in six areas of learning, deemed desirable for all five year olds to have on entry to compulsory schooling. However, in order to achieve 'Desirable Outcomes' at five it became necessary to have some form of assessment of children's abilities when they entered the nursery. By comparing the two it was hoped it would be possible to see how far children had progressed. This then, was the justification for introducing 'Baseline Assessment'

These different fields of education are not separate from one another but are connected and interrelated. Changes in one field can have indirect or direct effects on another field. These fields then, are the settings for the inquiry in the years immediately before the inquiry began.

But why was the inquiry started when it was, in 1995?

Timings

Although the timing of the research was partly due to the major changes taking place at the time within the various settings, it was the coming together of a diverse group of individuals that promoted the possibility of researching the changes whilst they occured.

In 1994 three local further education colleges were preparing to offer the BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies course to suitable candidates for the following year (September 1995). The three course leaders approached the Primary Education Department of the University with a proposal. At this point many Universities were accepting the BTEC HND / C not only as an entry requirement for a degree but in some cases as equivalent to the first year of a degree. This therefore meant some BTEC HND / C students were able to enter straight into a degree at second year level.

The proposal the course leaders suggested, was to form a relationship and thereby a link between their three colleges and the University to enable the HNC students to progress to Year 2 of the Initial Teacher Education course in the Primary Education Department. Initially the 'link' would take the form of a series of meetings between course leaders and University staff to establish whether there were or were not matches in the curriculum between the two courses. It was felt that for the HNC students to successfully enter Year 2 of the ITE course, they had to have sufficient knowledge of all the subject areas covered in Year 1.

Ultimately the 'link' would involve staff from the University going out to the colleges to make contact with potential candidates for the 'link' entry; developing relationships; providing induction to the University course and being the contact person on entry. It was also hoped to monitor and track the students in some way to ensure the 'link' worked appropriately.

In developing the Early Childhood HND / C programme, BTEC had once again built in a certain amount of flexibility. Aware that not all the candidates for the HNC would be working in education settings, the course was designed with core and option modules to enable all students, regardless of their job setting, to follow an academic course pertinent to their workplace needs.
Thus one task for the tutors meeting together, was to ensure that students in education settings, who may wish at the end of the HNC to take up the opportunity of progression to ITE, chose the most appropriate modules that closely matched the curriculum areas covered in Year 1 of the ITE course.

Where it was clear no BTEC module existed to match the ITE curriculum area then the intention was that the group of tutors and University staff would work together to produce a module, later accepted by BTEC as a centre-devised unit. This was the case for example with the areas of geography & history.

At the initial stages there were only the two groups of individuals in the Early Years Link Group, as it became known - the FE course tutors and a designated member of University staff with the power to include other members of staff as needed. Eventually, as the inquiry developed, these two groups were joined firstly by the students and then myself as the researcher.

All the members of the first two groups brought a vast range of experience to the project. The FE tutors had skills, knowledge and understandings of Further Education; of running BTEC courses and of working across the whole spectrum of the settings - Health , Social Care and Education. The University staff had skills, knowledge and understandings of Higher Education; of working in schools as teachers and in advanced study of specific curriculum areas. All were firmly committed to ensuring the provision of opportunities for academic progression for Early Years workers to enable entry into ITE.

In the spring of 1995, as the college tutors began interviewing and offering places to appropriate candidates and the student body began to take shape, my appointment as researcher was confirmed.

But why was this particular group of candidates worthy of study?

Individuals Involved

In addition to the timing being significant, there was also the issue of place. The timing was significant because as particular fields of education experienced their own changes there were implications for those fields that touched or overlapped with it. It was precisely because many of the Early Years workers could be found to be working within the areas of overlap, that they became such an interesting group to study.

Viewed from the distance of a few years, in the late 1990s, it seems strange to think that in 1995 Early Year workers had precious little chance to progress to a degree. At that stage there were no Early Childhood Studies Degrees being offered which would accept their experience and prior qualifications in Early Years as a specialist subject for study.

Early Years workers in health or social care settings wanting academic progression for promotion had to study degrees in psychology, sociology or social administration etc. For Early Years workers in education settings, the next logical step would have been a degree in Primary Education preferably with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). However, this was rarely possible because of the entry requirements to Initial Teacher Education.

Entry to Initial Teacher Education is controlled by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) At various times it issues criteria for entry which must be strictly adhered to by Universities and Colleges of Higher Education. Failure to adhere to some of the criteria can result in loss of funding. Failure to adhere to other items can result in the course being closed down. Even when Institutions do adhere to the rules there can still be massive changes implemented quickly that can result in funding being withdrawn. This latter issue deeply affected the student group at one point in the inquiry and had lasting consequences for the inquiry and the way in which it was able to develop.

The criteria for entry at that time was encased in DfEE document Circular 4/ 93 It clearly states that under the 'General' heading -

> 4.3 Institutions and schools should satisfy themselves that :
>
> 4.3.1 all entrants are able to communicate clearly and grammatically in spoken and written English;
>
> 4.3.2 all entrants have attained in mathematics and English language the standard required to achieve a Grade C in the GCSE examination;
>
> 4.3.3 from 1 September 1998 all new entrants to primary courses who were born on or after 1 September 1979 should have attained in a science subject or subjects the standard required to achieve a grade C in the GCSE examination.
>
> Circular 4 / 93

This is in addition to the academic requirement for admission to a first degree which at the time was 5 GCSE's at C or above and 2 or 3 A-levels, depending upon the institution.

There was however an option that might operate in the case of students like those in the inquiry.

> 4.5.3 Institutions may admit to 3-year and 4-year undergraduate courses mature students who lack conventional entry qualifications for first degree studies. Where they are satisfied as to the intellectual capacity of the student to complete a degree course successfully. Admission records should detail the grounds on which such students are admitted.
>
> Circular 4 / 93

It is immediately obvious by comparing the criteria and the course descriptions given earlier that Early Years workers have rarely had the required number of 'A' levels or their equivalents. The real stumbling block however has been the insistence on one of the 'A' levels being in a National Curriculum subject. All the years of expertise with children and training counted for nothing alongside the criteria as at the time no accreditation of prior learning was available for Early Years. This state of affairs meant many Early Years workers wanting to be teachers had to go back to Further Education to do 'A' levels in National Curriculum subjects before applying to initial teacher education.

It was partly this messy 'to-ing and fro-ing' between different fields of education that Early Years workers had to do in order to achieve their desired career, that prompted the development of the visual model in Figure 1.1. In addition, the Early Years Link group saw their task as enabling the creation of a 'new route' into initial teacher education. From the combination of these two ideas, the metaphors relating to 'journeys' that accompany the inquiry seemed to develop naturally. They are intended to aid understanding of an extremely complex area.

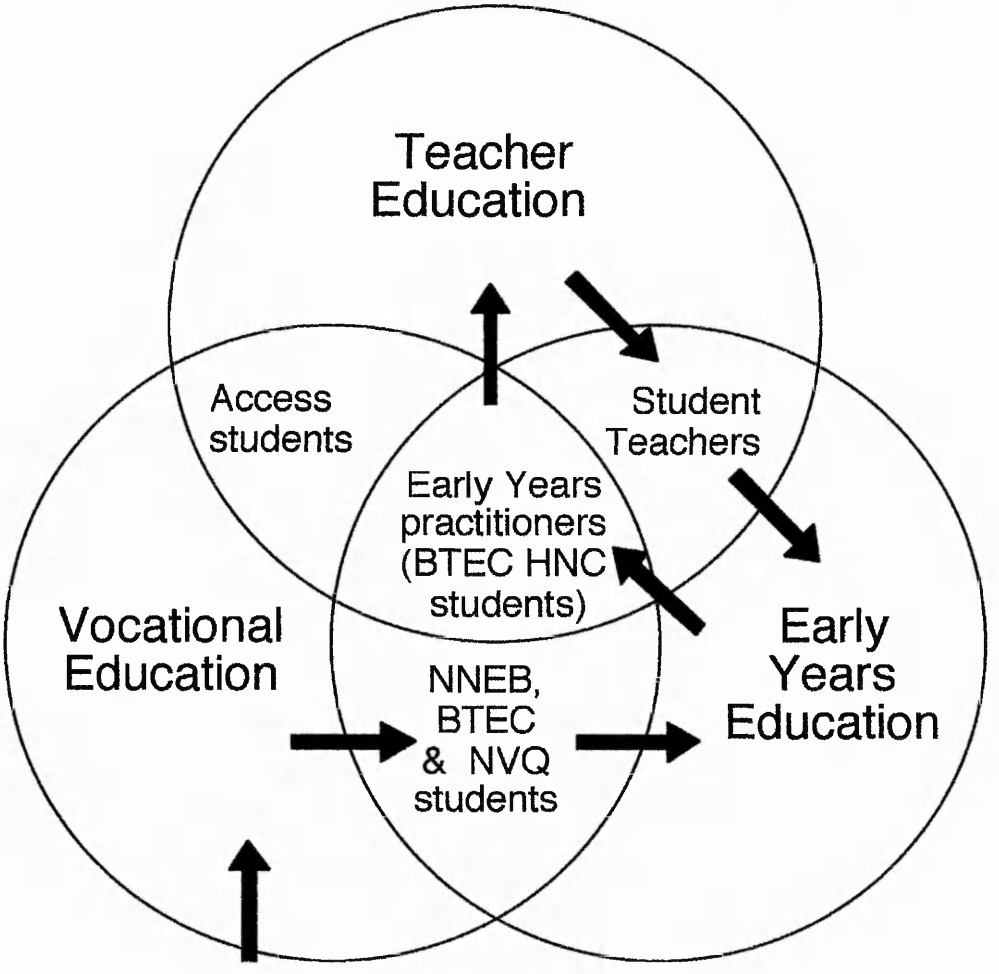
Another factor in the decision to use the designated student group, was not only did they work in areas where the various fields overlapped, but also existed in other fields in different capacities at the same time. So Early Years workers opting to train to teach, can ebb and flow between three related fields with different roles and responsibilities. The HNC students involved in the research are at the same time, workers in Early Years Education, students in vocational education and potential students in Initial Teacher Education.

The model shown in Figure 1.1, was devised after long months of trying to handle the complexities . At one level it is relatively simple and can be used to illustrate the typical route of an individual using the NNEB / HNC route to gain entry into teacher education. On another level it can be used to show other routes, with other starting points for differently qualified individuals.

Figure 1.1 concerns the 'new route' under inquiry starting with individuals entering vocational education to study NNEB or BTEC National Diplomas. They move into the overlap with Early Years Education when they undertake the placement parts of their courses in actual nurseries. In this overlapped area there are also unqualified individuals from the various workplace settings who are studying NVQs.

After gaining their qualifications these individuals move into Early Years Education settings to work. At a later date they can gain further qualifications by studying part-time on the BTEC HNC course. As they are still employed they are once again in an overlapped area.

After gaining this qualification some individuals want to teach. To do this they must give up their employment in order to enter teacher education. It is only when they return to Early Years settings on placement as student teachers that they once again enter an overlapped area. Following qualification they will once again enter completely into the field of Early Years Education, but this time as a teacher.



An Early Years practitioner's route to teaching in the Nursery

Figure 1.1

The decision to choose to research BTEC HNC students in particular, is graphically portrayed in the table with the unique position of the BTEC HNC students at the centre and overlap of all three fields of education clearly demonstrated. Prior to 1995 this central area of overlap was blank and individuals desiring to teach had to go back to their entry point in vocational education and start again from scratch on an 'A' level route.

So, by 1995 the Early Years Link group has begun to meet, the students are being selected and a decision is taken to try to track and monitor the students as they follow their HNC course and then move across to the BA degree. It is agreed that the focus will be on examining the students' understandings of their experiences on the 'Link' with a view to using the evidence to improve the link thereby making it stronger. It is at this point my involvement in the inquiry begins.

But why did I want to be involved? What exactly could I bring to the inquiry that might benefit the individuals involved and be of value to the research in general?

Like the HNC students, I too had ebbed and flowed between the three fields of education described in the table, throughout my career. My starting point though was Initial Teacher Education. I studied a Primary Generalist (3-11) course and focused on the infant age range (now YR, Y1,Y2). This B.Ed Honours degree was followed by the birth of my children and the start of part-time employment in Further Education.

I taught on vocational courses concerned with health, social care and education, particularly with NNEB & BTEC National Diploma students. Initially the teaching was in creative studies but gradually this changed to language studies, infant education and other subjects on the syllabus. At the same time as working in Further Education, I was also involved back at my original ITE institution as an educational research assistant. Hence in the space of one day, I might teach a 2 hour session in FE, go on a placement visit to a school nursery to see a student and spend the afternoon interviewing higher education colleagues for a piece of research.

By the time I applied for the post of researcher to the Early Years Link group I had spent ten years in Further Education on vocational courses culminating in having course leadership responsibilities for a BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies. I had also spent five years as an educational research assistant in the Department of Primary Education involved mainly in ethnographic research with an emphasis on case studies and action research.

In addition there had been opportunities for teaching in ITE through my involvement over five years with an annual field studies camp that was part of the Year 1 programme. My experience in Early Years Education had been through my connections with Further Education. I had spent four years making weekly visits to a variety of placements across the settings of Health and Social Care as well as Education. During this period my own children were growing so I also experienced childminders, playgroups and rising-five classes in my role as a parent.

So my appointment as researcher brought added experience firstly to the Early Years Link group. I had experience of Further and Vocational Education unlike the University staff and experiences in ITE unlike the Further education tutors. This was further helped by the fact that the University had been my original training institution as well as where I gained my research experience.

In terms of the BTEC HNC students I had experience of teaching similar calibre students on BTEC National courses and on the B.Ed / B.A degree. I also had first hand knowledge of the type of settings most students were working in which meant I had good all round insider knowledge. The fact that I was also mature, with a family and by virtue of the research, studying again, meant the potential was there for me to come closer alongside the students in terms of shared experiences.

Clearly all these points of contact - with FE tutors, University staff and the students, would determine the nature of the research inquiry and shape the decisions taken, the choice of methods used for data collection as well as the style of dissemination.

Certain types of research would be impossible to follow given the level of insider knowledge I had. It could be argued that this knowledge would 'bias' any research. However within the area of ethnography, particularly with case studies it would be possible to declare my insider knowledge and hopefully use it to cast greater light on the research findings. A deliberate decision was taken to 'declare my allegiances', from the start to all the other participants including the students. This was because I was also involved in the task of ensuring the 'Link' worked effectively.

The fact that ethnography as a methodology and various data collection methods were familiar to me from my research assistant days meant I was also more comfortable with the match between what was being researched and the manner in which that research would take place.

In order to make the 'Link ' work there had to be an open sharing of information between the various participants. This was evident in the negotiation to define roles that all participants could agree upon. Part of the shared nature of the inquiry was evident too in the establishment of the aims ,which were agreed with the EY Link group. The aims were fourfold-

- To explore the perceptions and attitudes towards teaching and teacher training held by students enrolled on 'BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies' courses.
- To monitor and track the development of those first perceptions and attitudes as the students progress onto the Initial Teacher Training course and examine changes and progression.
- To investigate the provision nationally for Early Years practitioners seeking to gain qualified teacher status.
- To examine policy issues raised by the findings and to establish a dialogue with providers regarding their professional judgments for Qualified Teacher Status training for Early Years practitioners.

Summary

So to summarise the reasons why the research inquiry has been conducted, we need to go back to the embarkation points of settings, timing and individuals involved.

Firstly, each of the three fields of education involved in the inquiry was undergoing great changes. Theories and practices were being closely examined, policies and procedures were being changed and old ideas were being pushed aside to make way for new ones.

Secondly, by making changes in all three fields there was the potential for an alignment of opportunities and possibilities that had never existed before. In short, the time was right for creating new ways of ebbing and flowing between the three fields.

Thirdly, for each of the different groups of participants the climate and conditions were ripe for trying to achieve long held beliefs about the value of providing a route for a richly experienced group of individuals to enter the teaching profession and thereby vastly improve the diversity of individuals and experiences within the profession.

For the FE tutors it was a chance to create realistic academic progression for a particular type of student. For the university staff it was a chance to improve the diversity of the teacher population and improve the status of knowledge of children within the student population.

For the students themselves it was the first time they were given credit for their vast experience and knowledge of children. That this was tied to their desire for academic progression and actually resulted in a realistic route into teaching, was significant.

For myself, although the possibility of studying for a Ph.D. at my old training institution was attractive, it was the nature and subject of the inquiry that were the real motivating factors. To be able to combine my expertise across three fields of education with my research skills and interest in ethnography, to undertake an inquiry that I also felt strongly about, was simply too good a chance to miss.

CHAPTER 2

PREPARATION

As the travellers begin their real life journey, each has prepared according to how they perceive the purpose of that journey. For a tourist wanting a hot, relaxing holiday, the process of getting to a destination needs only to be quick, pleasant and hassle free. For the traveller however, the journey is as important as the destination.

Whether on a formal tour with specified stopping places prior to a particular destination, or an informal backpacking trip, preparation can dramatically enhance the journey. For travellers, the preparation takes the form of examining maps, reading guidebooks, or hunting out and hearing the first-hand experiences of those who have previously travelled the route.

Which aspect of preparation occurs first depends on the travellers themselves, but hearing someone else's tale is often a powerful motivator for heightening awareness and arousing interest in undertaking such a journey.

This chapter deals with the preparation undertaken for the inquiry. Firstly with 'hearing first-hand stories' of individuals who have previously travelled similar routes. Secondly, with 'examining maps' where the terrain of the three fields of education is examined, particularly where they overlap. Thirdly, 'the reading of guidebooks' which involves the identification of literature pertinent to overlaps in the fields. Finally, there is an examination of the implications of this preparation for the development of the inquiry, as well as for my role as researcher.

CHAPTER 2

Preparation

'First-hand Stories'

By the time the inquiry began in 1995 I had spent ten years teaching students on childcare courses in Further Education. At a rough estimate, I had been in contact with well over a thousand students. As a tutor with pastoral responsibilities, as well as teaching 'interpersonal skills' modules, I naturally had many conversations with students concerning their aspirations. The issue of continuing to study and going on to become a teacher, arose on a surprisingly regular basis, for at least 25% of every group I taught.

For some mature students, teaching had been a dream they had long held, but at some point had been thwarted in following. For other students, it was the positive responses from teachers and headteachers in their placements that encouraged them to think about the possibility of teaching. However, as students worked alongside qualified Early Years workers in placements, they became increasingly aware of the lack of progression available and how difficult it was to make the move into teaching if they so desired.

Here then were tales of aspiration that fired my interest. But that interest had originally been sparked by my experiences in Higher Education firstly as an undergraduate and later as a tutor. I had studied for my degree alongside a friend who was a qualified nursery nurse. Her knowledge of children, of how they developed and learnt, seemed amazing to me at that point in my career. I benefited a great deal, in terms of learning from her skills and knowledge and in coping with the degree. But I also began to perceive and value the role of nursery nurses and classroom assistants within the classroom.

Subsequently, whilst tutoring for the University on a number of field trips, I came into contact with other undergraduates with 'Nursery Nurse' qualifications who had followed the slow route back through 'A levels' to gain entry to teaching. Although the individuals were few and far between, here was evidence of the success of these individuals actively engaged in achieving their career dreams.

These tales of both great aspirations and some limited success, were what I brought with me to the inquiry. In discussions with other members of the Early Years Link Group, it became obvious that these first-hand tales were a shared part of our experiences of Early Years workers. The university staff, when primary teachers, had had experiences of their own Early Years workers that had added to their knowledge. The further education tutors had had experiences that more closely matched my own. However, it would be for the inquiry to uncover what, if any, first-hand tales had been heard by or had inspired the students involved.

'Examining Maps'

Trying to identify the terrain of each of the fields of education in the early nineties was and still is, slightly more problematic. Firstly each field has its own dedicated literature. Secondly it has its own qualification awarding bodies and therefore its own qualifications. There are also different government agencies responsible for different aspects in each of the three fields. And as with some maps, the policies, directives, circulars and strategies very quickly go out of date.

It is clearly impossible to handle the vast amounts of information available for each field within this chapter. Indeed whole books have been written about single fields and even small focussed aspects of those fields. Instead the focus of this chapter will be on where the fields overlap with regard to the training of early years workers and the potential for their progression into teaching.

Some of the territory of the inquiry has already been mapped out in part within the previous chapter. It has been mentioned that vocational education went through rapid changes in the late Eighties and early Nineties and the various Child-care courses on offer at the time bear witness to these changes in the alterations and developments that occurred to the course structures and outcomes. The recommendations made by Dearing (1996) regarding the framework of qualifications for 16-19 year olds were in part an attempt to clarify the confusion about vocational and occupational education

During the same period, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was dealing with the effects of the changes happening in schools. The Education Reform Act (1988) had paved the way for the introduction of the National Curriculum into schools. This in turn influenced *which* subjects could be taught on ITE courses and to a lesser degree *how* they were taught. These changes was reflected in a new government directive DFE Circular 14/ 93, which detailed new criteria for courses for the initial training of primary school teachers.

Of particular significance to the inquiry were the criteria relating to student entry requirements. In general terms, all students had to have achieved a standard of grade C at GCSE level in both English and Maths (Criteria 4.3.2). By September 1998 students born on or after 1 September 1979 also had to have the same level in Science (Criteria 4.3.3). In addition mature students 'who lack conventional entry qualifications for first degree studies' could be admitted to 3 or 4 year courses if institutions were satisfied the student could successfully complete the course (Criteria 4.5.3)

So any Early Years worker wanting to enter initial teacher education not only had to satisfy a particular institution's entry requirements for a degree, but also the additional requirements demanded by the Department for Education as laid out in Circular 14 / 93. Due to the popularity of primary courses in some institutions and the ensuing competition for places, it was possible to have different entry requirements at each institution for both regular and mature students. This led to confusion and resentment amongst Early Years workers when they applied to different institutions. It meant someone with a BTEC National Diploma (equivalent to 2 'A' levels) was accepted by some institutions whilst other institutions, with more competition for places, required an additional 'A' level for entry.

Another aspect of Circular 14/93 pertinent to the inquiry, was the discussion of specific training for classroom assistants. Part of the document dealt with the variety of ways the criteria could be delivered by institutions, under a section termed 'Possible Course Models'. Following a brief paragraph concerning the role of the classroom assistant at that time (paragraph 32), there were suggestions for further training courses to enable the classroom assistant to meet the changing needs of their role in the light of the National Curriculum.

Stressing the importance of teaching and learning basic skills the suggestions from the Secretary of State were that there should be -

> ...work done to provide courses specifically designed to prepare classroom assistants in primary schools, especially at Key Stage 1, to offer greater support in these areas.
>
> (Para. 33)

with the courses aimed at -

> ...mature people and those with previous experience of working in the classroom.
>
> (Para. 33)

With 'a rigorous period of study' and certification, such courses and related experience in the classroom could also -

> ...form part of the accreditation of prior learning of those assistants who wished subsequently to pursue a BEd qualification and so acquire qualified teacher status.
>
> (Para. 33)

Here at one stroke was the justification for what later became the Specialist Teachers' Assistant course, as well as the potential flexibility for progression into teaching. The problem remained however, of how precisely ITE institutions would interpret the 'accreditation of prior learning'. With the range of childcare courses available, all offering different modules and experiences as well as 'equivalencies' to one another, students themselves were confused. This was further complicated when they applied to ITE institutions and came up against admissions tutors who had no understanding of the diverse nature of the 'prior learning' these students offered.

Another issue raised by the circular was the emphasis placed on the content of the ITE curriculum in terms of covering the subjects of the National Curriculum. Some ITE institutions organised their courses to require students to elect to specialise in a NC subject from the point of entry. The institution involved in the inquiry, required that any student holding a BTEC National Diploma must also have an additional 'A' level *in a National Curriculum Subject.* A student's specialism in Early Years alone, had little or no value on a Primary ITE course focussing on specific subjects.

Early Years Education was another field in a state of great change. Some changes related to the National Curriculum in primary schools. Other changes related to events taking place in the other 'spheres of activity' as the Rumbold Committee (DES 1990) defined them. So in the space of a few years, there were three major initiatives - Desirable Outcomes, Nursery Vouchers and Baseline Assessment.

The Nursery Education Voucher Scheme was introduced by the Government to

> ...expand, over time, the number of good quality places for the education of four-year olds, and to give parents greater choice in where their child is educated.

and

> ...can be used to obtain at least 5 sessions of education a week of 2.5 hours each for at least 33 weeks a year, excluding half term holidays
>
> DfEE Oct. '96

The Desirable Outcomes were, according to the documentation,

> Goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education*. They emphasise early literacy, numeracy and the development of personal and social skills and contribute to children's knowledge, understanding and skills in other areas. Presented as six areas of learning, they provide a foundation for later achievement.
>
> SCAA Jan '96

And Baseline Assessment became a statutory requirement carried out by schools, from September 1998, using an accredited baseline assessment scheme. The guidelines were that...

> All children aged 4 or 5, admitted to a primary school (or an infant or first school) should be assessed. Assessment will be a requirement regardless of whether children attend full- or part-time, or whether they enter a reception class or Year 1. Only children attending a designated nursery class or unit not part of the main school are excluded from assessment. These children will be assessed when they start school formally.

And its key purposes were

- To provide information to help teachers plan effectively to meet children's individual learning needs; and
- To measure children's attainment, using one or more numerical outcomes which can be used in later value added analyses of children's progress.

SCAA June '97

This then was the terrain of the fields involved in the inquiry. Naturally in the lifetime of the inquiry some changes did occur. A new government in May 1997, brought different policies which meant for example, the Nursery Voucher scheme was summarily withdrawn. It also meant there were different individuals in positions of authority with different experiences.

At a conference in October 1998, comment was made of the fact that at that time each of the agencies involved (QCA, TTA, DfEE and NTOs) in training Early Years workers and teachers, all had individuals in senior positions who had knowledge of and /or experience of Early Years. It was believed that this was the first time that individuals making decisions about Early Years issues were doing so from personal knowledge and understanding. This specialised knowledge was deemed to be vitally important if major changes to the training and progression of early years workers were to be achieved.

This new understanding of the issues was being reflected in consultations with Early Years workers about the Desirable Outcomes which during the lifetime of the project were being reassessed and redrawn.

'Reading Guidebooks'

Trying to identify literature that might offer guidance about either the issues involved in the inquiry or the way the inquiry might progress, bearing in mind the complexity of the fields, has been difficult. Whilst each field has a great deal of dedicated literature, there is very little that deals with the areas where fields overlap. Hence although there are some connections, most only partially relate to the inquiry.

Within the field of Vocational Education there is a body of literature that does deal with progression into Higher Education. However, it rarely deals with childcare courses, but instead deals with other subject areas such as computing or engineering. The main focus of the writing concerns the creation, suitability and evaluation of particular courses that are tailored to allow entry to specified degree courses.

Aware of the difficulty of progression into higher education with non-traditional qualifications (GCE /GCSEs & 'A' levels) many Further Education establishments offer these particular types of courses referred to as Access courses, because they offer access and entry to particular courses in Higher Education establishments. Some Access courses do offer entry to degrees with teaching qualifications attached. This tends to be in particular subject areas like mathematics or environmental sciences, for individuals wishing to teach in the secondary school or in Further Education.

Whilst it is possible that some Early Years workers may have been able to use an Access route into Higher Education, it is not particularly suited to their prior learning. In addition, Access courses were designed to encourage and enable entry for particular groups of individuals who were underrepresented in the Higher Education population. Some Early Years workers have found they do not necessarily meet these requirements as the four main criteria for entry to Access courses were 'age', 'class', 'gender' and 'ethnicity'. In particular the categories of students have been mature students, those from working class backgrounds, women for certain areas of study (e.g. engineering) and men for others (like childcare) and Black or Asian students for areas where they are under represented.

Trying to identify pertinent literature in Teacher Education is complicated by the sheer amount of documentation available. From the earliest foundations of the charity schools, through the monitor schemes, the pupil-teacher scheme, and increasing government involvement, there has been a growing mountain of documentation. The earliest forms of documentation took the form of 'minutes' from Societies meetings or personal letters and pamphlets written by founders advocating their particular scheme or approach. With increased government input, the documentation became more formalised and often more legally binding.

Any attempt to examine particular routes into Teacher Education (TE) in the 1990's needs to address what teacher education is about and what purposes it serves. We also need to ask whether there is any relevance in examining what has gone before. Aldrich (1992) argues that whilst the past cannot provide definite answers for the present or future

> ...it is possible to show how and why decisions about educating teachers were made in the past and to make some assessment of the validity or otherwise of those decisions and of their outcomes.
> p12

There are indeed whole books completely given over to the history of Teacher Education. Dent (1977) in particular, stands out as creating an easily accessible route into the subject with his book covering the period 1800-1975. Other writers have concentrated on either the nineteenth or the early twentieth century. Some however, have focused on particular issues or turning points marked by certain developments or events.

This is especially true in relation to Government Acts and Committee Reports. Alexander, Craft and Lynch (1984) for example, used this approach by focusing on the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963) and then on subsequent related developments.

Using a 'narrower focus' approach indicates the increasing complexity of the subject area. Alexander et al (1984) listed selected major events in TE from 1960 to 1984(p), and clearly showed an increase in the frequency of events and developments as well as increased complication and a finer focus with more significant impact.

Certainly, since Dent, most histories of TE have focused on curriculum studies or on particular issues when examining the last two decades. So, for example a book on Early Years such as that by Anning (1997), whilst starting with the wider historical picture from the past, hones down considerably onto Early Years issues as more recent developments are discussed.

Brooks (1991) suggests a way of dealing with this issue is to -

> .. turn history on its head, to consider first not the more distant but the more recent history in order to identify within their historical contexts those issues, which today confront the student teacher...
>
> p4

He believes this approach to be the more appropriate as it

> ...aims to show that present day concerns are historical in the sense that it is their history that gives them their meaning.
>
> p4

Aldrich (1990) basically agrees with an issue-led approach but refers to it as a 'case-study' approach. He maintains this approach means

> ...there is no intention to cover all the developments in the history of teacher education in this country;...
>
> p12

and that

> There is no assumption...that a single historical thread leads to, and justifies, the present.
>
> p12

One way to follow an issue led approach would be to start with contemporary definitions of the following terms - 'training', 'teaching' and 'education'. There is now a confusing interchanging of these terms, as if they shared the same meanings, partly due to differences in professional and vernacular usage and the many perspectives in which they are used.

In many situations two of the three terms are grouped together, like 'training and education' or 'teaching and education'. This suggests 'education' differs from its partner in some significant way. This could be a form of subject jargon designed to confuse those outside the field of education. However, for some writers, the term 'education' represents a larger, fuller, more in-depth experience of the previously named process.

Both 'training' and 'teaching' can be ways of transmitting skills and knowledge both to an individual and by that individual to other people. The differences between the two terms are essentially to do with how and where these processes are employed. 'Education' would seem to be how that individual makes personal sense or understanding of those skills and knowledge, and adds to them, develops them or adapts them to various environments.

The Government has always referred to the preparation of individuals to work in schools, as 'Teacher Training'. The current Government department with responsibilities in this area, is known as the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Writers at the beginning of the century also used this terminology to describe the process and practice that took place within training schools and later in the training colleges. Dent, writing in the 1970's, still used the term to describe all that went on in the preparation of new teachers. In recent years however, writers have begun to use the term 'Teacher Education' to describe this process. But why?

Aldrich (1990) claims,

> Such a change reflects in part the redesignation in the 1960's of the training colleges as colleges of education, institutions which, while producing teachers were to engage in graduate level studies, both in the area of education and in other subjects, although the final award was to be a Bachelor of Education degree
>
> p

The redesignation, recommended by the Robbins Report (1963), seems to imply that further academic study to graduate level, in some ways adds to the basic training of becoming a teacher, resulting in an educated individual with a degree who can teach.

In this interpretation, 'training' would seem to be only a part of the overall process of becoming an educated person. There is also an implicit notion that 'training' in this context, consists of gaining a set of skills and knowledge with which to teach others. But can skills and knowledge be grouped and packaged in such a way that particular skills and certain pieces of knowledge are enough to ensure a 'good' or 'efficient teacher? And will that particular package always produce teachers of a similar standard? What part is played by the individual teacher's understanding of those skills and knowledge?

Holman and Kleinburg (1994) feel

> For us, 'training' has too narrow a connotation. We consider 'education' and 'development'; to be equally important concepts in relation to the quality of a workforce which relates to young children. We use the word 'training' as a shorthand reference for processes which develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for understanding what is involved in 'educare' making judgements and carrying out good practice.
> pp128/9

The use of the term 'training' as a form of shorthand for a much fuller interpretation of the processes of preparation might be growing in popularity. This would help to explain how even with the government's traditional use of the term, an HMI survey carried out into Initial Teacher Training (DES 1987). could begin with the sentence -

> The training of a teacher is a complex undertaking, and one that should be seen as a continuous process occupying the full span of professional life.

and end with -

> The success of the initial training system must be measured by the quality of the foundation it lays, and by the thoroughness with which it prepares students for their professional responsibilities.
> p2

The difficulties with agreeing a common definition also point up a potential source of bias in the research. As the researcher, I am well aware of the various debates and feel strongly that 'training' is only a part of the set of processes involved. To this end, I have used the term 'teacher education' or 'initial teacher education' throughout the study to encompass the range of processes involved in preparation individuals to teach.

However, for the students involved in the inquiry, the debate may be far from clear. Many use the term 'teacher training' to express their desired outcome from the HNC course. Indeed, many authors writing in the field of caring for young children, and others writing outside Higher Education, still use the term.

The students have also received 'vocational training' via their prior Nursery Nursing qualifications and use phrases such as '.when I trained.' Yet even with this limited terminology the students all claim they have done more than simply collect a set of skills and pieces of knowledge. Their enrolment on the HNC course is in part, an act of self-selection, and is evidence that they see and feel a much fuller learning experience is available.

It would seem that actually experiencing the processes and living through the changes in thinking patterns and understandings that occur, is what broadens the definition from 'training' into the larger context of 'education'.

Blenkin and Whitehead (1987) contend -

> Education, as opposed to teaching, is a highly sophisticated activity. To teach someone something can be a relatively straightforward matter: hence many people in many different contexts do it more or less successfully all the time. Our view of education, however, is of a much more complex process or set of processes. To educate, that is, to attend to and promote the development of immature minds and persons ... calls for qualities, skills and levels of insight and understanding of a special kind, and for a far more sophisticated form of preparation than the term 'teacher training' would suggest
>
> p53

In the earliest foundations of Charity schools in the early 1700s, it was acknowledged that adults (or older children) involved in the classroom with pupils, needed to have some form of preparation for the tasks in hand. Dent (1977) argued that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) showed itself to be ahead of its time in demanding some qualifications for those 'entrusted' with the education of the young.

> The early leaders of the Society also realised that school teaching, if not a learned profession, was at any rate a skilled craft, and therefore its practitioners ought to be trained.
>
> p2

The idea that a 'learned profession' and a 'skilled craft' were mutually exclusive within teaching, has persisted. However if we examine the four traditional professions of the law, medicine, the church and the army, all have as their basis a skilled craft, or set of crafts, that has been enhanced with further academic study and professional expertise. If it works for other professions then it is possible a skilled craft could form some part of the basis for a learned profession within the field of education.

Across the years there have been agreed elements in which practitioners needed preparation, which arose from the purposes of education as perceived by the providers of that education. The SPCK saw the purpose of education and the aim of the Charity schools as "the salvation of souls rather than the nurture of minds" hence their emphasis on "religious orthodoxy and moral probity" rather than on scholarship. (Dent 1977)

Here then, is a link with the present day issues of who is allowed to become a teacher, what criteria are used and who controls the entry into teaching. Currently the government, or its various agencies, decides. The decisions range from the number of student places institutions can offer and which subject areas are covered, to the criteria students need to be accepted. Theoretically, this allows the government to control the flow of qualified teachers into the schools according to the need created by the numbers of children requiring compulsory schooling. In practice, the adjustments of supply and demand are often out of line.

In the past when control did not rest in the hands of government alone, the various founders and societies created their own entry requirements for teaching in their own schools. The qualifications that SPCK, for example, called for, reflected the time, the society and the individuals involved in the foundation of these schools. It is logical to assume that the qualifications currently demanded are similarly bound by the time, society and needs of the organisers of education. If we were to use now some of SPCK's criteria for selection - 25 year old Anglicans, of sober life and conversation, who could sew, knit, knew the Bible and Church of England liturgy, we might be very short of teachers!

Any discussion of entry criteria also raises the issue of funding, in particular who gives what to whom and what conditions are attached? Currently the Government through the TTA, allocates a certain amount of money per student to the Universities and Colleges of Higher Education.

The conditions attached in Teacher Education are quite stringent and are used as a punitive tool against establishments that do not follow exactly, the targets set out for student entry. Funding is withheld for each student recruited over target. In addition, the amount for the total number of students over target is also deducted from the target sum. Hence if the target figure is 100 students and 120 are recruited, the establishment fails to receive funding for the additional 20 students but is further penalised by having funding withdrawn for 20 students within the target. This leaves funding for only 80 students when 120 students are recruited.

Again this is not a new scenario. At various stages in the past, the nature of preparation received by student teachers did depend very much on whether there was money available to do the job of training.

The increase in educational provision in the early 1800s, meant there was a need for more teachers. However, training large numbers of teachers also meant having sufficiently large sums of money. With only limited funds available, other options had to be considered. Hence the 'Monitor' schemes were developed, as they were a cheap option.

In the late 1850's the drain on the national economy caused by the Crimea War, led to changes to the funding of the pupil-teacher scheme and the training colleges. Similarly the Revised Code of Regulations (1862) drastically altered the funding for training and thus encouraged local providers to opt for the cheaper option of more pupil-teachers.

Whilst the Elementary Education Act of 1870 cleared away many of the excesses of the Revised Code, the idea of replacing fully qualified professional teachers with cheaper substitutes has continued to prove attractive to funding providers. In 1993 for example, the Secretary of State for Education, John Patten, proposed a 'Mums' Army' scheme whereby non-graduates 'with a couple of A-levels' would go through a one-year training scheme and then be able to teach children up to the age of seven. However as Anning (1995) reported, this was not what practitioners and parents wanted and they fought successfully against the proposal.

> Doug McAvoy, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, voiced the concern of Early Years educators that the proposals 'were underpinned by a false and offensive assumption that teaching young children is easy, requiring fewer professional skills and less personal education' (Reported in *The Independent* 10 June 1993) The speed and professionalism with which early childhood educators lobbied for support against the scheme marked a new 'with-it-ness' in a group of workers pushed to their limits. The willingness of parents to rally in support of their children's nursery and infant teachers appeared to take the Minister by surprise.
>
> p45

Edwards and Knight (1994) also point out in relation to the scheme

> Early years teaching is a professional activity. Unfortunately, it is not always seen as such and it is only recently that the British government has discarded proposals to allow non-graduates to become qualified early years teachers in England and Wales
>
> P 5

Until the ideology behind this approach is challenged successfully, and shown to be shortsighted to funding providers, there will always be threats of this type to the profession.

Naturally most conditions that are attached to funding, reflect the value systems of the providers. In the 'Mums' Army' scheme for example, Early Years practitioners were not surprised that notions such as 'working with children is an easy option' and that 'any unqualified person could fill this essentially 'mothering' role', came to the forefront. The justifications for such a scheme simply reflected what the funding providers believed. The value systems of funding providers determine *who* and *how many* enter ITE and *on what grounds*, as well as *what* is studied during preparation and *how* it is studied.

The current debate concerns the structure of courses of preparation, in terms of their pattern of study and in the content of that study. The patterns can be consecutive or concurrent, whilst the content or curriculum as described by Naish (1992), is based around four main parts -

> ...one dealing with the process of teaching; a second with what may be loosely called 'educational theory'; the third with practical experience of teaching in schools, that is 'teaching practice' and the fourth concerned with subject studies
>
> p27

An examination of different patterns of study demonstrate the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) is an example of a consecutive pattern of preparation, as the year-long course follows on after a first degree, normally in a particular subject area. Traditionally this route has been used by those wishing to teach their subject specialism in secondary schools.

With the arrival of the National Curriculum in schools, it has been possible to develop primary PGCE courses, as subject specialisms are increasingly needed for teaching in the primary school. With the current development of first degrees specialising in Early Childhood Studies (without QTS), it may soon be possible to have PGCE courses geared towards nursery teaching.

The B.Ed degree, advocated by the Robbins Report (1963), and the B.A degrees are current examples of three or four year courses, with general education (in one, two or more subjects) and professional training and expertise running concurrently. These courses are the successors to the various certificates and one or two-year courses required in the past for teaching in the Elementary school. The length of these courses has altered throughout the years dependent on the demand caused by fluctuating birth rates, wars and subject shortages.

As to the content or curriculum, of these courses, the precise weighting of general academic education with professional expertise will continue to create debate. In some ways whatever division of time and energy is allowed, it will not be appropriate for everyone. This is because individual learners going through the processes of preparation will have individual needs relating to both aspects. Whilst a course for a hundred students may be able to offer some individual or group learning packages it cannot accommodate individual weightings for every aspect.

It could be argued that the apparent divide between general academic education and professional expertise, or theory and practice, is more obvious and artificial in a consecutive course than in a concurrent one, and therefore harder to bridge.

The theory and practice debate has a long and hallowed tradition. The two Monitor schemes in the 1800's were started by the Rev. Dr. Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster. Bell, an Anglican priest based his scheme on his teaching experiences in India. Lancaster, a Quaker with no formal qualifications but concern for children, created the 'British' system. The most significant difference between the two men and their systems was in their beliefs about how teachers were formed. Bell believed going into schools, seeing what went on and sharing in the office of tuition (DENT 1977) created teachers. Lancaster believed instead in formal instruction and lectures. Neither founder liked the others' scheme and so the divide between practice and theory widened.

The rhetoric continues to this day. It is evident in the discussions of a multi-tier teaching profession that stretches from 'super-heads'/ 'super teachers' down to classroom assistants, and how their roles are defined.

It is evident when Smedley (1996) points to the way current media reports theory being used in the so-called indoctrination of students by teacher educators. She denies the idea of theory being 'a separate and unhelpful thing' and argues

> But without a theoretical framework to help understand and inform teaching, teachers will find it difficult to move forward professionally; they are more likely to feel personally inadequate and stay in a rut; professional development then becomes unlikely.
>
> p20

She continues -

> I am not just arguing pro-theory, but for a particular conceptualisation of theory and practice - one which allows each to inform the other and is not driven by opposition and polarity
>
> p20

Blenkin and Whitehead (1987) in describing professional expertise emphasise the idea of theory and practice going hand in hand, to advocate

> ...teaching quality depends on three kinds of professional expertise. Teachers must be expert in understanding children and their development in an educational context. They must also be able to demonstrate professional competence which is rooted in a theoretical understanding of educational issues. And they must acquire a deep understanding of appropriate curriculum content.
>
> p60

They argue that

> ...teachers must be helped to develop all three kinds of professional expertise in a balanced and coherent manner, and this is most likely to occur if all three aspects emerge from and refer back to rigorous evaluations of professional practice. This is how, in our view, teacher education at both initial and in-service levels should be approached if teaching quality is to be ensured. It should address itself, in short, to the proper development of the teacher's professional expertise.
>
> p60

The environment of professional practice recommended above is precisely that in which the Early Years practitioners, the students in the study, are involved in every day in Early Years Education.

The issues relating to teacher education are pertinent for all teachers, not just those who wish to teach in the early years. However, the particular nature of working with young children has long been recognised as requiring additional skills, knowledge and understanding of the teacher. Indeed, according to Dent (1977) working with young children was one of the few specialist forms of study available in the early days of teacher education.

> The earliest specialist teachers in Britain were those who taught very young children. In Robert Owen's school their methods were different from those of teachers of older children. David Stow gave them a different training, and so did the Home and Colonial Society. The differences became more marked when in the 1850's the Baroness Marenholtz von Bülow introduced Froebel's *Kindergarten* into England.
>
> p38

In order to examine the specialist nature of Early Years teaching, which is after all the proposed destination point for the students involved in the inquiry, we need first to examine the literature relating to Early Years Education.

Before a closer examination of the overlapped areas involved in the inquiry can be attempted, there needs to be some understanding of and general overview of the body of literature.

Many books written about the field concentrate naturally enough, on 'the child'- what we understand children to be, how children begin to learn and how we might best achieve progress in children's learning. Hence many books focus on aspects of child development and on the value of play. But how we came to particular understandings of child development is firmly rooted in history. By starting with 'who' shaped Early Years Education we can gain an awareness of where, when and why the field evolved as it did.

Anning (1997) clearly details the history of Early Years Education and ideologies that have underpinned it. A significant feature has been the continuing influence of key individuals, pioneers in a way, whose understandings about children, their needs and learning abilities have transcended national borders and the passage of time. Indeed, it could be argued that Early Years Education has the strongest and longest links to theories that have been tried, tested, adapted, and yet have stood the test of time, of any of the branches of education.

Bassey (1999) has recently argued against the obsessive use of literature and in particular the idea of

> genuflection (ritualistic citing of the founding parents of theory)
> p6

This is actually quite difficult to avoid within Early Years Education. There are a series of pioneers whom even the newest childcare student quickly becomes aware are significant to her/his studies and work with children. Indeed, even if early years workers do not follow particular methods they nonetheless are aware of some of the attributes of other traditions and have a general shared understanding that allows dialogue with other Early Years workers.

The difference in the development of Early Years Education and theories about the child, is that many of the pioneers were directly influenced by their predecessors and simply took on, developed or adapted various theories to suit other environments or different groups of children. Certainly from the late eighteenth century onwards, from Rousseau, through Pestolozzi, Froebel, Montessori, Steiner, the McMillan sisters, Issacs, Piaget, Donaldson and many others, a comparison could be made with a relay race where the baton passes from hand to hand down the years. The baton would represent our knowledge and understanding of children and how they develop and learn.

In a way this also illustrates why there have been fewer 'Names' in Early Years Education in the last twenty years. The sum total of all these theories and approaches has created a vast store of knowledge and understanding of children and their ability to learn. In short, the baton is now too heavy for one person to carry.

Things have diversified; more people are involved in collaborative efforts to push out the boundaries of Early Years. Ideas that challenge established thinking about children and learning, arise as the result of collaborative work and even whole community involvement. The ideas currently flowing from Reggio Emilio, a municipal authority in Italy, stem from the involvement of a whole group of individuals. Adults and children alike have been involved in decision making such that children's contributions have been taken seriously and incorporated into the way things are organised.

Interestingly, many of these key individuals in the past, were not teachers or educationalists and some were not even parents. Of those who did have their own children, one or two had what can only be described as bizarre relationships with their children. Some biographers have suggested in these cases, the individuals' unsatisfactory relationship with their own child fuelled their need to find out more about other children.

These pioneers were doctors, psychologists, social reformers and one was even a zoologist! They viewed the child and the processes of learning from their own disciplines. As a result many of the pioneers had first-hand experiences of children who would not at that time have been considered educable for a variety of reasons. For some children it was for health reasons such as TB. For others, it was because of a physical disability such as being deaf-mutes. Montessori for example, based some of her ideas on Jean Itard's work in this area. (Britton (1992))

However it was the vast amount of children designated as 'idiots' or 'feeble minded' and other such labels, that the doctors and psychologists naturally came into contact with the most. Work that produced positive results with these children, was then adapted and tried with other children in various education settings. From there, general theories about a child's development and capacity for learning evolved.

The discussion of pioneers and their methods of working with children, naturally shows a strong British and European bias because the inquiry itself is based firmly within British Early Years Education traditions. Some of the methods did spread successfully to other parts of the world, an example being the strong Montessori centre in India, created by her during the Second World War, which continues to this day.

It is worth noting though, that these pioneers are not necessarily held in such esteem by current authors from other parts of the world. In the revised sixth edition of Bee's (1992) extensive work on child development, (a much quoted text on childcare courses here in Britain) only Piaget of the pioneers, is mentioned. This could be because the book was produced in association with a television series entitled 'Childhood' which was filmed in America and possibly the two were primarily intended for the home market only.

Although Early Years literature exists that deals with individual pioneers and their influences, the style of single books dealing with key individuals is now somewhat dated. Many recent books only devote a chapter to historical perspectives and a whole range of key individuals' ideologies, relying instead on an informed readership having a basic understanding of the historical developments.

The exception is where particular methods and traditions are still being used and literature is being produced to introduce the ideas afresh to a new audience of parents as in Britton's (1992) parent's guide to the Montessori method. This contains a chapter on Maria Montessori's life and details the experiences that influenced her and helped to develop the 'method' still being used today.

Whilst we view the key individuals who shaped Early Years Education as historical figures, we should not lose sight of the fact that they were contemporary in their own time. Their developing understandings of children and of learning grew out of their own time and their own society's acceptance and understanding of children. Most of the key individuals were controversial in their own time as they challenged their society's view of children. This is an aspect of Early Years Literature that is still true today.

Obviously with more individuals writing and wider areas of understanding being addressed, it is unusual for any one writer to have the same impact that the pioneers had internationally. Nevertheless, individuals are writing for their own time and needs, in addressing new policies enforced from central governments or in attempts to reclaim philosophical ground when practice has been imposed.

However, the largest part of Early Years literature deals with 'what' Early Years Education is all about and 'how' exactly those ideas can be translated into practice. This is also reflected in childcare courses in Britain, with large parts of the curriculum given over to child development and how that in turn influences childrens' ability to learn and what that means in terms of creating educative experiences for children.

This is less evident within ITE because of the reason Anning (1997) describes

> In 1971 there were 148 public sector institutions where teachers were trained; by 1984 these had been reduced to 54. Many of the courses closed were BEd routes into teaching, the traditional source of early years teachers in the UK. The emphasis in initial training at primary level has shifted inexorably to 'subjects' as the need to prepare newly qualified teachers to 'deliver' the content of the National Curriculum had taken priority. For example, courses are required to demonstrate 150 hours of English, mathematics and science tuition to all primary trainees. Courses in child development and training in understanding physical development have been squeezed out.
>
> p48

Theories about child development, encompassing all aspects of a child's development, (physical, intellectual, language, emotional, social, moral and cultural) are reinforced on childcare courses by placing a heavy emphasis on students carrying out detailed observations of children. Unfortunately, this too is missing from ITE courses. That 'child development' is such a large part of childcare courses is evident in literature with many classic texts about the subject now being in their fourth, fifth or sixth editions.

Following on from this, is a great body of literature dealing with how Early Years workers can put theories about child development and learning, into practice. Within recent years this literature has reflected the changes happening in schools and nurseries with the implementation of the National Curriculum, Desirable Outcomes and Baseline Assessment.

Some of the literature, like Abbott & Rodger (1994) or Edwards & Knight (1994) gives a broad overview of issues in Early Years Education. Other writers like Anning (1995), Aubrey (1994) and David (1999) discuss curriculum issues relating to separate subject areas, whilst individuals like Smidt (1998) focuses specifically on policy issues that result in changes to practice like the Desirable Outcomes. So within the 'what' and 'how' part of Early Years literature there is both breadth and depth.

The problem is that very little of this literature has had direct relevance to the areas where vocational education and teacher education *overlap* with Early Years Education. Some Early Years books do give over a chapter to 'working with other adults' in the classroom, but they are often written from the teacher's perspective and concern management and leadership issues. Even in these cases, the emphasis can sometimes be on the other adults helpers being parents, rather than other Early Years workers or students. There are other sorts of books that are written specifically for childcare students, in terms of providing them with knowledge and skills to go and work with young children.

What has been largely absent from the literature, until the 1990s, is a focus on what further training opportunities for Early Years practitioners existed and how these opportunities might be extended beyond any initial qualifications to enable individuals to enter teaching. In particular, there has been a growing debate within the literature about the manner in which these opportunities are or are not linked together in any form of progressive 'pathway'.

So, even though issues like the low status and low pay of Early Years workers have long been known and discussed within Early Years Education conferences and forums, it is only now being acknowledged and written about within the literature. A variety of issues have been examined. David & Wishart (1991) examined the feasibility of different models of career paths into teaching. Hevey (1992) and Curtis & Hevey (1992) suggested the improvement of training opportunities with new qualifications like the NVQs offered a chance for a radical rethink of the content and structure of training and qualifications for Early Years professionals.

In 1994 Segebarth edited a collection of articles covering different Early Years settings that called for a model,' a climbing frame', that would work to ensure quality training for all sectors and enable Early Years workers to move easily around the whole field. This was followed by Pugh in 1996, editing an examination of the mismatch of training needs of Early Years practitioners and the training opportunities available. The Early Years Training Group of the Early Childhood Education Forum who were responsible, were 'committed to creating a more coherent system of training and accreditation for Early Years workers in the UK'

From this literature, Abbott & Pugh's (1998) recent book emerged which not only brings together for the first time all the issues associated with workers in the Early Years, but also makes recommendations for what can be done to create progression, both in academic and professional terms, for individuals working with young children.

There is nothing else in the literature that quite brings together *all* the threads of undertaking the journey to work with young children. Nowhere is the story told, of how and why individuals choose to develop from being a childcare students into a professional early years workers and then maybe continue through Initial Teacher Education to emerge as Early Years teachers. Nor is it told how, in order to follow this journey, individuals have to 'ebb and flow' between quite different fields of education.

Implications

The preparation undertaken for the inquiry has raised two main issues that have implications for the way the inquiry has continued to develop. Firstly the lack of a coherent written narrative of individuals' journeys suggests the inquiry is breaking new ground. The sheer numbers of Early Years workers willing to share their story verbally, even in informal settings, suggests this is a significant group of narratives rather just an untapped source.

The second issue raised by the preparation has been the current dynamic nature to the changes taking place. Even trying to set the inquiry within a context is difficult because the context is rapidly changing with new initiatives and new language to describe them being introduced constantly. A case in point is the review of the Desirable Outcomes, which at the initial stages of writing this thesis, had suggestions of new descriptors like 'Early Learning Goals' and 'Foundation Stage' being put forward. So whilst trying to keep abreast of the contextual changes, I recognised the scope of the inquiry could only be adapted so far.

On the one hand, the inquiry is breaking new ground by collecting and presenting the narratives of particular Early Years workers, whilst on the other there is a definite sensation of the inquiry being a 'snapshot in time', a time of great change and hopefully, great potential. In short, the preparation has shown the inquiry to be a true reflection of the field of Early Years Education, with all its contradictions and its complex nature.

CHAPTER 3

DECISION MAKING

Armed with the preparation they have conducted with maps, guidebooks and personal accounts, the travellers are now ready to make decisions about the final details of the journey. In real life, this involves deciding on the precise route and destination, as well as choosing stopping places along the way. There are also decisions to be made about the manner of travelling, in terms of speed, comfort or the company of others. All these decisions are coloured by three things - the quality of the preparation; the travellers' perceived purpose in undertaking the journey; and the actual nature of the landscape to be travelled.

For the students in the inquiry, the decision making is similarly determined. They need to decide upon which course and which qualification, whether to study full or part-time and whether to work alone at a distance or join a designated course. These decisions are also influenced by the preparation, perceived purpose and understandings of what is involved in becoming an Early Years teacher, by the individual students.

This chapter also examines the manner in which decisions were made about how and why various data were collected and about which methods were chosen to facilitate this collection.

CHAPTER 3

Decision Making

Introduction

In order to examine the decision-making process within the project, there will be an examination of why the inquiry developed as it did and how the decisions taken, regarding methods, related to the knowledge being pursued. This chapter will also focus on the quality of preparation; why the individuals involved undertook their particular journey and how this was affected by the nature of the landscape of Early Years. Central to this, is a discussion of how it is possible to know about other individuals' choices and experiences. This has implications for determining the methods chosen for the data collection discussed in the following chapter

Discussions of how and why a piece of research developed must consider the nature of the knowledge being examined and the subsequent effect on how the decisions were made. Any piece of research and its development is also very much a product of the time and space in which it is created. It is in a sense 'a snapshot in time' - resting in a specific context, time and place. With some types of research and inquiries it is possible to change different aspects of the context and create similar pieces of research. Sometimes it is even possible to replicate the research completely. However, in other situations, particularly those involving individuals' experiences (which cannot be un-done), it is more difficult to repeat the research in any meaningful way.

The knowledge sought for this project involved accessing the personal understandings experienced by a particular group of specifically qualified individuals, of certain educational processes, in a particular time period. The initial intention was then to use this knowledge to further tailor the educational processes to fit more appropriately the prior educational and work experiences of these individuals. To do this, there had to be knowledge of the experiences of individuals and of the educational processes as well as the relationship between the two.

Personal experiences have both qualitative and quantitative aspects. They can be open to interpretation, yet can also be factual in terms of *describing* the events an individual has experienced. All the individuals had a set of demographic facts that could be used to describe those personal experiences relevant to the project. So for example, the age at which they undertook to study; the courses they studied; the jobs they applied for and subsequently worked in, could all be documented accurately. How the students then interpreted these experiences and viewed them in terms of significance to their stated goal of becoming teachers, was clearly going to be more difficult to demonstrate. How I might then view these interpretations as the researcher would add a further dimension.

It can be seen that there were three separate elements to the data that needed to be collected for the project - the individuals' experiences (facts), the educational processes (facts) and the individuals' experiences of the educational processes (interpretations). To deal appropriately with each element, the methods for data collection needed to take this into account. Initially it was felt some form of questionnaire would be useful for identifying certain factual experiences such as type of jobs and length of time in employment as well as courses studied. The collection of course documentation would also supply the factual evidence for some of the educational processes undertaken by the students. However, in order to collect data about how the students felt about their experiences, and how they interpreted them, it would be necessary to use face-to-face interviews over a period of time. This 'longitudinal' aspect was therefore present from the start of planning the project.

The time frame for the project also had an effect on data collection. In 1995, although Educational Research and Early Years Education were particular landscapes, they were very different places to what they would become by the turn of the millennium. The former was beginning to reflect the changes in thinking filtering through research in general, in particular regarding the qualitative – quantitative debate. The latter however, had been a fairly static, stable environment for many years with major changes in thinking only very gradually being reflected. The very rapid changes that subsequently followed soon rendered replicating the project with further generations of students impossible. Consequently the project became very much a product of the time and space in which it occurred.

Positioning As Researcher I

My own positioning as a researcher at the start of the project was also instrumental in making decisions about the methods chosen for data collection. My experiences in Early Years Education, Further Education and Initial Teacher Education, as a tutor and as a lecturer were beneficial to my understanding and 'insider' status in the subject matter of the inquiry. The role of 'insider' is both blessing and curse in any research project.

This idea about being an 'insider' or 'outsider', as the researcher in relation to and with the subjects being researched, is often expressed in literature as the relationship between 'Self' and 'Other'. Indeed, Fine (1998) examines the hyphen between Self-Other that 'both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of Others'. Much of the work focussing on this issue has been within the fields of literature relating to race, gender, age and sexuality with many writers focussing on the ideas over a number of years.(Hill Collins (1990) Fine (1998), Wilkinson & Kitzinger (1996), hooks (1990), Bhavnani & Phoenix (1994), Merriam & Johnson-Bailey (2001))

In my case, the nature of being an 'insider' could best be summed up by Robson's (1993) description firstly, of the advantages -

> It is increasingly common for researchers to carry out a study directly concerned with the setting in which they work. ...There are clear practical advantages to this kind of 'insider' research. You won't have to travel far. Generally you will have an intimate knowledge of the context of the study, not only as it is at present but in a historical or developmental perspective. You should know the politics of the institution, not only of the formal hierarchy But also how it 'really works' (or, at least, an unexamined common-sense view of this). You will know how best to approach people. You should have 'street credibility' as someone who will understand what the job entails and what its stresses and strains are. In general, you will already have in your head a great deal of information, which it takes an outsider a long time to acquire.
>
> p297/ 8

This was certainly true in my position but then so were some of the disadvantages Robson (1993) listed

> Your addition of the role of researcher to that of colleague is difficult both for yourself and your colleagues. Interviewing colleagues can be an uncomfortable business; particularly so in hierarchical organisations when they are higher in status to yourself. Supposing that you obtain confidential information, appropriately enough within the conditions of confidentiality of the case study ; is this going to affect your working relationship with colleagues?

> If you make mistakes during the study, you are going to have to live with them afterwards. More fundamentally, how are you going to maintain objectivity, given your previous and present close contact with the institution and your colleagues?
>
> p298/ 300

Some of these disadvantages were dealt with when I left my role as a course leader with direct involvement with students in Further Education, shortly before beginning work on the project. The move was recent enough to give me credibility with other providers and students in Further Education, but also meant I was no longer involved in the competition for students that exists between colleges. Hence in this field of education I was not working with direct colleagues but rather working with individuals with similar backgrounds and skills to my previous colleagues.

My role within the University as a researcher was potentially more disadvantageous. Here I was known. Some members of staff were aware of the research assistant role I had held previously, but generally these relationships and the role were easy to assume again. For staff with whom I had no previous shared experience, there were few issues. The main area of disadvantage would be when interviewing staff with higher status. My previous experience as a research assistant had prepared me for this and I was aware some of the effects could be minimised with professionalism and objectivity.

Ultimately however, it would be my prior experiences in educational research rather than in Further Education or Initial Teacher Education that would prove to be more significant to the methodology of the inquiry. My ability to connect with and adapt to some of the ideas gaining credence in educational research at that time, was shaped by having spent some years as a research assistant and completing a Masters degree.

For a five-year period from 1984 onwards, I was employed as a research assistant to the Reader in Educational Research at the higher education institution subsequently involved in the inquiry. I was employed to collect data with a variety of methods, collate it and be involved in the analysis of the findings.

The reader, Bassey, (1986) came from a strong natural science background, but had developed an equally strong action research approach to his research. As a consequence, research methods were employed from across the qualitative-quantitative divide.

Whilst my skills in methods as diverse as numerical analysis and interviewing grew and developed, my interest in qualitative methods grew at a greater rate. Throughout this period, I was also working part-time as a lecturer in Further Education teaching music to nursery nurses.

The research post came to an end, and in 1990 I began to study part-time for a Master of Arts in Education degree with the Open University and became exposed to ideas about ethnography, in particular those expressed by Hammersley (1986), who was a major contributor to the course, as well as being my 'summer school' tutor. As part of the studying I embarked upon a piece of research with my students on the nursery nursing course, involving questionnaires and interviews, designed to elicit their previous experience of music and how it might be used in the nursery.

These ideas were what I brought with me to the project. They were fractured pieces of understandings; disparate parts of a jigsaw for which I had no overall picture. I was skilled in a variety of data collection methods, but was much more interested in and excited by qualitative approaches, particularly those involving ethnography and case studies. What I was not aware of at the time, was the significance of the time period during which I had been exposed to these ideas.

In their discussion about the history of qualitative research in the twentieth century, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) divide the period into five distinct phases - five 'moments' of qualitative research. Their 'third' and 'fourth moments' stretch across a time period prior to the start of the project, whilst their 'fifth moment' encompasses the project itself.

The 'third' moment is referred to as 'Blurred Genres' and stretches from 1970 to 1986. For the first time, qualitative researchers have a wide range of paradigms, strategies and methods available. They have a range of different ways of collecting and analysing data and there are new ways of reading interviews and other texts.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) cite Geertz (1973 and 1983) as arguing,

> ...that the old functional, positivist, behavioural, totalising approaches to the human disciplines were giving way to a more pluralistic, interpretive open-ended perspective."
>
> p18

They argue that Geertz goes on to suggest that the boundaries between the social sciences and humanities are blurring and that researchers are turning to other disciplines to borrow models, methods and strategies. This is reflected in writing, where,

> A form of 'genre dispersion' was occurring: documentaries that read like fiction (Mailer), parables posing as ethnographies (Castañeda), theoretical treatises that look like travelogues (Lévi-Strauss).
>
> p18

The 'third moment' for me, was experienced albeit secondhand, through my Bachelor of Education degree and the research work with Bassey. I was at the point in my own learning of trying initially to understand the positivist viewpoint. My tutors, Bassey included, were experiencing firsthand the changes and newly blurring genres.

Their interest and excitement at the changes in educational research spilled over and I too became aware there were new possibilities available, but did not as yet understand how these changes would affect and influence my life and thinking.

Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) definition of the 'fourth moment' is of a 'Crisis of Representation'. The 'Blurred Genres' of the previous moment have called into question some of the established truths and meanings particularly in relation to validity and reliability and even objectivity. With different ways of researching and different ways of writing about research comes the problem of what and who is represented in the text. They argue...

> At issue now is the author's presence in the interpretive text, or how the researcher can speak with authority in an age when there are no longer any firm rules concerning the text, its standards of evaluation, and its subject matter. (Geertz 1988)
>
> p19

In the past, the act of writing about research had been seen as separate from the fieldwork. The written text may follow certain conventions. but was nevertheless merely an account of the research. There are arguments made for using different forms of writing to deal with this crisis of representation but Clough (1992) argues this will not address the issue as

> the problems of writing are still viewed as different from the problems of method or fieldwork itself.
>
> p20

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue further

> These works have the danger of directing attention away from the ways in which the text constructs sexually situated individuals in a field of social difference.
>
> p20

Arguments developed to support the idea that writing is in itself a part of the inquiry process not just a record of it. With these ideas a further blurring took place, but not of genres this time, but between fieldwork and writing.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest

> viewing writing as a method of inquiry that moves through successive stages of self-reflection. As a series of writings, the field-worker's texts flow from the field experience, through intermediate works, to later work, and finally to the research text that is the public presentation of the ethnographic and narrative experience. Thus do fieldwork and writing blur into one another. There is, in the final analysis, no difference between writing and fieldwork.
>
> p 21

For me, this fourth moment was spent both as a research assistant and beginning my teaching career in Further Education. In both areas I was learning to write for specific purposes - writing up interview data for reports and creating new course modules to meet examination board guidelines. It was only as I began my Masters study that I became aware of the different forms of writing I could use to represent the findings from my students.

Sadly, the previous twenty years of education had trained me in only one form of academic writing - the passive, objective voice. It was a familiar form of writing and one that, throughout my educational life, had brought me not a little success. In this moment, though I became aware it was possible to write in different forms for research, I felt ill equipped to abandon the only way I knew.

Denzin and Lincoln's fifth moment ebbed from the mid 1990's to the present day. There was and still is a 'Double Crisis'. In addition to the representational crisis of the previous moment, there is the added problem of legitimation. - how, with all the blurred genres, the questions over who and what is represented in the text and the melding of fieldwork and writing is it possible to evaluate qualitative studies at all. Denzin and Lincoln conclude that within the fifth moment

> Theories are now read in narrative terms, as "tales of the field" (Van Maanen 1988). Preoccupations with the representation of the "other" remain. New epistemologies from previously silenced groups emerge to offer solutions to this problem. The concept of the aloof researcher has been abandoned. More action-, activist-oriented research is on the horizon, as are more social criticism and social critique. The search for grand narratives will be replaced by more local small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations. (Lincoln 1993)"
>
> p22

The life of the project has been encompassed within the fifth moment. As a researcher my understandings have changed and developed similarly - I am no longer comfortable with the form of writing I was used to, and have found it increasingly difficult to use this form to reflect both the substance and manner in which the students are expressing their feelings. I have become increasingly interested in how I might better amplify the voice of the students I am working with, rather that the writing consist of my voice relating their stories. This is a long way from where I started my research journey.

Paradigms

At the beginning of the inquiry, my understanding of research was quite simplistic and rested very much on the qualitative / quantitative debate. I tended to view the methods used for data collection first, (believing certain methods went with just one approach) and then work backwards to identify an underpinning concept or belief about what and why the research was being undertaken. In particular, I held the view that research fell into one or other camp and thus labelled, was viewed with hostility and mistrust by active researchers in the opposing camp.

Robson (1993) alludes to the commonality of this view

> there are strongly held views that the divide between qualitative and quantitative represents an ideological divide and that that particular twain should never meet
>
> p6

Cohen and Manion (1994) claim that as educational research in the last thirty years has adopted a social scientific orientation it has also taken on

> two competing views of the social sciences - the established traditional view and a more recently emerging radical view. The former holds that the social sciences are essentially the same as the natural sciences and are therefore concerned with discovering natural and universal laws regulating and determining individual and social behaviour: the latter view however, whilst saving the rigour of the natural sciences and the same concern of traditional social sciences to describe and explain human behaviour, emphasises how people differ from inanimate natural phenomena and, indeed, from each other
>
> p5

They go onto argue that

> investigators adopting an objectivist (or positivist) approach to the social world and who treat it like the world of natural phenomena as being hard, real and external to the individual will choose from a range of traditional options - surveys, experiments and the like. Others favouring the more subjectivist (or anti positivist) approach and who view the social world as being of a much softer, personal and humanly created kind will select from a comparable range of recent and emerging techniques, accounts, participant observations and personal constructs, for example
>
> p7

They continue and describe the first approach again as

> ...if it were a hard external and objective reality... it will be predominately quantitative"
>
> p7

and the second approach as

> - subjective experience of individuals. The principle concern is with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself or herself... takes on a qualitative ...aspect
>
> p8

Clearly under this definition, the project could be seen as following the second, subjectivist (or anti positivist) approach, dealing as it would with the subjective experiences of students, and therefore it would be placed firmly in the qualitative camp.

Although Robson goes on to state

> an extensive literature on qualitative / quantitative distinctions exists, including Glasner and Moreno(1989), Hammersley (1989) and Fielding and Fielding(1986) Attempts have been made to build bridges and seek a rapprochement (cf Cook and Rieichardt, 1979, Ragin 1987)
> p303 / 4

Brannen citing Layder (1988) contends

> Traditionally a gulf is seen to exist between qualitative and quantitative research with each belonging to distinctly different paradigms."
> p3

However, in the midst of all this debate, another viewpoint was developing - that of the possibility of mixing methods, across the quantitative / qualitative divide. Robson (1995) cites Bryman (1988a) as playing down the differences and in regarding the distinction between the two as being primarily technical, a view which he supports.

Brannen (1992) in turn cites Burgess (1982) as coining the phrase..

> ... 'multiple research strategies' to describe the use of diverse methods in tackling a research problem and then argued
>
> ...researchers ought to be flexible and therefore ought to select a range of methods that are appropriate to the research problem under investigation. (Burgess 1984)
> p11

But what of the different paradigms mentioned by Brannen? How do they relate to the quantitative and qualitative debate and where exactly would the research fit?

Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that a paradigm

> may be viewed as a set of *basic beliefs* (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a *worldview* that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world", the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as for example, cosmologies and theologies do. The beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted on simple faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness."
> p200

In analysing four paradigms currently used in qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln argue that identification rests on the responses to three questions - *ontological* - what is there that can be known, *epistemological* - what is the relationship between the knower and what can be known and *methodological* - how can the knower go about finding out what they believe can be known.

In terms of the project the ontological question is concerned with identifying the students' experiences and the educational processes they have been exposed to, whilst the epistemological question refers to the students' interpretations of those experiences. Methodologically it is clear some of what can be known, can be identified with observation and questionnaires whilst other aspects demand in-depth discussion with the students themselves to elicit their understandings and interpretations.

Of the four paradigms identified; Positivism, Postpostivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism, it is the latter that most accurately describes the project.

What can be known, is seen as relativist with realities being

> multiple intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature... dependent on their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. Constructions are not more or less 'true"... but simply more or less informed and /or sophisticated
>
> p206

The relationship between the knower and what can be known, is seen as transactional and subjectivist. That is, they are

> assumed to be interactively linked so that "findings" are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds.
>
> p207

The way in which the knower can find out about what can be known, is seen as hermenueutical and dialectical. The idiosyncratic nature of social constructions

> suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents. ...constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques and compared and contrasted through dialectical interchange.
>
> p207

As for the issue of the qualitative and quantitative debate, Guba and Lincoln argue

> it is our position that it is a term (qualitative) that ought to be reserved for a description of types of methods. From our perspective, both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm.
>
> p195

Clearly then for most pieces of research, the paradigm determines the way in which the study is carried out. However in the case of this inquiry, the kind of knowledge being sort effectively determined the paradigm. Many of the features of the inquiry: operating in a realistic setting; with a multi-disciplinary team; looking at why certain individuals chose certain areas of study; and what they understood of their experiences, were already fixed elements, in place before my appointment as researcher.

These fixed elements, along with my own expertise and 'insider' knowledge clearly place the research into what Guba and Lincoln describe as the "constructivist paradigm" but what Bassey (1999) refers to, in opposition to the "positivist paradigm", as the "interpretative paradigm".

He argues that-

> ....People perceive and so construe the world in ways which are often *similar* but not necessarily the *same*. So there can be different understandings of what is real. Concepts of reality can vary from one person to another. ....
>
> p43

This aspect was already in evidence. One of the reasons the research came about was the belief held by providers and students in Further Education, that ITE admissions tutors did not understand the experience held by the Early Years practitioners. This lack of understanding resulted in no accreditation of prior learning (APL) being given when practitioners applied to ITE and, in the opinion of the college providers, severely affected the students' chances of being accepted on a teaching course.

Bassey then goes on -

> Interpretive researchers reject the positivists' view that the social world can be understood in terms of general statements about human actions. To them the descriptions of human actions are based on social meanings, people living together interpret the meanings of each other and these meanings change through social intercourse."
>
> p43

It was here that my 'insider' status allowed me privileged access for interpreting the meanings created by the practitioners as well as the FE college providers and the University providers. Although each group had their own meanings and some overlapped I did need to check out the agreed meanings with each group to be sure I understood their viewpoint.

Bassey also states -

> ... The data collected by interpretative researchers are usually verbal: fieldwork notes, diaries and transcripts and reports of conversations. Sometimes interpretative data can be analysed numerically but more usually they are not open to the quantitative statistical analysis used by positivists...."
>
> p43

This was particularly true as identifying individuals' understandings of their experiences was based on verbal discussions. However, the background information about practitioners' qualifications and jobs was collected by questionnaire, thus allowing for some numerical analysis as suggested. Bassey contends that

> Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, hermenuetics and social anthropology are more or less alternative labels for the interpretive paradigm. ... Ethnography is a branch of this paradigm, concerned with participant observation where the observer is not 'a fly on the wall', but becomes a participant in the activity which she or he is studying.
>
> p43

This does seem a little simplistic but I would agree the place of Ethnography in an interpretative approach.

Finally Bassey argues

> To the interpretive researcher the purpose of research is to advance knowledge by describing and interpreting the phenomena of the world in attempts to get shared meanings with others. Interpretation is a search for deep perspectives on particular events and for theoretical insights. It may offer possibilities, but no certainties, as to the outcome of future events."
>
> p43

This was certainly true, as one of the initial starting points for the inquiry was to allow an attempt at shared meanings between practitioner, FE establishment and HE institution.

The irony is that aspects which might have been classed as possibilities at the beginning of the inquiry, such as developing the initial FE courses and creating greater links now began to look increasingly unlikely as future events, because of some of the changes occurring in both FE and Early Years.

Schwandt (1998) in his discussion of constructivist and interpretivist approaches argues that

> Proponents of these persuasions share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. This goal is variously spoken of as an abiding concern for the life world, for the emic point of view, for understanding meaning, for grasping an actor's definition of a situation, for *Verstehen.*
>
> p 221

He goes on to highlight an idea about timing, that rings true for this inquiry

> The world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors. That is, particular actors, in particular places at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language and action.
>
> P222

Viewed in this way the research is clearly interpretive or constructive in basic approach.

Ethnography and Case Study

Further exploration of the claims made by Bassey for ethnography being part of the interpretive paradigm requires some definition of the term. Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) argue the definition is problematic but that ethnography usually refers to social research that has certain features - exploring rather than testing particular social phenomena; working with 'unstructured ' data i.e not coded at collection; investigating a small number of cases in detail and analysing data in terms of meanings and functions of human actions.

At this level, the project would appear to be ethnographic although the issue of participant observation is more problematic. Although initially a distinction between the researcher either acting as a non-participant observer or being actively involved in the research group as a participant, this is no longer a useful distinction suggesting as it does that

> ...the nonparticipant observer plays no recognised role at all."
>
> p111

Instead, Atkinson and Hammersley use Gold (1958) and Junker's (1960) typology of :

> complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, complete participant.
>
> p111

They acknowledge within these categories a range of variation. For the most part, my role throughout the research did not involve observation although arguably my involvement in the interviews could mean the students saw me as a participant. They did express the idea that I shared their aims for the outcome of the research - to make the transition to ITE more effective and enable more Early Years practitioners to become Early Years teachers.

However whilst some of the features of ethnography are present in the project the lack of any substantial participant observation seriously weakens the argument for defining the research as fully ethnographic.

However, one of the features of ethnography that is present in the project, is the idea of a case study. Each individual can be seen as what Louis Smith (1978) defines as "a bounded system", in that the extent of their experiences in work and education are finite and their interpretations are bound together with those experiences.

Bassey(1999) cites Stake (1995) as describing a case study as :

> the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (p.xi)
>
> p27

Bassey also cites Sturman (1994) as claiming that case study researchers

> hold that to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalise or predict from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge."
>
> p26

So far this holds true for the project. Stenhouse (1985) however defined four broad styles of case study: ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research. Although the initial remit of the project would have meant the case studies were more evaluative, as the inquiry developed this emphasis moved towards more ethnographic case studies.

However the confusion about what is and is not a case study or case study research is also highlighted by Gomm & Hammersley et al (2001). They argue that the way the term is used currently has a number of 'dimensions', namely, that it 'identifies a specific form of inquiry' which contrasts with 'the experiment or the social survey'; that a small number of cases may be studied but 'in considerable depth' and that 'case study researchers construct cases out of naturally occurring social situations'

They also argue that the term 'case study' has 'implications for the kind of data that are collected and perhaps also for how these are analysed' as well as often being 'held to require a narrative approach'

A further confusion arises as to whether case study is a method or paradigm. The debate has focussed, according to Gomm & Hammersley (2001), on generalisability, causal or narrative analysis, the nature of theory and authenticity and authority. Whether it is possible to generalise about findings from such a small group of cases is questionable, but I would argue that the in-depth nature of the project focussing on an area not previously researched, means the cases might be used as a bench mark for future research, which may in time further validate and authenticate the cases highlighted in the project.

'Real World' Research

The initial emphasis of the inquiry, being an evaluation of two academic courses and how they melded together in terms of progression, was explored through the students' actual experience of being on the courses. It was undertaken as a piece of 'real world research or enquiry' as defined by Robson (1995). He characterises 'real world research' as that which takes place outside the laboratory and has seventeen different emphases from the type of experimental research carried out within laboratories. (see Figure 3.1 - Box 1.1) Regardless of degree, most of these emphases do relate to this project and are discussed in detail (Figure 3.2).

The project was initiated by three Further Education Colleges who approached the University with an issue of direct concern to both parties, which involved a real-life situation. It concerned access to teaching courses for students with non-standard entry qualifications, particularly those with BTEC Higher National Certificates (HNC) or the equivalent. By examining the experiences of these students, their tutors and the providers of Initial Teacher Education, it was hoped a suitable link between FE HNC courses and access to ITE in this local situation, could be established to meet everyone's needs.

Box 1.1 Characterizing real world enquiry

In real world enquiry the emphasis tends to be on:

solving problems	rather than	*just gaining knowledge*
predicting effects	rather than	*finding causes*
getting large effects (looking for robust results) & *concern for actionable factors* (where changes are feasible)	rather than	*relationships between variables* (and assessing statistical significance)
developing and testing programmes, interventions, services etc.	rather than	*Developing and testing theories*
Field	rather than	*Laboratory*
outside organisation (business, school, etc.)	rather than	*Research institution*
strict time constraints	rather than	*as long as the problem needs*
strict cost constraints	rather than	*as much finance as the problem needs* (or the work isn't attempted)
Little consistency of topic from one study to the next	rather than	*high consistency of topic from one study to the next*
Topic initiated by Sponsor	rather than	*topic initiated by researcher*
Often generalist researchers (need for familiarity with range of methods)	rather than	*Typically highly specialist researchers* (need to be at the forefront of their discipline)
Little use of 'true experiments	rather than	*Much use of 'true experiments*
Multiple methods	rather than	*Single methods*
Oriented to the client (generally, & particularly in reporting)	rather than	*Oriented to academic peers*
Currently viewed as dubious by many Academics	rather than	*High academic prestige*
Need for well developed social skills	rather than	*Some need of social skills*

Figure 3.1

A closer examination of the emphasis of the project & inquiry with Robson's 'real world' approach

solving problems	*Use of student experiences to update courses*
predicting effects	*Individual nature of experiences*
getting large effects (looking for robust results)	*Small sample but practical, observable behaviours evident*
And	
concern for actionable factors (where changes are feasible)	*Students want to use findings to benefit other students*
developing & testing programmes, interventions, services etc.	*Colleges wanted actionable factors re own action and that taken by University*
field	*College and /or work based data collection*
outside organisation (industry, business, school, etc.)	*FE Colleges (and indirectly EY workplaces and University)*
strict time constraints	*}Student timetables only allowed small slot for data collection*
strict cost constraints	*} travel needed for data collection & limited funds*
Little consistency of topic from one study to the next	*One-off study*
Topic initiated by sponsor	*FE Colleges*
Often generalist researchers (need for familiarity with range of methods)	*}My research and teaching background gave me 'insider status'...*
Little use of 'true' experiments	*} allowed for a variety of...*
Multiple methods	*} qualitative methods*
Oriented to the client (generally and particularly in reporting)	*FE Colleges (and indirectly the University and students involved)*
Currently viewed as dubious by many academics	*Time lost defending inquiry - hierarchy within fields also an issue*
Need for well developed social skills	*Range of client groups - students tutors and senior providers*

Figure 3.2

In addition to the creation of this link, it was hoped that by highlighting particular factors as they arose, any necessary action could be taken immediately. An early example of this was the identification of a gap within the HNC curriculum with reference to History and Geography. For HNC students to enter Year 2 of a BA Degree they need to have appropriate knowledge and understanding of all the curriculum areas in Year 1. Once the gap was identified, an additional module was devised by the FE centre involved and included in their HNC course.

Much of the project uses the knowledge gained from the students' perception's of their experiences, to influence both their future direction on the ITE course, and solve anything from those experiences that might be deemed a problem. In short, the project provided an opportunity for the knowledge gained to be applied to the courses under scrutiny, to update and amend where necessary, and provide practical measures for improving the experiences for future students who follow this route. This was an example of Robson's first emphasis - solving problems.

Obviously, by concentrating on the interpretation given by particular individuals of their own understandings of their experiences, the project lays itself open to arguments concerning subjectivity. However, for the individuals concerned, these interpretations are real as they have direct influence on the decisions they make and the manner in which they interact with their experiences. The individual nature of these interpretations means, with a small sample, as in this project, each individual response can be used in a cumulative way to predict further effects. This is because each interpretation that individual students offer should have a practical effect on their behaviours, attitudes and understandings. These practical effects should in turn prove to be observable. These aspects could be seen as 'predicting effects' and 'getting large effects'

All along there has been, for all of the participants involved, be they students, tutors, or providers, a desire to use the findings of the research to benefit other students undertaking the same route. This hangs well with Robson's notion of 'concern for actionable factors' as the Further Education Colleges were looking for aspects to change when they approached the University. They were also determined that the project be about 'developing and testing programmes'.

For many of the students too, there was a need to see their world of work and college taken seriously and given credence. They were not interested in 'airy-fairy' theories and said as much. They were interested in solid practical action and change that made a positive difference to their working and intellectual lives.

Going out on visits to the FE Colleges and administering questionnaires and conducting some of the interviews on their premises, was a deliberate attempt to give validity to the students and tutors experiences. Obviously this meant the project was conducted in the 'field' within an outside organisation with all the ensuing access issues.

'Time' and 'cost constraints' did affect the inquiry, particularly when data collection took place in the field. The main constraint was time, and centred on timetabling issues. The students involved, were on a two year HNC course, where they attended the college one afternoon and evening a week. If successful and they moved into Initial Teacher Education, there was an additional two years to track them through their course. Hence the project would naturally come to an end in four years.

The 'strict' aspect of the time constraint was the 'one day a week' attendance. This meant they were only available to talk to or interview once a week and they had taught sessions for most of that time. Specific visits had to be arranged to match with set tutorial times to allow for opportunities to talk to students and tutors alike. This was made more problematic by one of the FE Colleges being about an hour's drive from the University.

In terms of cost, there was no direct budget available from either the FE Colleges or the University for the project. The University did supply computer and library facilities, as well as those for photocopying. There was also some reimbursement for visits. The constraint here then was related to the finances of the researcher!

There was 'little consistency of topic' as initially the project was seen as a one-off study which arose out of practical need. It was however hoped it might be repeated with further cohorts of students if successful, particularly as the FE Colleges had 'initiated' the project and acted as sponsor.

I was clearly a 'generalist researcher' although my particular match of skills and knowledge of the area involved in the study, means the topic is one I could feasibly have initiated for myself. This engagement with the topic was part of the reason for me accepting the role of researcher.

My particular world-view towards the areas meant my appointment to the project rests not only on my past experience of research but also teaching the type of students involved in the project. I have worked on vocational courses, teaching Early Years practitioners and have also taught initial training students on field trips.

At a stroke I am firmly aligned with all the content areas of the project. It could be argued that this further diminishes the academic prestige and viability of the project. However in a real world approach these connections strengthen the project as I have 'insider' knowledge (Robson 1993) and understanding of the areas, and all the individuals involved are aware of this. Bearing in mind the personal nature of the project with regard to students, this insider knowledge and understanding allows for deeper insights to be made. My background also means I have built up a range of research skills and am comfortable using 'multiple methods' for data collection. My insider status and orientation to all the client groups makes reporting back somewhat easier as well.

There are however problems with this real world approach, as it does not have high academic prestige. In this particular case this has been further exacerbated by the content area of the project. Sadly, as in any field, there are some areas of study that are mistakenly given lower status by some practitioners in the general area. Hence in education there tends to be a hierarchical status with University teaching at the top and Infant and Nursery and Early years teaching at the bottom. Each group looks down on the previous stage as though teaching in that area is simpler, easier and less time consuming. In reality, each stage of Education and its teaching has its own intricacies, difficulties and delight. They are not better or worse than one another, simply different.

However this is not the impression gained by the general public through the media. When the government announced initiatives such as Patten's "Mum's Army" (1993) and the recent idea for returning unemployed youngsters to early years classrooms (Aug. 1998), one could be forgiven for gaining the misguided impression that working with young children is easy and any untrained soul can manage it.

In addition within any stage of education such as early years, there are internal hierarchies relating to the individuals who work in the area. Hence the qualified teacher is at one end of this hierarchy whilst the unqualified part-time occasional helper is at the other. In other agencies such as the `Social Services of the Health Service there are other qualified individuals such as social workers. and nurses at one extreme with volunteers, often untrained, at the other. However since the Children Act (1990) the Social Services particularly have operated a tighter control over who may work with children under eight and what type of qualifications they require.

The advent of the phrase 'Early Years Practitioner' was an attempt to unify across the various agencies, the strengths and talents held by many qualified individuals for whom phrases like auxiliary assistant, classroom assistant or nursery nurse was archaic and demeaning. Typically the phrase is used within the field of early years whilst the old descriptors tend to be used by those in other age sectors.

So in addition to the real world approach the content area of Early Years and practitioners coupled with Further Education colleges and vocational courses could further diminish the project's potential for 'academic prestige' in the eyes of some researchers.

This is an unfortunate side effect of this type of project. Unfortunate for the project, in that more energy and time has to be spent convincing researchers with no knowledge of the area, of its worth, validity and reliability, than with other types of research. Unfortunate for the students and other individuals in that this extra time and energy involved spent on arguing for academic viability has to be deducted from the actual research.

Because of the complexity of the project with different individuals and institutions involved, all with their own agendas it has been necessary to use multiple methods to collect data. This means that as the researcher I need to be familiar with range of methods and have 'well developed social skills' with which to relate to the client groups. All these emphases can be viewed in Table 2.

The Students' Decisions

Clearly, the preparation that students had undertaken differed from person to person. Most had either direct experience or other people's stories that formed the basis for the content of the preparation. In terms of 'first-hand account', most individuals either knew someone who had gone through a similar journey personally or had heard someone else's story via friends. All the students had been involved in at least two of the fields of education, already - during their vocational training and through work experiences. Similarly many had heard stories about the third field - teacher education. As a result of their various training courses, the students had also been exposed to the many 'guidebooks' available. So across the original groups, despite there being individual differences, there was also the basis for shared understandings about the preparatory aspects of the journey all students were embarked upon.

However, when the quality of that preparation was examined more closely, greater discrepancies amongst the groups were revealed. Putting aside an individual's personality, learning processes and expertise for a moment, there were other aspects that affected quality. Individuals with direct knowledge had a more realistic picture of what to expect from their new experiences.

The range of training courses similarly encompassed a wide range of expectations, which resulted in different levels of student engagement with the courses. This resulted in some students having more difficulties with the HNC course. There was also the issue of similar but different workplaces. This was further compounded by individuals' length of time in post, level of responsibility in post and the range of employment involved.

The reasons students had embarked upon this route into teaching were many and complex. Most had worked in schools alongside teachers and had either been inspired by good teaching or motivated by bad teaching to test out their own abilities.

All shared a personal experience of Early Years Education. Plus all have a shared understanding of the public face of Early Years, which would need addressing in the questions asked of the students.

Positioning As Researcher II

Denzin and Lincoln conclusion within the fifth moment bears repeating at this point

> Theories are now read in narrative terms, as "tales of the field" (Van Maanen 1988). Preoccupations with the representation of the "other" remain. New epistemologies from previously silenced groups emerge to offer solutions to this problem. The concept of the aloof researcher has been abandoned. More action-, activist-oriented research is on the horizon, as are more social criticism and social critique. The search for grand narratives will be replaced by more local small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations. (Lincoln 1993) p22

I now understand the influences on my thinking were partly time and space bound. By training to be a teacher at the time I did, I became exposed to ideas that were unthinkable just a few short years before. All the bits of my understandings, other peoples' understandings and that of the students came together to form a more complete picture of the journey through Early Years.

I no longer want to be an aloof researcher - a role I believed initially was the only one open to me. My ideas about 'grand narratives' or even generalisations have been replaced by these smaller 'tales' more suited to the local situation I am exploring.

My insider status has proved to be both help and a hindrance. It has helped in terms of gaining easy access to students and the college providers, enabled me to have conversations where there were clearly understood shared meanings and engendered feelings of acceptance and a sense of working *alongside* the students.

It has proved a hindrance where students saw only my 'university' role or my 'research' role and believed I had more kudos to effect change for them personally enabling them to enter teaching. It was particularly awkward when some students who were involved in the questionnaires and first set of interviews at one college, were turned down for admission to the University course, by colleagues not involved in the project.

Ironically my insider status meant I was close enough to be allowed access to the hurt feelings and sense of disappointment some of the students felt. One of my greatest concerns was whether I could handle this emotional side to the admissions process for the students and college providers and not become too emotionally involved myself. I dealt with it by writing a set of personal notes after each set of field notes, which allowed me to check out just how I was feeling about the process. Naturally these notes contained far more than just my feelings about the visits and my relationships with the students and encompassed all aspects of my life. For this reason, only the field notes are included in the thesis.

Being aware of my personal interactions with the process and with the individuals involved, raised concerns about the validity of what I was trying to do with the data. In particular the idea of 'voice' resonates for me within the crisis of representation - how can I know I have accurately portrayed the students involved such that they would recognise their own unique narratives? - have I let my own voice grow too loud? is it my role to 'give' them a voice? or did they already have one?... it was just that no one was listening?

This project is a snapshot in time for all the individuals involved, myself included. We can never come afresh to these new understandings as they change our thinking and our practice forever.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING OFF

And so the journey begins. For the seasoned traveller, after months of preparation and immersion in the culture and landscape of their intended journey, the time arrives to depart from the familiar, from known routes and embark on the adventure of the unknown.

For most travellers, the actual journey would be incomplete without a log or diary, that documents all the events that take place and all the sights seen. Interwoven with personal reflections on their own experiences, the traveller's log also provides insights and commentary into the context of places visited, the events that transpired and the people encountered.

This chapter is the log of the inquiry, and details the development of the research alongside the relevant initiatives taking place in the fields studied, particularly those in Early Years Education. The chapter is presented chronologically to demonstrate the juxtaposition of some of the local issues with significant national events.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The inquiry stretches across one of the most rapidly changing time periods in the history of Early Years Education in Britain, and ends in debatably the "closing moments of the twentieth century - December 1999. It involves the establishment of a project between three Further Education colleges and a University designed to facilitate the professional progression of some Early Years practitioners. This 'Early Years Link' project was the setting for the focus of the research, the personal and professional experiences of the individuals involved, but also separate from it. The research began in September 1995 with my appointment as researcher and the first cohort of Early Years practitioners enrolling on the BTEC HNC in Early Childhood studies. However, preparatory work for the establishment of the 'Link' predated the research.

In retrospect, there were three main phases to the research - the establishment of relationships with the colleges and with the students; the period of reflection for both students and staff throughout the data collection period and ultimately the assessment of the relevance of the data in terms of individuals' experiences in the light of the rapidly changing context.

The new relationships between the local further education colleges and the University were developed at tutor level as well as between the researcher and researched - i.e. the students. This was to facilitate the establishment of the 'Early Years Link' between the two courses, as well as enable research to be undertaken. At tutor level these relationships grew and faded away in the manner of such initiatives, with the career movement of the staff members involved. As tutors in both sectors gained promotion, sought new jobs or opted for early retirement, new relationships had to be built afresh with the successors to their posts.

Similarly, over the two years, some of the students also moved on and left the HNC course. Generally, this was as a result of family or work pressures, though there was an undercurrent of financial difficulties in most cases and students left to concentrate more immediately on their paid employment. When they left, they were for the most part, not interested in continuing with involvement in the study. For most of them, gaining a place on the college course had been a great achievement, in some cases the successful fulfillment of earlier dreams. Giving up their dreams was hard enough without the constant reminder, through the inquiry, of what they might have achieved had they stayed the course.

As relationships grew at tutor level, it was possible to initiate the relationships with the students and slowly begin the work of data collection. This period was one of reflection. For tutors, it was a time to assess the various elements of the two courses and attempt to create a bridge between them; to make the 'Early Years Link' live up to its name. For the students, it was a chance to reflect on their past work experience and on their prior training courses as they began to make plans for further studying and possible career changes.

Following the data collection period, there was a chance for everyone concerned to assess the relevance of their experiences in the wider national context. Throughout the inquiry a great many changes were taking place at national level. Each one had implications at both a practical level for the students as EY practitioners and at an academic level in terms of courses available at Further and Higher Education institutions.

These national changes initially merely influenced the project but would ultimately shape it significantly. They took the form of government directives and initiatives as well as policy changes made by government agencies such as the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Most initiatives centred on only one of the three fields studied, but the effects spread out in a 'ripple' pattern to influence the other fields. The effects were also felt as they permeated down from the national context through the local context to the institutions and individuals involved in the study. This simultaneous 'outward' and 'downward' pattern to the effects of initiatives, meant there was a constant tension between the national and local contexts *within* each field and *between* fields.

The data was collected in small bursts spreading over two years and took the form of a questionnaire followed by a series of interviews. Initially it involved travelling to the colleges to meet with the tutors and students, but once the students began the B.A course, the follow-up interviews were conducted at the University. In addition to the data collected from the students, some data was collected via interviews from the 'providers' of ITE. These were the managers and gatekeepers for the B.A course at the University. Attempts were also made to gain responses from providers in other institutions but sadly to little avail.

One of the major strengths of the inquiry was also one of its major restraints, in terms of methodology. The realistic nature of the research meant there were problems gaining access to students who were only in college on one day a week; students and tutors moved onto other jobs and contact was lost and government directives changed policy rapidly and with dramatic effect. In short, all these factors affected the nature of the data collected as well as the manner of and reasons for collection

Ethical Considerations

Prior to embarking on the data collection, a number of ethical considerations were taken into account. These concerned the protocols for approaching the colleges and students, deciding how the data would be collected and identifying who might reasonably be allowed access to the data.

One consideration was to adopt the ethical guidelines for conducting educational research espoused by the British Educational Research Association. As Bassey (1999) was influential in the creation of the guidelines, my years as his research assistant were spent operating within a strong ethical framework. It was therefore natural for me to continue to operate in this way. Also, at every stage of the data collection (visits, questionnaires, interviews,) the appropriateness of the process for all the participants, was discussed with my supervision team. Furthermore, particularly at the start of the project, there were regular meetings of the "Early Years Link" where the college and University tutors effectively formed a steering group for both the 'Link' project and my research.

The protocols for approaching colleges and students came through my initial contact with the college tutors at "Link" meetings. From these meetings, decisions were taken about when I would visit the colleges and what I would be doing on particular visits. Further communication with the tutors was by letter or telephone, as none at that stage had access to email. Through the 'Link" meetings a contract for my role was agreed and signed by all the college tutors with the full knowledge of their colleges. The completed documents were then held by the University. All of the colleges agreed to be identified by name within the project and the thesis.

Once access between the institutions was agreed, the next step was to secure the students' agreement. The first visits involved explaining the project to the group of students identified by the college tutor, and asking for their co-operation and involvement.

For the questionnaires, the students were informed that although the colleges would be identified by name within the thesis, their names would be confidential. They were told at follow-up visits that I had randomly allocated a number to each student in order to enable their individual background qualifications and experiences to be expressed in the graphs. However, apart from myself, no other individual had access to that information, so no named individual could be identified from a number.

Subsequent visits involved checking the data from the questionnaires and beginning the interviews. There was an initial explanatory discussion at the start of these visits, where students were made aware I had some queries to check out with some individuals about their questionnaires. These students were then spoken to privately to check their data.

The initial discussion also covered how I had used the questionnaires and the criteria of age, qualifications, jobs and IN-SET training, to identify a representative sample of the group resulting in a number of students I wanted to interview. In addition to this, I also offered those *not* in the representative sample, a chance to be interviewed if they so wished.

As some of the representative sample were absent on the day, other students did take this opportunity and took the absentees' places. It was agreed at the end, that everyone who had wished to be interviewed, had had the opportunity to do so.

The next ethical consideration concerned the interview process itself. Once students came individually to the interview room, I offered them the chance to refuse to be interviewed and to refuse to be taped. I explained the tapes were to enable me to keep accurate records of what had been said and that transcripts would be made and could be returned to students for their approval before use. At the end of the interview the students were asked again if they required sight of the raw transcript and how this might best be achieved. Because of the nature of the discussions (the students were adamant they wanted their 'tales' told) and what I was told was my understanding (as a privileged 'insider') of their situation, no student requested access to a raw transcript.

As it was acknowledged that the students would not be on the courses or even at the colleges when the project and thesis was completed, an opportunity was made for students to provide their home addresses to facilitate any future contact . Again, very few took this opportunity.

Although interviews formed the basis of the remainder of the data collection, other ethical issues needed consideration because of the different groups of individuals being interviewed. For the interviews with providers, the issues were again to offer the opportunity for individuals to check their raw transcript and also to ensure confidentiality. To this end, no names were used and where it was felt their role within the admissions process was too easily identifiable, their job descriptions were amended.

For the interviews conducted with the final four 'pioneers' it was agreed that only their first names be used and that their full biographies would be amended where and when necessary to protect confidentiality. Following these protocols enabled the data to be both collected and stored safely and ensured the relationships with students and providers were protected.

Establishment Of Local Relationships

The context for establishing the relationships between the colleges and the University had as a background, a set of far-ranging initiatives that had all occurred at national level in the preceding decade. All were significant in themselves, but also meant the groundwork had been laid potentially for a much wider range of initiatives to be made possible in the future.

One of the most significant changes, particularly seen from the landscape of 12 years distance, was that of the Education Reform Act in 1988. (DfE 1988) With it came the introduction of the National Curriculum, which in turn over the years would spawn the creation of OFSTED, and in the field of Early Years, 'Nursery Vouchers', 'Desirable Outcomes', and 'Baseline Assessment'.

There is much that could be written on any of these initiatives, but this would divert the thesis from its primary focus. Suffice to say, these initiatives clearly had an impact on the field of education in general, but also had specific implications for childcare and welfare. They are highlighted as necessary components of the context in which the individuals involved in the project, and the project itself, are situated.

Over next two years, the Education Reform Act was closely followed by The Children Act (DoH 1989) and the National Health Service and Community Care Act (DoH 1990) whose main foci were children and young adults in the care of the state. In three short years, the ways in which the care, welfare and education of children were conducted in England and Wales changed beyond recognition.

In 1990 the influential Rumbold Report, 'Starting with Quality', reported on the quality of the educational experience offered to 3- and 4-year olds. One of the many areas it addressed was in relation to the education, training and support for adults working with under fives where it recommended -

> We see as essential needs: a closer linkage between the three strands of health, care and education in initial and in-service training; a pattern of vocational training and qualifications for childcare workers which will bridge the gap between vocational and academic qualifications; safeguarding both the rigour and relevance of initial training for teachers of the under fives; and affording improved opportunities of in-service training for childcare workers in educational settings.
>
> 10 / 197.

1993 brought the creation of OFSTED, which with hindsight would prove to be a very mixed blessing to the field of education. This year also saw forty organisations working with and for young children, join together to form the Early Childhood Education Forum (ECEF) which would soon prove to be a powerful lobby for training for Early Years, arguing that..

> Diversity in early childhood studies means the individuals need to be confident and competent in their role within these services, i.e. they should be appropriately trained.
>
> (October 1995)

And in 1994 Sir Christopher Ball delivered the 'Start Right Report' on behalf of the Royal Society of Arts which recommended

> The Department of Education should review its plans for the professional development and training of early years teachers in the light of claims made in this report, that:
>
> - the curriculum of early learning forms a fundamental, distinct and essential phase of education, without which it is difficult for children to progress successfully into school or into adult learning;
>
> - the double competence required of early years teachers - especially the mastery of an applicable theory of learning development - makes just as intense a professional demand on students as does the mastery of disciplines required of all teachers;
>
> - the training and development of early years teachers should be no less rigorous and demanding than that appropriate to any other teachers.
>
> Recommendation 10 (**6**.20)

This then was the background against which both the tutors in the colleges and University, as well as the students in their paid employment, were operating. On the one hand it was dynamic and exciting, whilst at the same time frightening and confusing. Experienced staff in all settings found it unsettling, having only limited knowledge of the changes and also suddenly being in the same position as newly qualified colleagues. This period of time was a great leveller.

It was at this time that three Further Education colleges suggested to the University's Department of Primary Education that they would be interested in undertaking a collaborative project that facilitated Early Years practitioners moving into Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

At this stage, the Department offered a three-year, full-time, Bachelor of Education degree in Primary Education, leading to Qualified Teacher status. The course only covered the training ages from 5 - 11 years. There was no course available at this time within the Department which either focused on, or included the Early Years age range (3-5 years). As a consequence, local early years practitioners found it difficult to progress into teaching.

By September 1995, the point at which I joined the project and began the research inquiry, the college staff and university staff were some months into their preparatory discussions about how the project would function. At this point, although each of the colleges had been in contact separately with the University and already had long established relationships with each another in their professional capacity, there had been no meeting with all parties present.

The brief at the time I joined, was that all three colleges were intending to offer, from September 1995, a brand new course from BTEC designated at Higher National level and aimed at Early Years practitioners. As all the practitioners were working in early years settings, the course would be part-time and hence be a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Early Childhood Studies.

An HND, or Higher National Diploma was only available as a full time option and although it was hoped in the future that this might develop, the initial market was felt to be individuals in full-time work, hence the choice of the Certificate option.

All three colleges were well versed in delivering BTEC courses at National level and offered both Certificates and Diplomas across the range of subjects available. Similarly, all the college tutors were experienced in the fields of Health Care, Social Care and Childcare & Education, having delivered courses in these areas for many years.

The new BTEC course was something that had been pressed for nationally by these and many other tutors, as there was a real need for the development of the practitioners' role and status. It was intended that this BTEC HNC would develop sufficient kudos amongst University admissions tutors to enable progression into University based degrees.

The HNC encompassed both Health & Social Care modules as well as Education modules. There was a core of five general modules undertaken by all students and then a further five specialist modules to be taken from amongst ten other modules. The intention was that individuals working in Social Care areas such as child welfare services, would choose modules that reflected their work situation, and those working in Child Care and Education areas such as school or day nurseries would choose other specialist modules that better reflected their experiences.

It was proposed that the Social Care students would use the HNC as a link into Health or Social Care degrees and the Child Care and Education students would use it as a link with an Education degree, possibly with Qualified Teacher Status.

Whilst data would be collected from all the students on the courses to give an idea of the general demographics of these groups of HNC students, the main thrust of the inquiry would focus on the Child Care & Education students.

It would be their specialist modules that would be used to form a link with the curriculum modules on the Primary BA degree at the University and hence create a potential route onto the degree course.

From June 1995, the college tutors met with the university tutors and began a series of meetings designed to build a pattern of relationships through dialogue with one another, about the similarities and differences in the ways the colleges delivered the HNC course. Subsequent to this, the discussions centred on the curriculum nature of the modules on both courses and the matches and mismatches.

The acceptance by Higher Education institutions in general, of the equivalence of HNC/D courses in other subject areas with Level 1 (usually Year 1) of a degree , meant most Universities allowed HNC/D students to miss the first year of an undergraduate course and enter at Level 2, i.e. the beginning of the second year. As it was intended that this would happen in this particular case, it was essential that any mismatches between the curriculum of Year 1 of the BA course and the HNC course were quickly identified and addressed. This was to ensure, when the HNC students were given dispensation to enter the second year of the ITE course, all University tutors could be sure the students had followed a course comparable with that in Year 1.

Whilst it quickly became apparent through these meetings, that most of the core areas of the curriculum were covered, there was a particular issue with history and geography. These were key areas of the ITE course but not touched upon by the HNC course. It was agreed that the this would need addressing in the second year of the HNC and to this end the possibility of the tutors writing a new module to address this gap was suggested. BTEC courses already had flexibility built in, which allowed for a 'Centre-devised' module to be included in a course with approval from the examining board. In other words, individual colleges could design their own modules to meet local need. This seemed to be the best way to address the history and geography gap.

The national initiatives in Early Years were also causing concern for tutors and students alike at this time. Within all the courses, the introduction of Nursery Vouchers and then consultations for Baseline Assessment (which would become a statutory requirement for primary schools from September 1998) meant changes to course materials as well as tutor attendance at local training days in order for tutors to take on board the changes. For the students there were similar training initiatives and changes in workload within their workplace as they struggled to implement these new initiatives. This workload and changes in practice were further exacerbated for some individuals with the introduction by the DfEE of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit which in turn was responsible in 1998 for the introduction of the Education Action Zones.

The SEU was also the source of the Standards Fund which was the new main source of funding for Early Years practitioners in terms of in-service training. These changes in funding brought new procedures to learn when applying for further training, and the potential for new smaller training packages. It also meant individual schools had to decide how to spend their allocation and how to take advantage of some of the training being offered by Local Education Authorities for Early Years workers.

For practitioners in areas designated as Education Action Zones, again there were new procedures and patterns for allocation of funds both for training and for employment. In addition to practitioners already in employment, it was possible for schools to apply for specially designated EAZ Learning Support Assistants, usually for the duration of the funding. These individuals were over and above the usual quota of staff and were justified by schools according to need. Some of the students involved in the study were interested in applying for these new posts as they saw them as a way of increasing their range of skills and expertise, yet only committed them for a limited time period. This latter point was pertinent for those who thought they might like to continue studying and maybe enter ITE in the future.

These changes were added to significantly in January 1996 when the new 'curriculum' for Early Years, the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes', was published as *"Desirable outcomes for childrens' learning on entering compulsory education"* by the then DfEE and SCAA (a predecessor of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA)). Every Early Years setting that wished to benefit from the Nursery Voucher scheme, regardless of sector, now had to ensure the 'Desirable Outcomes' were covered sufficiently well within the setting to pass an inspection. This latter development affected all the HNC students, not only those in education settings such as nursery schools or school based nurseries, but also those in care settings such as day nurseries and playgroups.

Later the same term, the project developing between college and University tutors to create a route between the HNC and the BA degree became known as the 'Early Years Link'. Ironically, this was perhaps a little premature, as new TTA guidelines for the first year intake of initial teacher education courses were also issued at that time. These guidelines linked funding for students throughout duration of their degree course. Hence a first year student withdrawing from the course would result in all the funding relating to that student being removed. This meant there were no longer 'empty' places with funding attached, that in subsequent years, could be used to accommodate students moving onto the course from elsewhere.

Obviously this would have a serious effect on the proposal being suggested; that students who had followed the Early Years Link would be allowed to enter the second year of the BA degree. Whilst the 'Link' was endeavouring to eliminate any curriculum stumbling blocks such as the history / geography gap, the TTA were erecting new blocks, but this time of a financial nature.

These financial constraints were aimed at Higher Education institutions rather than individuals. One way of dealing with the problem was for Universities to approach the TTA with requests for additional student numbers. However, the strict control on student places for initial teacher education meant these requests were unlikely to be successful.

For the University involved in the project to make such a request, it would first need more information about the potential demand for these type of places from early years workers who had followed a HNC route in other colleges in the locality. All three colleges involved in the 'Early Years Link' project, intended to recruit in September 1996, but only two actually began recruitment September 1995.

Local Provision

So to clarify the local provision, a small survey was conducted to ascertain how many Further Education colleges were offering the 'BTEC HNC / D in Early Childhood Studies' locally. It focussed on the four counties closest to the University as these counties and their feeder Further Education Colleges have traditionally been seen as stronger catchment areas for Primary Education students than further afield.

The colleges themselves were identified using the Education Authorities Directory which lists all further and higher education establishments according to Education Authority. Most of the authorities follow county boundaries, apart from London and one or two other metropolitan areas such as around Manchester. The four Authorities examined were the counties of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire.

As the survey was only concerned with a specific Childcare course, not all the colleges listed in the directory were approached. Any college that clearly specialised in particular subjects such as art & design; agriculture & horticulture, technology or were residential and named as such, were excluded. In some cases the name alone proved unhelpful. In these cases the details of the schools or departments listed were taken into account. Of thirty-two colleges offering further education courses across the four counties, only eight were excluded from the survey on the grounds of specialist orientation.

It was intended that the survey be conducted by adopting a realistic approach to the colleges by a potential student interested in childcare courses. It consisted of a single sheet of A4 paper with a brief letter requesting a prospectus and information for childcare courses on offer from September 1996 (Appendix 5). The letter was general in approach and the only information given about the prospective student was home address and status, which might suggest a particular age group, though this was not stated explicitly. The timing of the survey was significant as in late Spring, when the letters were sent out, most Colleges would expect to be receiving such requests and hence would have course information readily available for distribution.

When replies were received, a note was made of the date of return and the nature of the reply in order to assess the variety of responses. (Appendix 6) This was followed by a careful examination of the information to identify all childcare courses on offer from September 1996. As the HNC course would be part of this profile this would reveal the extent of provision.

Over twenty colleges, of the twenty four included, replied within six days. The quantity and quality of the information returned, ranged from a single full-time prospectus to five items consisting of full and part-time prospectuses, course leaflets, a letter and an application form. Over twenty of the colleges returned two or more items. Of the six items recorded, the course leaflets and full time prospectus were most common, being returned by seventeen colleges.

However, trying to identify accurately the courses on offer proved more complicated than at first imagined, due to the quantity and variety of course names and awarding bodies. In an attempt to clarify the information, the courses for health and social care and those for childcare were listed separately. (Appendix 7 & 8) The difficulties arose partly because the new National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) were being introduced, which in some cases replaced long established qualifications whilst in others meant the introduction of brand new courses and levels of qualifications.

Added to the new qualifications, there had been recent changes to the awarding bodies themselves. The National Nursery Examining Board (NNEB) and the Council for Early Years Awards (CEYA) had merged together in 1994 to form the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE). By late 1996, BTEC too had joined with the London Examining Board to form EDExcel. Again long established courses changed their name and new courses were also introduced.

In this climate it was hardly surprising that confusion arose about course titles and content, and more importantly for the 'Early Years Link' project, the notion of equivalence. Course tutors in Further Education who were delivering these new courses, were not always sure about the various levels of the courses and how they compared with one another. This problem was exacerbated once the admissions tutors in Higher Education had to assess appropriate Early Years candidates for ITE courses.

So the evidence from the survey of four counties showed a mixed bag of courses in both Health & Social Care and Childcare, but only four of the colleges stated an intention in their prospectus to offer the 'BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies' from September 1996. Of these four colleges (out of an initial group of twenty-four), three were based in Nottinghamshire and one in Lincolnshire. Only one of the four was not in the original group of three colleges that had approached the University and of these, only two had students already enrolled on the course at the time of the survey.

So the initial results from this small survey were not encouraging for a University trying to build a case for increasing the number of student places, to present to the TTA. The 'BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies' course was relatively rare in the East Midlands. In early 1996, it was being offered in only two colleges, which might mean a maximum of about twenty students per college qualifying in July 1997. This was always assuming the course had not only recruited well, but also managed to retain student numbers throughout the two years of the course.

Also, the flexible nature of the course meant not all the qualifying students would be childcare students anyway, as some were bound to be health and social care students. In addition, not all the childcare students would necessarily be interested in pursuing a career in teaching. In reality it was more likely that each college would probably turn out a maximum of five qualified students per year who would be interested in entering initial teacher education. And finally regardless of their interest, the overwhelming constraint for the students had already proved to be financial. The attraction of the HNC course was its part-time nature, which allowed students to continue with full-time work. Many students had family responsibilities, so to give up work to return to full-time studying required financial support from other quarters. For many students this was not possible.

Whether the low demand for BTEC HNC course in the area, was due to the usual teething problems associated with getting a new course off the ground, or whether there was a lack of real demand at this point, remained to be seen. In short, the University could not rely on a demand for ITE places from its local catchment area of more than about ten HNC students a year and this was an optimistic estimation and certainly not sufficient to warrant an approach to the TTA.

The 'Link' Project

In the Summer Term of 1996, following the worrying survey results, the first real establishment of relationships with students began. In consultation with the 'Early Years Link' group, it was decided that as researcher and as a representative of the University course, I would make a series of visits to the students in their home colleges to introduce myself, my research and the "Early Years Link project'. Ultimately, there would also be follow-up meetings with the students who successfully completed the 'Link' and joined the University degree course but these would take place at the University.

Initially it was intended that there be three visits to each college - the first to introduce myself, my research and the 'Link'; the second to collect the demographic data concerning the students' prior training and work experiences and the third to interview a representative sample of the group.

The first visit took place with the college furthest away one Monday in early April. The students only attended college one day a week, between 1.00pm and 8pm. By arriving at lunchtime, I was able to have access to them during their initial tutorial session and at later intervals throughout the afternoon and early evening. As they usually broke for a meal break between 4 - 5pm, I was also able to use that time to speak more informally to them. This daily pattern was the one I followed throughout the visits to this particular college.

It also became clear at this first visit, that my involvement in the 'Early Years Link' would mean I would need to try at least to address if not answer, some of the many questions about the 'Link', the University and "why is it so difficult for us to get into teaching anyway?" My dual role in the 'Link' and as researcher was confusing for the students and meant I needed to address the issue of bias in how I approached the data collection.

This echoes again concerns raised in the previous chapter relating to my positioning as a researcher and the nature of 'real world' research. I attempted to address these issues by being as open and honest as possible with the students about the progress of the "Link' and emphasising I did not have all the 'answers'. Some students negotiated extra time with me to talk through their options on the 'Link'. Naturally there was additional personal and professional information shared on these occasions. Hence, prior to interviewing some students (i.e.those who had requested additional time) it became necessary to document any additional information held on individuals, that had not emerged from their questionnaires.

The first visit ended with the first cohort of students and the college tutor enthusiastic for my return and for the start of the actual data collection in the Autumn Term when the second cohort would also be enrolled.

However this optimism was not to last long. Shortly after the visit to the first college the 'Early Years Link' suffered another blow, this time closer to home, affecting its personnel. Within the only college yet to recruit, the tutor who had been most heavily involved with the Link, left her position suddenly to move to another post. The absence of her enthusiasm for the BTEC HNC course resulted in the college deciding not to recruit students for the course after all.

Shortly afterwards, there were drastic staff changes at the other college running the course, but as yet unvisited. As a consequence, the tutor in charge of recruitment was encouraged to take early retirement. Although this was a blow, the fact that the course was already running simply meant changes in personnel. These changes were less dramatic than initially thought, as the new tutor given responsibility for the enrolled students was known to other members of the Early Years Link group.

In the space of a year the 'Link' had been established and yet national and local factors were already combining to threaten its existence. In addition, the sample size for the research was beginning to diminish and began to look increasingly threatened. By the Autumn Term it was becoming obvious there appeared to be a problem with demand for the course locally.

Subsequent enquiries, revealed only two of the four colleges highlighted by the survey done earlier in the year, had in fact recruited students and begun delivery of the course in September. The initial interest and demand reportedly expressed by the colleges did not appear to have been followed through to recruitment and course delivery.

An added problem involved the qualification itself. Although the 'BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies' course catered for individuals working with children in health and social care settings, BTEC had also created a sister course that was more specifically focused on health and social care - the 'BTEC HNC in Health & Social Care'. One of the two colleges recruiting students, opted for their 'second' cohort, to recruit only students interested in the social care course rather than the childcare course. They thereby created a rolling programme, whereby students could follow their specialist option only in alternate years. Further informal discussions with a BTEC researcher at an Early Years conference later the same year, also revealed that whilst about a hundred Colleges were approved to offer the HNC courses, nationally, only about twenty two were in fact delivering the courses.

The initial estimations of the three colleges, having a cohort in each year of the course of about 20 students, making a total of about 120 students, were now obviously over generous on the part of the 'Early Years Link' project.

Whilst this clearly affected the Link itself in terms of there being less demand for places on the degree course, it also had implications for the research being undertaken.

From a potential starting sample of six cohorts or 120 students, there had been room for the natural 'wastage' of half the group being health and social care students, and half of the remaining group not to be interested in teaching. Nevertheless, this would have left about thirty students, across the two years of the course, in all the colleges that could be involved in the research.

However, with one college opting not to recruit and one only recruiting a single cohort of childcare students, it meant that by September 1996, in practice, the total number of cohorts that could be involved in both the Link project and the research was three, with 60 students. If a similar 'wastage' occurred, of half the group and half the remaining group, then in practice there would only be about 15 students for the Link project and the research. This was also assuming the cohorts had not only recruited at least 20 students per year but had managed to retain them across the course.

In actual fact ,by the time of the data collection visits, the first college had 15 students in each cohort whilst the second college had 8 in the single cohort making a grand total of 38 in all.

College (Course)	Cohort (Yr. of entry)	Estimated numbers in cohort				Actual no.s before loss
		Intake	50% loss H&SC	25% loss No T	Sample ?	
1 (BTEC HNC)	First (1995)	20	10	5	5	15
	Second (1996)	20	10	5	5	15
2 (BTEC HNC)	First (1995)	20	10	5	5	8
	Second (1996)	20	10	5	5	Not recruited
3 (BTEC HNC)	First (1995)	20	10	5	5	Not recruited
	Second (1996)	20	10	5	5	Not recruited
TOTALS		**120**	**60**	**30**	**30**	**38**

Figure 4.1 Initial Estimation of Students on BTEC HNC Courses

Bearing in mind the scarcity of courses at this level for Early Years practitioners, it was at this point that it seemed both appropriate and necessary to examine other courses to see if the research might be extended to include other individuals with similar Early Years backgrounds who also might be interested in moving into initial teacher education. There was clearly nothing else within the Further Education colleges. However, the University did have within its portfolio of courses, a similar type of course at the appropriate level.

The part-time Specialist Teacher Assistants (STA) course catered for Early Years practitioners working in school settings, developing their skills in English and mathematics to further assist the teachers in whose classes they were working. However on its own, the STA course was insufficient to warrant entry into the BA degree, especially at Level 2 in Year 2, as it was only worth 60 CATS points at Level 1.

A small cohort of STA students had elected to extend their studies for a further year to follow a part-time Certificate of Higher Education (CHE) course to enable them add a further 60 CATS points at Level 1 to gain entry into Year 2.

Although only a group of 19, the vast majority were at that time determined to enter Initial Teacher Education. Following discussions with the University's Faculty of Education, under whose mantle the STA and CHE courses fell, it was agreed that these students could be considered part of the Early Years Link project and thus were eligible for inclusion in the research.

College (Course)	Cohort (Yr. of entry)	Actual No.s before loss	Actual No.s Questionnaires
1 (BTEC HNC)	First (1995)	15	15
	Second (1996)	15	14
2 (BTEC HNC)	First (1995)	10	7
3 (STA/CHE)	First (1995)	7	6
	Second (1996)	12	10
TOTALS		**59**	**52**

Figure 4.2 Final Numbers of Students on all Courses

In late October the second visit to the first college took place. This visit was to introduce myself to the new cohort of first years but also to distribute the questionnaires amongst first and second years as well as collect the completed versions at the end of the afternoon. There were two questionnaires, designed to collect demographic data about each individual in the group, regardless of intention to teach. The first looked at their prior training and qualifications (Appendix 9) whilst the second dealt with their work experience (Appendix 10) Both questionnaires had been designed with the intention of being able to examine if there were any similarities between certain qualifications and / or work experiences happening at certain stages in the students' careers and if these related to students' expressed intentions to teach.

The field notes reveal a well-planned welcome with everyone knowing about the afternoon's activities.

> *Was allocated an hour with each group..... Planning was well organised with both a tutor and the receptionist aware I was arriving for the afternoon session. Each member of staff involved in the afternoon programme, myself included, had a copy of the timetable..... Felt welcome and expected, very positive vibes from staff who'd never met me before. Taken and introduced to the new Year 1 Group.....*

The cohorts were very different in nature and as well as some time being allocated for the completion of questionnaires, there was also time for some group discussion, which was particularly valuable with the second year group.

> *The Year 1 group seem generally quiet, but It's still early days, they've only been a 'group' for six weeks. Some vocal individuals..... questionnaires filled in quietly with one or two pertinent questions asked.*
>
> *Have met Year 2 group before. There's still quite a lot of anger about the action they have to take to become teachers. Am conscious they regard me as someone who understands where they're coming from and also this strange place called the University. .....they're also quite concerned about individuals who might get on similar courses with less than the desired entry requirements. They're concerned this may have implications for me and subsequently them if they choose Trent..... they asked so many open questions we overran .*

Once the students had filled in the questionnaires, it became obvious there would need to be some slight adjustments to the form itself. These adjustments were mostly to do with layout and increasing the space for answers, rather than content. One such change was to move the table to page 2 and make the 'extra information' section wider on both questionnaires. Another, was the need for some sections, such as the section on school-based qualifications on the 'Prior Training' form, to be repeated for those who completed these qualifications in FE. As such these changes did not really constitute a pilot version of the questionnaires.

Following this visit to the first college, the questionnaires were adjusted to take account of the issues with layout. In the final month of 1996 the first visits took place to both the University CHE course cohort and the college with the single HNC cohort. There were greater restraints on timing so close to the end of term and as both the cohorts had fewer students than the first college, it was easier to combine all the material that had been covered in the first college's two visits into just one. This meant introducing the 'Link', myself and the research, as well as distributing the questionnaires. The field notes reveal some of the time pressures...

> *... allocated half an hour with the group before their last session of the term. This time slot is problematic as the tutor teaching from 5.30pm really needs to start at that time. There's quite a lot of pressure to get on with it and not give sufficient time for questions. Some of the group crept in at 5.25pm, which made things worse! Did feel welcome though and had very positive vibes from the students.*
>
> *... allocated an hour , half of which should have been break time and half tutorial time. New tutor very welcoming and sat in on the session so had an idea of what was going to happen. They'd managed to do their tutorials earlier so I was able to use the whole hour without feeling guilty. Feel I'm explaining it a bit more succinctly and am not getting so many interruptions about BTEC stuff. The students were all willing to take part and the non-teaching ones were fine about still being included.... managed to get both questionnaires filled in and returned in the time.*

Whilst it had been hoped with the smaller cohort sizes, that the questionnaires would be finished and returned during the visits, the differences in time allocated to the visits meant this was not possible. It also meant that there had to be different arrangements put in place to collect the completed questionnaires.

> *End of term so it's only a small group numbering 8 (out of 17?) but they're all committed to teaching so that's helpful. They've been a 'group' since September and had all been on the STA course so were comfortable with one another. The size of the group means even with quite vocal individuals, most folk get to offer their opinions. Questionnaires were taken away to be filled in and posted back through the pigeonhole system or via the tutor after Christmas.*

This is a small group of about 8 or 9 though only six were present. They are all 2nd years and have been divided this year into two sub groups to follow their chosen options of either education or health modules. There have been lots of staff changes since last year . Three of their tutors left (either retiring or going round the world!) and recruitment was obviously affected. The College decided not to run a 1st year in the end this year which does make the sample even smaller!!! All do seem enthusiastic to take part ....

By the end of that term and year, relationships had been established with all the students, and new tutors, who would be involved in the research and the 'Early Years Link'. The research inquiry began to move into the data collection period, which would prove to be a period of reflection for staff and students alike.

Reflections on Experiences and Training

The main purpose for all the data collection, was to see if there was a mismatch between students' motivations and aspirations about becoming teachers and what was going to be needed, and possible, within the available structures of the BA degree course and the TTA requirements.

The pattern to the data collection involved, from the early stages of the inquiry, both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative methods took the forms of the two questionnaires designed to reveal demographic data about individuals' prior training and work experience. This was followed by a qualitative approach using interviews. The data from the questionnaires were used to decide which individuals to interview, in an attempt to have some form of representation of the range of students in terms of age, training and experience.

Once the 'Link' was successful and some HNC students were enrolled on the BA degree, the intention was that there would be additional interviews. Whilst the interviews in the FE colleges focused on the students' aspirations and understandings about teaching and completing a University course, those within the University would focus on how these aspirations and understandings were affected by the students' experiences on the BA degree and on school placement.

To extend this further, it was also intended that interviews take place with those tutors involved in the process of the ensuring the 'Link' worked, those 'providers' of further studying opportunities within the University - the 'gatekeepers' - the course leaders and admissions tutors. And in order to gain a still wider perspective, two similar questions to those asked of the internal 'providers', would be asked, by mail or email, of external providers from other Higher Education institutions.

However, after the second visit to the first college, partly due to the number of students involved there, the original pattern for data collection had to be amended. Another shorter visit had to be inserted between the original second and third visits to allow for feedback and checks to take place. This was necessary because of the sheer range and diversity of details given in the prior training and work experience questionnaires. In order to be sure I understood the many different details given by the students, there had to be a discussion with the group in general as well as discussions with certain individuals with very diverse answers. It also meant students who had not been sure of details when filling in the questionnaires, were able to go and double-check them for the follow-up visit.

In this way it was possible to ascertain what were the students' general misconceptions about the questions, what were my misconceptions about the answers and what were just idiosyncratic patterns of employment or training. These discussions identified the students misunderstandings about whether they saw themselves as qualified in any way; my lack of knowledge about courses awarded by the National Association of Maternal and Child Welfare (NAMCW) and an individual who although qualified with an NNEB Diploma, had always worked with visually impaired adults and whose work-roles reflected this experience.

These discussions did enable a more informed choice to be made to ensure a representative sample of students were interviewed. Discussions with the students revealed they themselves had identified four main criteria that defined the members of the group.

These criteria also emerged from the questionnaires as needing representation. They were age, specific qualifications (including INSET work), areas of specialism and range of work experience. Even amongst the group of thirty these criteria were spread across a fairly wide range.

The four criteria warrant a little explanation. The age criteria is perhaps self evident - within any part-time course but especially in those dealing with Childcare there tends to be a broad sweep from 18 years through to late forties in the age range of the student group. This age range also ensures that the group holds a diversity of qualifications, some specific to childcare and in addition have completed a range of in-service training short courses. Similarly, the range of both work experience and specialisms such as Special Needs, tend to be broader in a group with a wider age range by virtue of the fact that if you have lived longer you have had the chance to do more things!

In trying to find a representative sample, the relatively simple device of a matrix, as outlined below, was used. Each criterion was split into three sections. For 'specific qualifications' it was 'none', 'basic' and 'lots' which referred to no childcare qualifications at all; a basic first qualification like an NNEB or BTEC National Diploma and lots of extras such as an NNEB Advanced Diploma in Childcare & Education (ADCE) or in-service training. For 'work experience', it was 'little', 'some', 'lots' which meant just one job; four different jobs or work situations and more than four jobs. For 'specialisms' it was 'main', 'SEN', 'other' which meant a minimum amount of specialism working with mainstream children, or Special Educational Needs specialism working with SEN children or working for example, with visual or hearing impaired children, these often being indicated by the type of INSET courses taken. For 'age' it was three age bands, 'over 18', 'over 28' and 'over 38'.

It was decided to combine two criteria on a matrix in a realistic pairing. Hence as a student's specific qualifications often determined which jobs they had held, these two criteria were used together. Similarly, the older the student, the more likely they were to have built on their initial training and started to specialise and refine their experience, so these two criteria were used together.

Qualifications	Work Experience / Jobs		
	lots	some	little
Lots			
Basic			
None			

Age range	Specialisms / INSET		
	other	SEN	main
over 38			
over 28			
over 18			

Figure 4.3 Blank Matrix Grids

Clearly everyone would appear on each matrix, but with careful examination it was possible to narrow the field down to about a third of the group, in the first instance, between six and ten individuals who covered the spread of the criteria. These individuals would be the students interviewed.

Each individual was assessed against both criteria on the matrix and assigned to one box. For example, Individual A who might be 20 years old, had only been in mainstream settings, was in her first job but had done lots of INSET work would be entered as below, whilst Individual B who was 42, had specialist knowledge of SEN and had moved jobs frequently but had basic qualifications with little in-service work, would be entered accordingly.

Specific qualifications	Work Experience / Jobs		
	lots	some	little
Lots			Individual A
Basic	Individual B		
None			

Age range	Specialisms / INSET		
	other	SEN	main
over 38		Individual B	
over 28			
over 18			Individual A

Figure 4.4 Example of Use of Matrix Grid

Clearly, once all the individuals in each cohort had been allocated, there would be some boxes on the matrix that would contain a number of individuals whilst other boxes would be empty or only contain one name. These single instances were immediately designated as interviewees and if they appeared on the other matrix as a multiple, were removed from the running. With the multiple instances it was necessary to use both matrices to try to ensure a good spread, as demonstrated in the following fictional example.

Specific qualifications	**Work Experience / Jobs**		
	lots	**some**	**little**
lots	(05) 06 10	*11* 12	
basic	02 09 (14)	04 07 13 (15)	**08**
none		**01**	**03**

Age range	**Specialisms /INSET**		
	other	**SEN**	**main**
over 38	06 *04*	**14**	
over 28	**05**	09 *10*	(01) 02 07 13
over 18		**15**	(03) (08) 11 12

Figure 4.5 Fictional Example showing Selection Process for Interview

So out of this example of a group of 15, the following students might be interviewed as examples of single instances - **01, 03, 05, 08, 14, 15**

As these are also included in examples of multiples on the other matrix the minimum number of interviewees that represented the most criteria would, in this case, be this group plus - **04, 10, 11**

This method of identifying individuals to interview was rough and ready, but with the small size of the sample, did allow for some representation of the criteria the students believed were significant in their professional profiles.

Much of the initial identification of 'who' to interview was carried out in the early months of the new year before the additional visit back to the cohorts to check their questionnaire responses. Only after this visit was the final choice of interviewees made. However, this was not the only matter concerning researcher and researched, staff, students and the colleges and University alike during this period.

The spring term of 1997 started with dramatic new student target numbers from the TTA. As the implications for the University became clear, it was increasingly obvious that in order to meet the new targets, one of the two current initial teacher education courses on offer would have to be closed. The two degree courses were the four-year Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the three year Bachelor of Education with QTS.

It had been intended that the "Link" involve entry into Year 2 of either of these degrees, but informal discussions had, prior to the issue of the new targets, revealed that most students on the HNC course were unwilling or unable to give up paid employment for more than two years and so had indicated a preference for enrolling on the three year B.Ed. degree.

In a relatively short space of time, the University had to make a decision in response to the new targets, and so announced its intention to cease recruitment for the B.Ed. degree course. Those students currently enrolled on the course would continue on it, but there would be no new intake in September 1997.

This was a massive blow to the "Early Years Link" project. The full implications arising from the changes in TTA guidelines for first year ITE student intakes the previous year, were still not completely clear. And whilst it did still seem HNC students would be able to move onto the B.A. degree, for most interested students, the extra year without a salary generally made the move impossible.

On this occasion the stumbling block the TTA were delivering was again directed at the Higher Education institutions and again was target related and therefore involved financial restraints. This time however, there was a direct financial cost to potential students of this type in having to give up paid employment.

Early in the summer term, all the 'Link' participants had a meeting at which the FE tutors reported the mood of the students, following the news of the proposed changes to the degree courses. In short the students felt cheated. They had believed the 'Link' would be a way around the myriad stumbling blocks they felt were placed in the way of students with non-traditional qualifications but extensive experience of children, who wanted to become teachers. Once again, they felt the system had let them down.

It was clear from this moment on, that the "Link" was doomed and would probably only work for the current cohorts. It would then sink from existence as the financial pressures on most members of the student cohorts, were too great to meet the length of time away from paid employment (3 years), now required of them. It was also increasingly doubtful whether there would be many students able to meet these requirements within the current cohorts. This also threatened the future of the research inquiry. For the tutors, students and researcher involved it was a sobering time - on reflection, all the work of the last two years would ultimately come to nothing because of the targets imposed by the TTA for initial teacher education courses.

There was no possibility that this set of events could have been foreseen. The FE tutors had responded to a very real need from students and other Early Years workers they were in regular contact with, as had the University tutors to the FE tutors requests for partnership and collaboration. But in the grand order of things, there just was not a significant enough demand to affect change in these circumstances.

Against this background, this term also saw the start of the additional visits to all the cohorts - the visit where the questionnaire details were checked informally with the groups and with certain individuals who had obscure or unfamiliar qualifications and work roles.

This visit also made it possible to feedback a little of the demographic data collated, to the tutors as well as the students. It was also the first opportunity for any problems with retention to emerge.

> *Briefly described major findings so far - range of roles and different interpretations of roles; range of in- service courses attended- much wider set of skills and knowledge apparent from this simple trawl through data. Tutor suggested reason for folks wanting to come on HNC might be to do with their awareness of demands caused by the nursery vouchers scheme etc.*
>
> *Checked up on numbers still present on course. Large proportion of withdrawals from 1st Yr. group. Five withdrawals from a group of 14 (a third!!) All had major difficulties e.g. - work too hard, so transferred to another course, divorce, separation and childcare problems, nervous breakdown, cancer diagnosed and treatment ensued. Whilst it could be to do with age profile, as more demands on mature students, it still seems excessive loss.*

Ironically, some of the students in the second year cohort at the first college had applied to the University and were already being given interview dates. It became obvious that by the next visit, to interview the students, some of these applicants would have been to the university and would know their fate.

> *This group has remained more stable in terms of numbers. As this group have known me the longest, the relationship is fairly relaxed. Recent events at NTU re funding has meant changes to what they can expect in terms of admissions.*
>
> *Those students who have applied have anxieties about getting interviews and the future in general. Consequently the quick chats to check demographic data already collected, turned into longer chats with most individuals about their career futures. ...interesting what 'critical incidents' or factors they saw as significant. There have been some interesting changes of mind re teaching that need to be chased up in interviews.*
>
> *The two main areas for checking were job titles and in-service courses. At present there appears to be very little streamlining possible from the answers given.*

It is obvious from the field notes that the changes to the University courses and thus the 'Link', were affecting the students and consequently had an effect at the data collection level. For the limited number of potential students from this cohort it was essential, if they were indeed to proceed through the 'Link' and enter the degree course, that their fears at this time should be addressed.

As the only member of University staff to whom they had direct access at this time, I had to field their questions. This meant the data collection took longer and an additional follow-up visit had to be arranged to finish checking all the questionnaire data from the first college.

> *This was a return visit to follow-up all the students not managed last time. Aware it is stretching things out a bit time-wise but want to be sure all students have a chance to amend the data given at beginning of term.*
>
> *Managed to talk to all the students who were present on the day. The Year 1 Group now consists of ten students although two are away, long-term sick. Of remaining eight, have talked to all of them. Again very little streamlining possible. Just odd changes to First Aid courses. Also managed to complete the Year 2 group at the beginning of the afternoon - again interesting stories and anecdotes but again little streamlining of the many work roles and INSET training courses possible.*

One of the main reasons for checking the questionnaires had been the many varied titles of work experience roles and in-service training courses (INSET), in the initial data collection. It was hoped the sheer range and variety was because some of the labels were merely duplications under a different name. Closer discussions with all the students had revealed this was not the case, and there really were a large number of different work role titles and INSET course names. When the other cohorts' responses were compared with the first college's responses, the number of titles and course names simply increased. (Appendices 11 & 12)

These comparisons also revealed different counties offered different INSET training and the options were also affected by different local council bodies. The Local Education Authority and the Health and Social Services not only offered courses with different names but also with different emphases. The courses available to individuals depended not only upon which county they were employed in as early years workers, but which service they worked within. So although a county might offer a range of INSET courses, usually, individuals employed by the Education Authority could only access the education focused courses and individuals employed within the Health and Social Services sectors could only access the health and social care courses.

Students were only able to access both sets of courses if they moved between the sectors, for example by moving from a day nursery into a school nursery and back to a day nursery as contracts became available.

Once all the colleges had been visited to check the questionnaire data, the cohorts were assessed using the matrices and a group of individuals were identified for interview purposes. As the data collection moved into the interviewing stage, other more radical changes occurred at national level, which had a more all encompassing nature.

In May 1997 the Labour Party won the election and there was a change of government. Within weeks the hated Nursery Voucher scheme, which had dealt the deathblow to many small areas of childcare provision such as the playgroups in rural areas, was scrapped. There was also renewed hope that the plight of early years workers in terms of lack of status, poor salaries and limited professional progression would now be recognised.

In June, the White Paper "Excellence in Schools" was published detailing the Government's intentions for Education for their term of office. Amongst its many proposals was the establishment of

- An early years forum in every area, planning childcare and education to meet local needs;
- A network of early excellence centres to spread good practice;

p. 22

as well as

- education action zones providing targeted support and development where they are most needed.

p. 44

The forums were clearly a direct response to the Nursery Vouchers scheme -

> 5 We need a new approach to achieving our early years goals - one based on collaboration and partnership. The nursery voucher scheme has not worked. It ignores broader childcare issues and has created expensive bureaucracy instead of effective co-operation. Vouchers will not be used after the summer term of 1997.

> Instead, each local authority will set up, with local private and voluntary providers, an early years forum representing the full range of providers and users of early years education in the area as well as employers and others with an interest in early years services. Our aim is a comprehensive and integrated approach to pre-school education and childcare. p16

The early excellence centres were to raise standards and allow, through the use of partnerships between various sectors, the access to high quality early years education for every child from 0-5 years old.-

> 9 One of the best ways to raise standards is through practical examples. We shall work with the local authorities and others to establish early excellence centres which demonstrate good practice in education, childcare and integrated services and provide training and a focus for dissemination. Twenty five centres will be chosen initially.
>
> p.17

The education action zones were seen as "new and imaginative ways of helping schools to achieve the overall objectives" and expected to-

> 8 ... operate on the basis of an action forum, which will include parents and other representatives from the local business and social community, as well as representation from the constituent schools and the LEA. The forum would draw up an action programme, including targets for each participating school and the Zone as a whole. The action forum could bring forward plans for school rationisation, and for new schools to provide new hope for the area. The LEA, using its existing powers, would be expected to support a reasonable programme put forward by the forum, and the Standards and Effectiveness Unit of the DfEE would monitor the operation of the Action Zone. The action forum would be expected to publish regular reports on progress.
>
> p.39

Many of these initiatives were met positively by professionals within Early Years. Many places were still suffering from the after effects of the problems associated with the nursery voucher scheme which were highlighted by the media at the time. Some geographical areas were more dramatically affected than others.

The Surrey Advertiser ran an article entitled "Nursery Schools threatened as classes tumble", stating

> Nurseries and pre-school groups in Surrey are facing extinction as primary schools take more and more four-year-olds into their reception classes.

which had been caused by -

> Early entry to school was accelerated by the introduction of nursery vouchers as the availability of funding for four-year-olds boosted competition between schools to recruit the most pupils.

The scale of the problem did not diminish with the abolition of the scheme, if anything, it increased -

> In Guildford Borough alone there are nearly 50 groups, all of which are losing upto half their pupils at the start of each school year.
>
> The Pre-school Learning Alliance, which represents 19,000 pre-schools in England, said that since last year as many as 800 have closed already or will close imminently.
>
> The Surrey Advertiser 17-10-97

This was also reflected in other parts of the country, particularly rural areas where playgroups in particular were often the only form of childcare available. However, by the end of 1997, the proposals from the White Paper would start to be addressed as the first seven Early Excellence Centres (EEC) were announced and a more positive mood would begin to develop.

These changes were still in the future when, within days of the change of Government, the initial interviews at the first college took place. The interviews were quite structured in that they focused on just five questions. These questions were designed to try to ascertain the students' fundamental beliefs and understandings about teaching and about becoming a teacher. They covered what the students thought teaching was about; why they wanted to teach; what had influenced their decision to teach; what they felt they had gained from their current course and what issues, if any, they felt strongly about in the field of education. (Appendix 16)

In all, a total of 7 students were interviewed and as predicted, some of the students who had applied to the University did know the outcome of their interviews for the degree course. Of the three who had elected to apply, only one had been successful. The two unsuccessful students were very unhappy about the situation and this was reflected in their interviews with me. Similarly, the excitement and anxiety of the successful candidate also shone through her interview. Discussions with the tutors for the other cohorts, revealed another three students had also been successful in their applications to the University.

September 1997 marked a watershed, both in the development of the 'Link' and the research. For the first time, four early years workers had progressed from both HNC and CHE qualifications onto a BA degree in Primary Education with QTS. However, the very small number, just four, meant it was unlikely that the 'Link' would be able to maintain any kind of credibility with the student cohorts and the admissions tutors within the University.

Of the four students, there were two HNC students, one from each of the external FE colleges, and two CHE students from the University's internal course. One of the HNC students, like the CHE students, elected to enter Year 2 of the course, on probably the last occasion it would be possible. They were placed together in the same seminar group to facilitate their acceptance into an established group that had been together the previous year. The last student, whilst well experienced with children, had only limited experience of schools and so opted to begin in the course from Year 1 to ensure she had plenty of experience on school placement.

It had been intended that the first interview be followed up with another, early in the students' first term on the BA course, to see how their aspirations and understandings of teaching were reacting to their new experiences. However at this point the research ground to a halt. In mid September, I became ill with a stress and fatigue-related virus and was away on sick leave for the remainder of the half term. Although I returned in November, my role as full-time researcher was reduced to part-time to allow for the very slow and gradual recovery to full physical and cognitive health, typically needed with these types of viruses.

One consequence of the timing of the illness was the failure to complete the first focused interviews with the remaining cohorts. Interviews had taken place with students from both the first and second year groups in the first college prior to my illness at the end of the summer term. Although the HNC course in the remaining FE college (with a single second year cohort of eight students) ended in the July, it had been intended that the first interviews with these students be conducted in their work places in the autumn term. This would also give an opportunity for the first interviews with the students on the CHE course (with 6 first and 10 second years) during the same time period. This was important as the CHE course had not followed the usual September to July format with both cohorts such that in December 1997 all the students would finish together.

In the event neither of these sets of interviews took place. By the time the research relationship had been re-established with the four students who had followed the 'Link', the other cohorts had completed their courses. Subsequent attempts to follow up students by telephone and letters, to maintain contact, proved fruitless. The nature of some of the work roles meant some students had moved two or three times during their HNC or CHE course, so contact with work places had been lost and there was a lack of responses from many home addresses.

On reflection, a number of events at national, local and personal level had deeply affected both 'Link' and the research. Although there were now four excited, positive HNC and CHE students on the BA degree, there were unlikely to be any others in subsequent years. The CHE course was no longer being offered. Only the first FE college was still recruiting yearly and there were moves afoot at national level to streamline the national framework of qualifications which had implications for the BTEC HNC course. In addition, although there were four students to be followed through with the research, this was a far smaller number than had been envisaged and the viability of research was once again in doubt.

Relevance

My slow recovery to health and lack of contact with the four 'Link' students at their crucial point of entry onto the B.A degree course in the Autumn of 1997 was compounded with the running down of contacts with students as they approached the end of their HNC or CHE courses.

The 'Link' students were not left completely on their own however, as another member of the University staff team, who had been involved with the 'Link' project from the beginning, was able to meet with them regularly and deal with any immediate concerns. This was not however what any of us involved in the project had expected, nor how we had planned this transition. It pointed up the weakness of having a single 'named' person in these situations.

Contacts with the HNC students in particular were becoming more difficult to maintain, because as their course was ending, many were moving onto new jobs without leaving forwarding addresses with the colleges, necessary if follow-up interviews were to take place.

Early in the spring term of 1998, one final event broke the relationships amongst the student group in the CHE cohorts and subsequently contact with them became extremely difficult for research purposes. One mature student, Beverly Fowkes died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage.

This was a personal blow as well as a professional one, as I had known her well before the research project began. Bev was a busy person. She had brought up four children, been a child-minder and worked in her local playgroup and school before being convinced by a variety of individuals, teachers and headteachers, who had seen her in action, that she might be a suitable candidate to train to be a nursery nurse.

And so in 1991 she began a 'Certificate in Playskills' course as a step to joining the CACHE NNEB Diploma course. The group of twenty mature students she joined, were my very first tutor group, for whom I had teaching and pastoral responsibility. My experience of her then, led me to believe that she would have made an excellent teacher, but that her age might be against her.

Not only was she excellent with children, she was a valuable member of the group. She initially lacked confidence with academic work but blossomed as the course progressed. She boosted other people's confidence and was always ready with help if fellow students were in need, whether it was with lifts or suggestions for where to find information or practical ideas for work with children. In short she was an enabler - and everyone around her benefited, including her tutor!

It was partly my discussions with Bev and other members of her group as well as subsequent tutorial groups, which started my interest in why Early Years workers wanted to become teachers at all. So, imagine my delight in late December 1996 when I had walked into the STA/CHE cohort on the introductory visit, to see Bev smiling back at me. And my horror, shared with the CHE students, her tutors and the children she worked with, my son amongst them, at her tragic death fifteen months later.

It may seem strange to include such a personal response to a professional experience in an academic document, but it illustrates an essential feature of the nature of Early Years work and involvement with Early Years workers and children. It gets personal!

Quite whether the diverse and 'non-standard' nature of the work in Early Years Education allows this personal approach to grow or whether this is first a feature of the initial childcare qualification courses, is debatable. If these courses were more formalised, would students become Early Years workers with less personal involvement with the children in their care and with those whom they work with? Surely this personal involvement, particularly in relation to team-working is one of the great strengths of Early Years Education? This is an aspect that will need to be addressed further in the light of the data collected.

In addition to my own response, there was that of her friends and fellow students in the STA/CHE cohort. In her role as an enabler, Bev had effectively been the contact point for everyone in the group.

Her death shattered the networks established between the members of the group in such a way that when the course finished, very few kept in touch with one another or the University. From the point of view of the research, it proved impossible to maintain contact with many of the students. And as a consequence no interviews took place with this cohort.

So relationships were broken, and on reflection it did seem that with all the problems involved with the 'Link' project, there had been a great deal of effort for very little benefit. However, the research did not end with the 'Link' project's demise. There were still four students on the B.A course to be tracked through to graduation and local and national providers to approach for their responses to the findings of the project.

Although at local level things were difficult at this time, at national level, Early Years initiatives were happening thick and fast. In March 1998 the first Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP) were approved. These were local and regional partnerships of different organisations who could work together to offer Early Years services tailored to their regions or locality's needs.

In May the government produced a Green Paper : 'Meeting the Childcare Challenge' which outlined its National Childcare Strategy. This was rapidly followed by the launch of the National Training Organisations Network. National Training Organisations were employer-led bodies responsible for the development of skills to meet the business needs of employment sectors in the UK. Whilst not delivering training themselves, the NTO's role was to develop and review National Occupational standards on which qualifications would be based.

Significantly for Initial Teacher Education this was the time when a new Circular giving guidelines for course content and student entry requirements was issued. Circular 4/ 98 replaced the influential Circular 14/ 93 and added to the guidelines in Circular 10/97.

During this same period of time, the delayed interviews with the four 'Link' students took place. One student had requested, because of her career profile and limited experience in schools, that she be allowed to start in the first year of the course. As such, she was new along with every other student and the transition was relatively problem free. For the three other students, however, entering into the second year of a course, albeit with new seminar groups, was more difficult.

There then followed a curious setback to the intention to ascertain national providers' views about these types of initiatives for Early Years practitioners who wished to become teachers. A series of questions was devised for the local providers and 'gatekeepers' within the University as well as providers in the colleges. There were two different versions - one for individuals who had only management involvement with the 'Link' students and one set for individuals who had teaching involvement with them. From these questions, were devised two more general ones that could be sent either by mail or email to national providers, identified through Early Years literature and conferences.

The first problem was within the local colleges. The rapid changes to recruitment and implementation of the HNC courses and staffing meant those individuals now responsible for these courses within the three colleges had had no involvement in the 'Link project and were unwilling to be interviewed.

The national response was however far more bizarre. A letter with the two questions attached was sent, with a stamped addressed envelope to twelve key individuals in Early Years at national level. One version went by email to Lesley Staggs at QCA. There was one reply the following day, by email from Lesley Staggs and then nothing further from any of the other individuals. It was however the beginning of the summer vacation and subsequent telephone conversations in September revealed some letters had never reached their destination. It was not possible to repeat this part of the process.

In September the interviews with four of the providers within the University were conducted within the new context of Circular 4 / 98 and the responses reflect the new initiatives being discussed in the University at that time.

In early November 1998, the Early Years National Training Organisation was launched. It had as its remit, children between the ages of 0-8 years old and was legally a division of CACHE, an examining board. This would have an interesting effect on the qualification framework created over the coming years, with the BTEC HNC not being given accreditation.

A further example of the development in different organisations coming together with Early Years as their focus, was the Early Childhood Education Forum's publication of a framework for Early Years practitioners entitled "Quality in Diversity" (1998)

The final piece of data collection took place in May 1999 with the 'exit' interviews of the students shortly to graduate from the B.A degree. In practical terms the inquiry was at an end, as most of the students who had been involved in the 'Link' project, were now moving on.

But at national level, 1999 saw the QCA begin the review and consultation on the Desirable Outcomes which would result in the creation of the Foundation Stage and the Early Learning Goals for the Early Years.

Following the end of the data collection and with the tracking of the 'Link' students complete, some issues are already emerging which will be addressed in later chapters in the light of the findings. For example, there needs to be some examination of what the implications are for what has happened to the students. How is their experience relevant in a national context that is changing so rapidly? What can local providers learn, again, that can have significance in such a volatile context?

There are both methodological and philosophical implications that need addressing in terms of the nature of what happens to students following these 'non-standard' courses. 'Non-standard', that is in relation to Initial Teacher Education courses. There is an argument here for turning this round and viewing these students from what they <u>do</u> bring to ITE rather than what they do <u>not</u> bring.

There is also the mismatch between the students' experiences as Early Years practitioners and the standard and rigid routes available to them by which they might enter teaching. Throughout the research process the students have also been party to the tension between the highly impersonal 'edicts from above' that have influenced their progress where they have little or no control and on the other hand the very personal insights shared as part of the interviews.

The following chapters examine the research evidence and attempt to address some of these emerging issues in terms of their relevance to the students, providers and national context

TIMESCALE FOR INQUIRY

YEAR	INQUIRY	LOCAL FE & NTU CONTEXT	NATIONAL CONTEXT
Pre 1995		1993 Circular 4/93 guidelines (DfE)	1988 Education Reform Act (DfE) / N. Curriculum 1989 Children Act (DoH) 1990 National Health Service & Community Care Act / Rumbold Report 1993 OFSTED / ECEF / Circular 4/93 (DfE) 1994 Start Right Report RSA (C Ball)
1995	Jun Meeting of NTU Curriculum Leaders & FE Tutors & KW Jul Meeting of NTU Curriculum Leaders & FE Tutors & KW Sept Meeting of NTU Curriculum Leaders & FE Tutors & KW Nov Meeting of FE Tutors, AD & KW - Hist. & Geog. Discussion		Introduction of • Baseline Assessment • Standards Fund
1996	Mar Meeting of FE Tutors, AD & KW (EY Link) Mar Survey of local HNC provision Apr Visit 1 to NLC - to introduce self & EY Link Sept Nursery World conference, London Oct Visit 2 to NLC - to distribute questionnaires Dec Visit 1 & 2 to STA /CHE - self/EYLink/quest. Dec Visit 1 & 2 to BH - self, EY Link & questions.	Jan New TTA Guidelines for 1st Year ITE intake. Threatens viability of EY Link July Contact tutor at BR leaves, so course does not recruit in September. Contact tutor at BH takes early retirement so new relationship needed Nov NTU students on STA/ CHE course included to replace missing cohort from BH	Introduction of • Desirable Outcomes SCAA • New TTA Guidelines for ITE
1997	Mar Visit 3 to NLC -Questionnaires checked Mar EY Link meeting Apr Visit 3 to NLC cont. - Questionnaires checked Apr Visit 3 to BH - Questionnaires checked May Visit 4 to NLC - Focused interviews Sept Researcher ill (6wks) Nov Setting up STA/CHE & BH interviews Dec. STA/CHE and BH HNC courses end, students hard to contact, many do not reply so interviews abandoned	Jan New TTA targets for NTU mean reducing ITE courses so only a 4 year BA will be available. EY Link students will have to do three, not two years and with changes to funding, Link increasingly no longer viable Mar FE tutors report course change from 3 to 4 years is affecting cohort - may have no group left to study as finances prevent EY Link happening Sept Just four students enter ITE course at NTU 1 in Yr. 1 (HNC) and 3 in Yr.2 (2x CHE & 1 x HNC)	Mar Nursery Vouchers launched May Labour government elected June Excellence in Schools *White Paper* Sept. Nursery Vouchers scrapped and scheme ends finally by April 1998 Dec First Early Excellence Centres announced
1998	Feb STA /CHE student dies - seems to fracture group and contact is lost with many of them Mar Delayed interviews with ITE 09.97 students Sept Interviews with four NTU providers	1998 Circular 4/98 guidelines (DfEE)	Mar Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships approved May National Childcare Strategy *Green Paper* May National Training Organisations launched Nov Early Years NTO launched
1999	May Interviews with students leaving ITE		Review of Desirable Outcomes
Post 1999		2000 3 students graduate ITE course all with BA Hons. 2:1 degrees 2001 Last student graduates with BA Hons. 2:2 degree	

Figure 4.6

CHAPTER 5

PREVIOUS JOURNEYS

As the journey progresses, travellers in the group will experience the various events, sights, sounds, smells and tastes along the way in a manner unique to each individual. The differences in these engagements reflect in part, the previous journeys undertaken by a particular individual. Some experiences will be very familiar, some only similar, whilst others will be completely unknown and outside an individual's frame of reference. Clearly the nature of previous journeys will be significant as will the age and understandings that the traveller brings to their new travelling experiences.

Four significant factors enable the students to make sense of the learning journey they are embarked upon, their age; the qualifications they have completed; the jobs they have held and the In-Service training (INSET) they have received.

This chapter presents and examines the data from the questionnaires that demonstrate these four areas of experience.

CHAPTER 5

Previous Journeys

Introduction

The questionnaires were designed to reveal a range of demographic data covering individual students' ages, qualifications, the jobs they had held and the In-Service Training (INSET) courses they had attended. The data was collected from five cohorts of students in three different institutions situated in two counties. The first institution had two cohorts on a two-year BTEC HNC, one for each year. The second had a single cohort of students enrolled on the first year of the same course, whilst the third institution had two cohorts studying simultaneously for a Certificate in Higher Education. In total 52 questionnaires were completed from every student enrolled on the courses at the time of the visits. The breakdown of number of students per cohort were - Cohort 1 with 15, Cohort 2 with 14, Cohort 3 with 7, Cohort 4 with 6 and Cohort 5 with 10.

The data was therefore examined in terms of the individual cohorts of students, as well as giving an overall general picture of what skills, knowledge and understandings this type of student might take with them into Initial Teacher Education. However, the sample was too small for any meaningful statistical analysis to take place. The demographic information presented is therefore primarily descriptive but nevertheless still enables reflection on the issues raised.

Age

The first and simplest question students had to provide answers for, was their date of birth and subsequent age on 1st September 1996. This date was chosen as all the students were enrolled on their courses on this date. Whilst their actual date of birth helped with checking details in the qualification and jobs sections of the questionnaire, it is the students' age on 1st September 1996 that is of interest here.

The spread of ages for the whole sample ranged from 18 years old through to 48. An explanation for the start of the range would be that, in order to enrol on any HNC or CHE courses, most potential students already held an initial childcare qualification. These qualifications are gained on courses that accept students at the earliest at 16 years old and last for two years.

Whilst possible, it was therefore very unlikely that there would be anyone younger than 18 years old on subsequent courses such as the HNC or CHE. Within the sample, this initial type of qualification accounted for 21% percent of all qualifications achieved by all the students, although this varied considerably between the cohorts. This figure is discussed in greater detail in the section dealing with qualifications.

The older end of the range is somewhat harder to explain. The option of further studying on a HNC or CHE course can be taken up by individuals, to add to their personal skills, knowledge and understandings, which in turn would benefit their professionalism. Further studying is also often undertaken with the hope, and sometimes promise from employers, of specific career progression. Whilst this is clearly still possible at the age of 48, career progression in the form of moving into Initial Teacher Education is likely to prove to be more problematic for older students.

Other reasons for undertaking further study at this age, might be for example, in the case of students who have made a recent career change, or returned to work once their children are grown-up or who have moved job and are being given new responsibilities. Each of these situations would require in-depth study to facilitate the new skills and knowledge required of the professional role, regardless of the possibility of career progression or promotion.

Whilst the overall picture presented in Figure 5.1 is fairly evenly spread, there are however differences within the cohorts. The average age across all cohorts is 32.8 years, but it varies between 29.6 years in Cohort 3 to 38.4 years in Cohort 5.

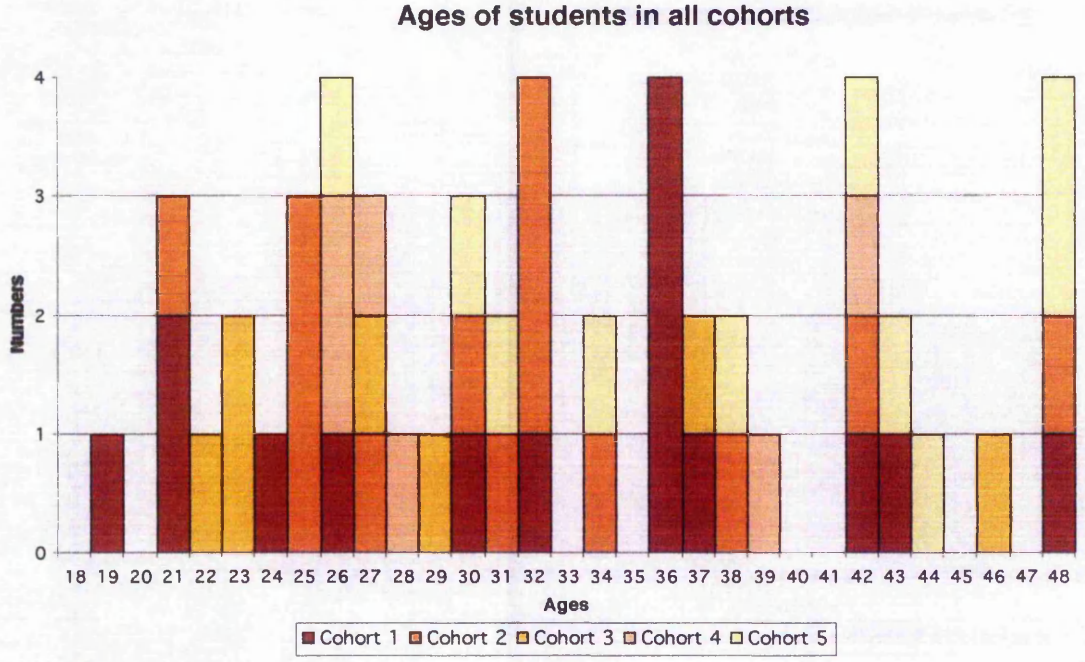


Figure 5.1

Examining the data in bands of ten years as in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 shows that the majority of students in Cohort 1 (with 47%) and Cohort 2 (with 43%) fall into the 28-37 age group. For Cohorts 3 (with 57%) and Cohort 4 (with 50%) the majority falls into the 18-27 age group. Only Cohort 5 has the majority of its students (60%) in the oldest band of the 38-48 age group. This grouping however does not take account of any clusters of ages that may occur around the 28 or 38 year point.

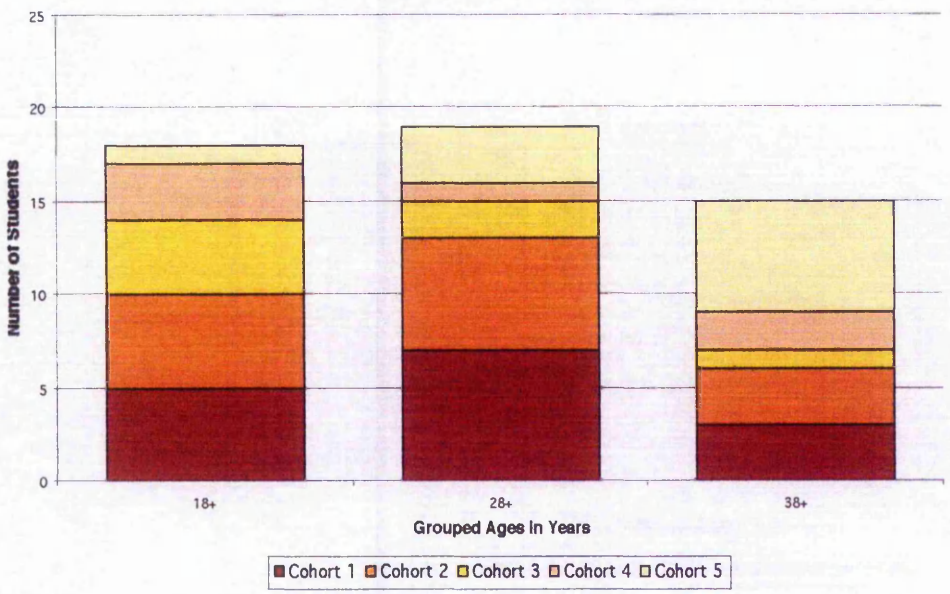


Figure 5.2

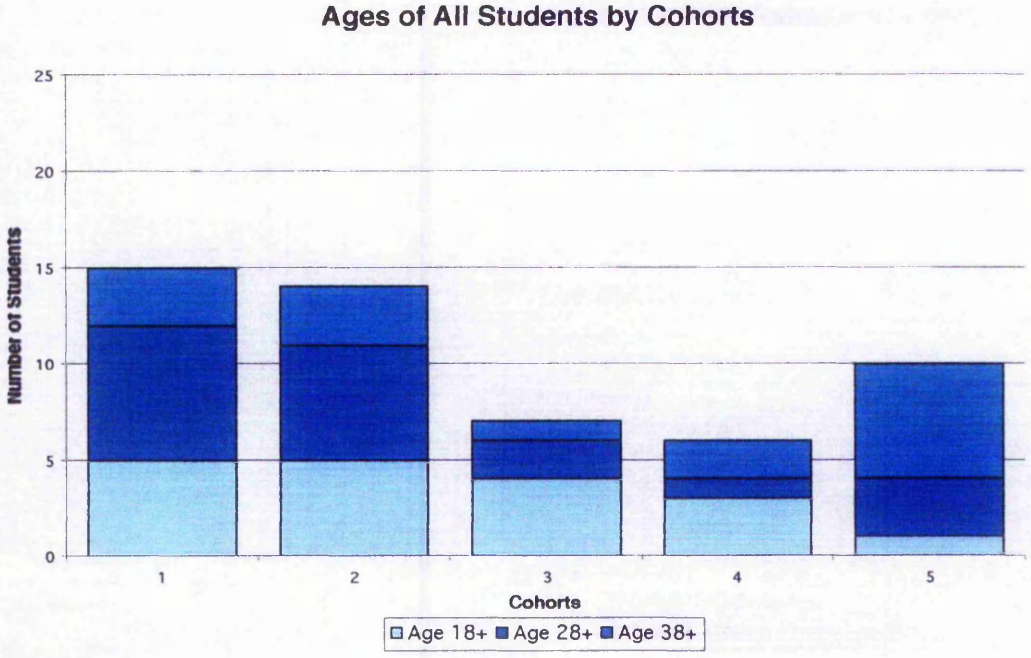


Figure 5.3

To address the issue of possible hidden clusters of ages, a further breakdown was created by grouping in five-year bands. This revealed a slightly different story as is shown in Figures 5.4.and 5.5

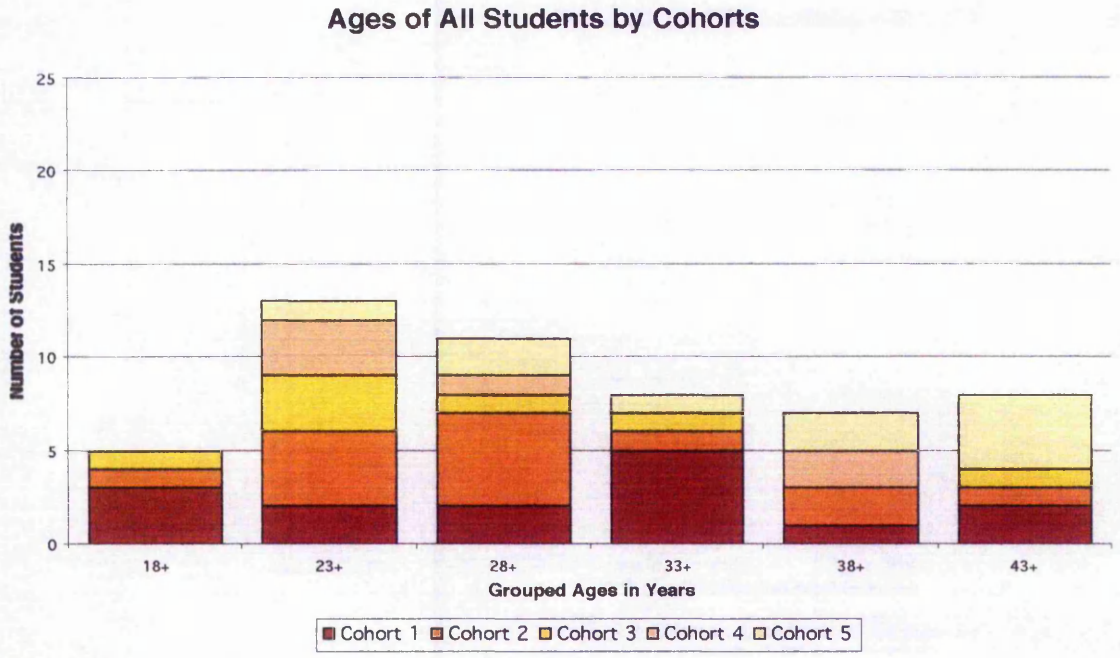


Figure 5.4

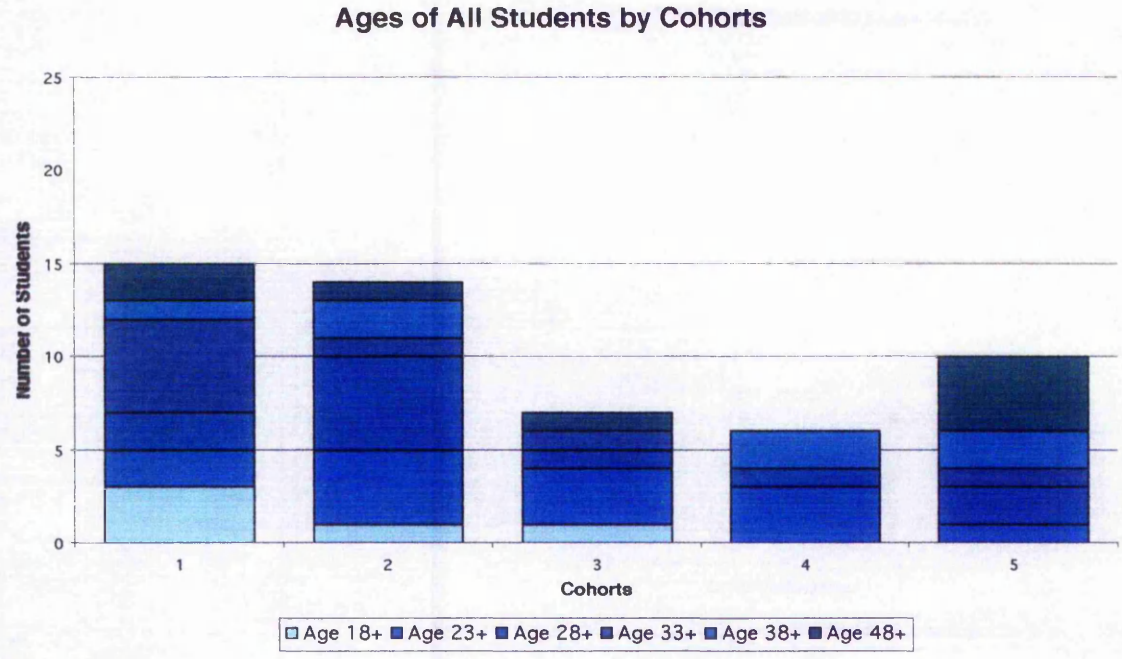


Figure 5.5

Viewed in this way, it can be seen that the largest group of students in Cohort 1, 33%, is in the 33-37 age band whilst in Cohort 2, the majority of students, 36%, are in the 28-32 age band. For Cohorts 3 and 4, 43% and 50% respectively of their students fall into the 23-27 age band, whilst Cohort 5 has a majority of 40% of its students in the 43-48 age band. In summary, the data shows a range of ages across the cohorts, with each cohort having a unique age profile, though some are more weighted towards the extremes of the age group spectrum than others.

Qualifications

The second section to the questionnaire focused on the qualifications gained by the students at school, at college and at other institutions, later in life. The first results, collected from Cohort 1 and 2, generated a list of qualifications, the length of which caused some confusion. To ensure that each qualification differed from the others and was not another name, by which the same qualification might be known, a follow up check was carried out. The questionnaires were discussed with each student in these cohorts to check for duplication. There was none. There was just a long list of qualifications held by these students. The complete list numbered 43 and ranged from CSE's through to two degrees , a BA from Pakistan and an Honours degree in history and Greek. (Appendix 13)

Although there was a large number of diverse qualifications it was possible to group them into similar types of qualification determined by the examining or awarding body. Initially all CSE, GCE, GCSE and A level qualifications gained at school were grouped together, as were the same set of qualifications gained at college. All qualifications once awarded by NNEB and now CACHE NNEB were grouped together, as were those once awarded by BTEC and now by EDEXCEL. A similar grouping was achieved by combining qualifications that had once been gained though the Pre-School Playgroup Association with those now gained from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

As a number of students also held the Advanced Certificate for Specialist Teacher Assistants, this was also included as a group. This left a remainder of 24 qualifications most of which had been gained by an individual student. These 'singletons' were grouped together as 'other' qualifications. By doing this, it is possible to examine individual student's profiles as well as the cohort in general, in order to make some observations about which qualifications are the most common as well as which are the most rare.

In Cohort 1, shown in Figures 5.6 and 5.7, there is clearly a wide range of success rates for completing qualifications across the group. There is one student who gained no qualifications at school, whilst others gained ten or more different qualifications. For two students, the HNC is the first form of qualification studied since leaving school. For other students, there is evidence of continued studying to gain extra qualifications, which arguably could demonstrate a progression from school, through college and onto a range of Childcare courses.

Grouped in this way, the largest percentage of qualifications (80%) gained by students within this cohort, were those taken at school. Of the remaining 20%, the largest proportion was from 'other' qualifications with 9%, whilst amongst the childcare courses the largest proportion was for the NNEB / CACHE qualification with 4%.

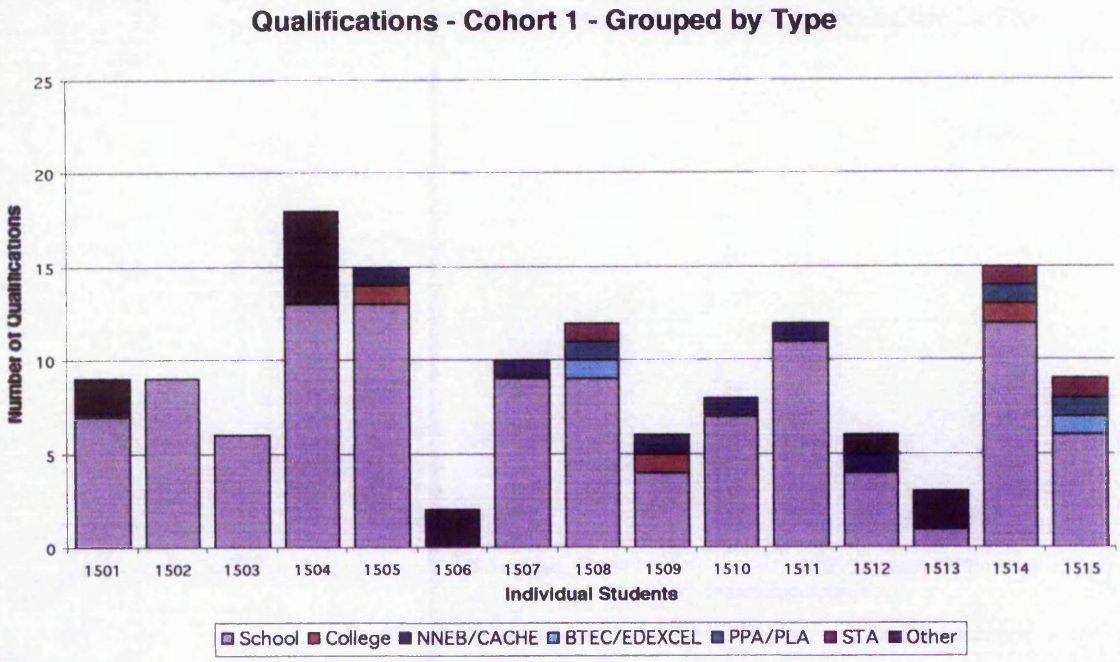


Figure 5.6

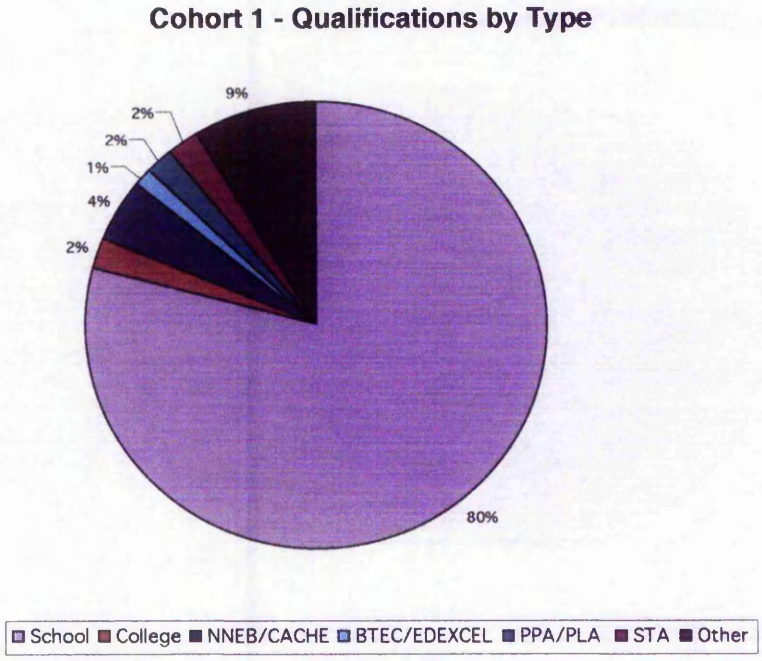


Figure 5.7

For Cohort 2 the picture, shown in figures 5.8 and 5.9, is similar, with again the largest number of qualifications achieved at school. Whilst there is no one in this cohort without school-achieved qualifications, for a small number of students this is the only set of qualifications gained. In this cohort however, there is an increase in the number of qualifications achieved at college, some of which are the result of retakes of qualifications first attempted at school. On the other end of the spectrum from the students with only school-achieved qualifications, there is one student who holds qualifications in six of the seven groupings.

Again this suggests there might be an informal type of progression taking place through the various childcare qualifications, such that as individuals complete one qualification, they look around for something else that will fulfil their need to study and add to their professional expertise. Anecdotal evidence prior to the inquiry had suggested this was because there was no formal progression towards what some students required... a teaching degree.

Again, the largest proportion of qualifications, 73%, is achieved in school, with a further 10% achieved at college. Of the remaining 17%, the 'other' qualifications undertaken by individuals makes up 7% and the largest percentage for childcare courses is the NNEB/CACHE with 4%. In addition to the increase in qualifications taken in college, and the single widely studied student, there is one student who unusually has four 'other' qualifications. This is explained by her working in a particular area of health and social care which required in-depth study in a specific area of specialism. The four qualifications represent her professional development and promotion through a number of specific jobs in her area of specialism.

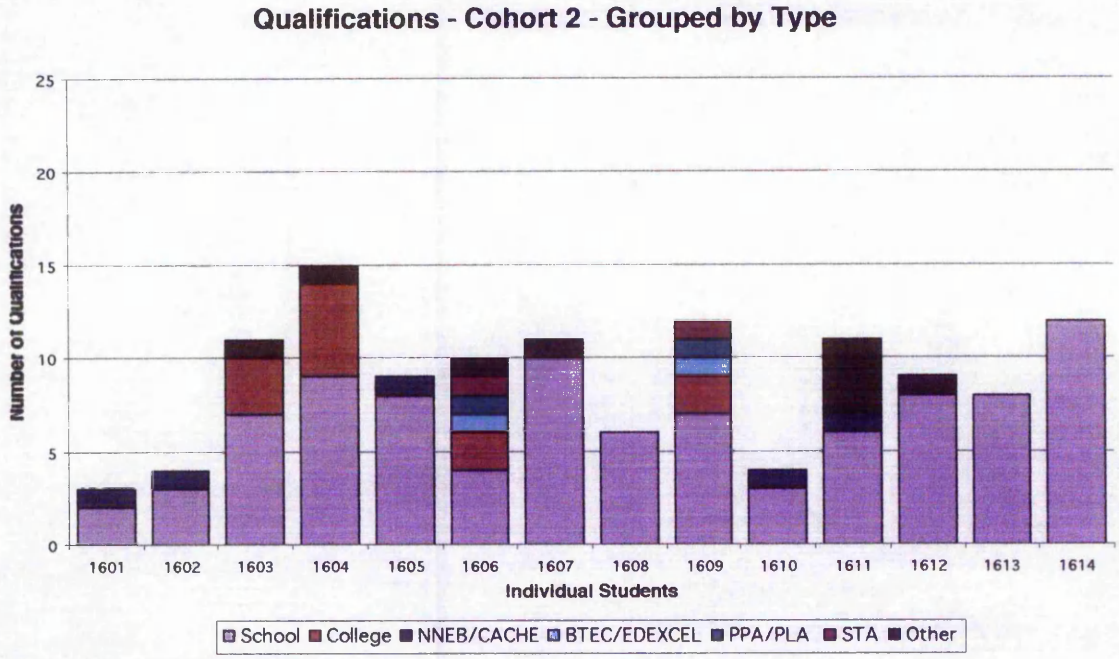


Figure 5.8

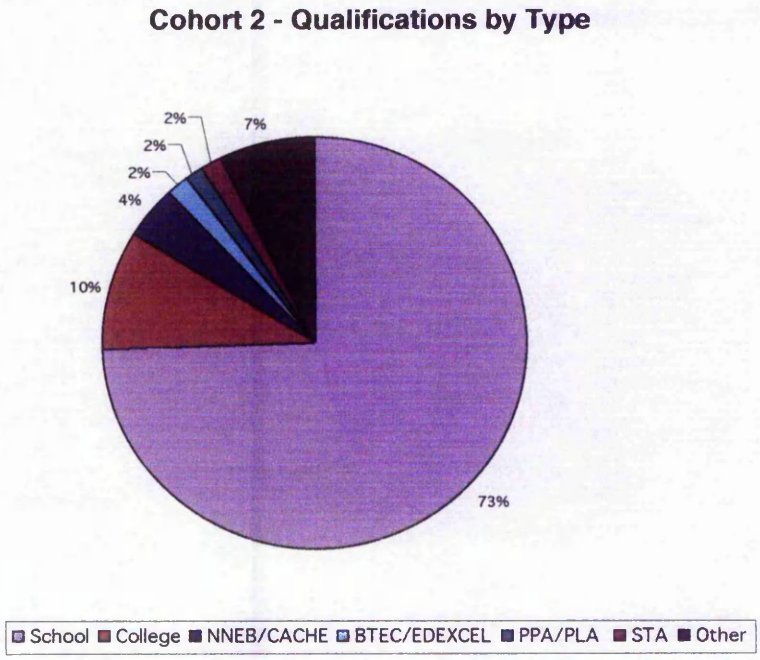


Figure 5.9

Cohort 3, overall, has less variation between individual students, due in part to the smaller number in the cohort. All the students have gained qualifications at school and have additional qualifications of one sort or another. Three students have qualifications from five of the seven qualification groups, again suggesting there might be links between the child care courses at least of an informal nature in terms of progression or a desire to broaden the scope of their expertise.

In this cohort the percentage of qualifications gained at school was lower than in the previous cohorts, but the college-achieved percentage had increased. All of the childcare qualifications had increased their percentages whilst the 'other' qualifications were reduced. These figures suggest all the members of this cohort are more involved in childcare and education related jobs, which require these qualifications, rather than in Cohorts 1 and 2 where there would appear to be more students working on other fields. This will be examined in greater detail in the sections on 'Job Titles' and 'INSET Training'.

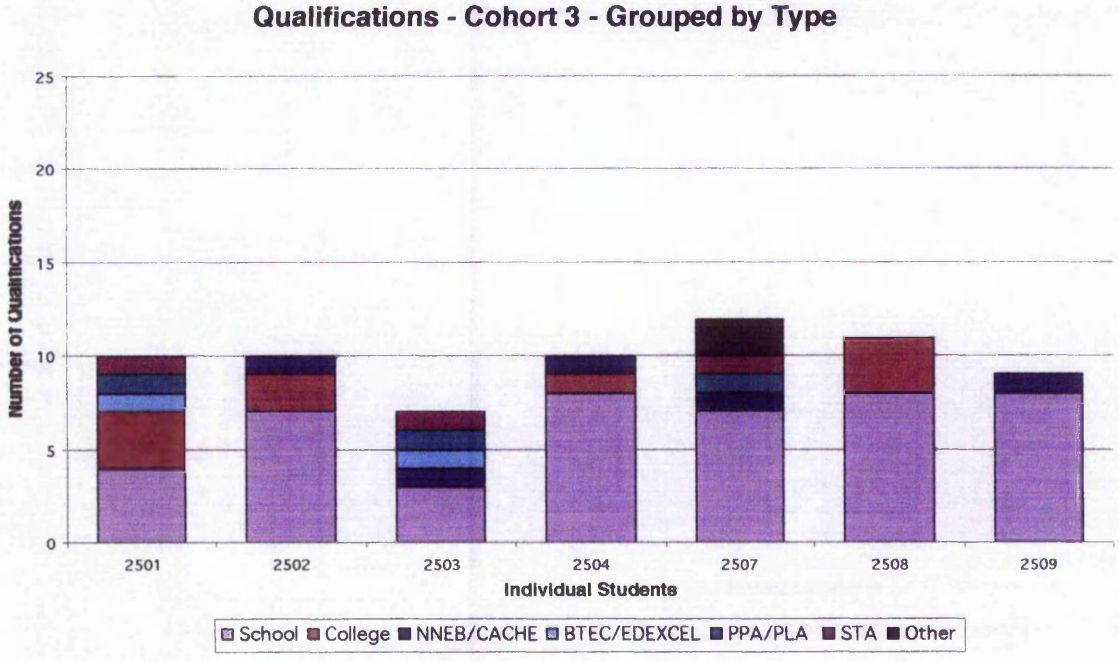


Figure 5.10

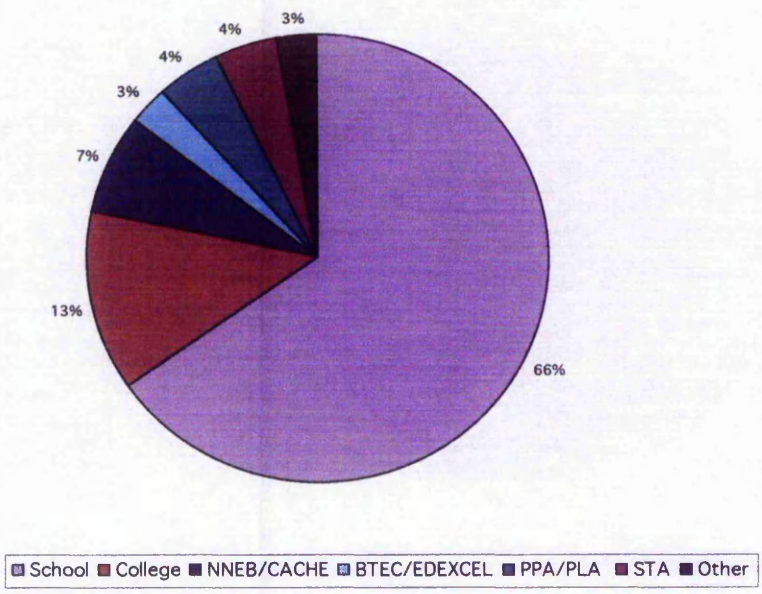


Figure 5.11

Cohort 4 had the fewest number of students who had a number of qualifications ranging from 3 to 13, although the average was 9.5, shown in Figures 5.12 and 5.13. The student with the least number of qualifications had also gained no qualifications at school. In terms of percentages, the school-achieved qualifications compared with those achieved by Cohort 3 but were less than in Cohorts 1 & 2. The 'other' qualifications remained at 3% whilst no one achieved any qualifications in the BTEC / EDEXCEL or PPA/ PLA groupings. The significant qualifications in this cohort however were those of NNEB / CACHE and STA groupings. They account for 14% and 10% of the overall percentage of qualifications achieved. When the individual student profiles are examined, it becomes obvious this is because each student in this cohort holds both the NNEB / CACHE and STA qualifications. This clearly marks the cohort out as one of two that, rather than studying for the BTEC HNC, are instead aiming for a Certificate in Higher Education (CHE) for which the STA course in this instance, is an entry requirement.

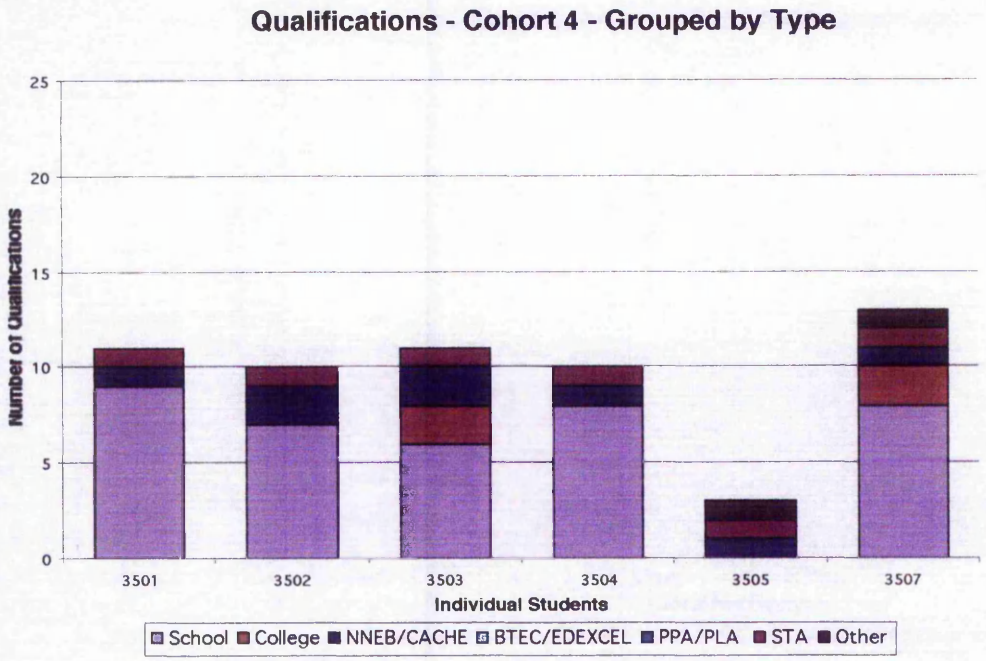


Figure 5.12

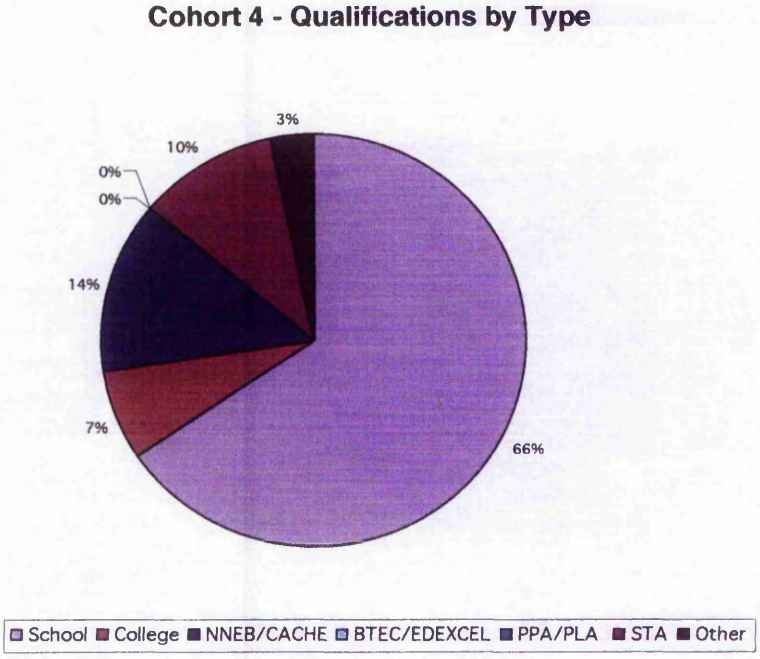


Figure 5.13

Cohort 5 is the other group of students studying for the CHE and their qualification profiles again reflect this aspect. They are a larger number of students in comparison to Cohort 4, with the number of qualifications spanning from ranging from 4 to 11. Of all the cohorts, they have gained the least percentage of their qualifications at school (55%) but have a similar profile to Cohort 3 in terms of those achieved at college. Again, this group have a very small percentage of qualifications with the BTEC / EDEXCEL and PPA / PLA groupings with 0% and 1% respectively. However a significant percentage of qualifications are achieved through NNEB / CACHE and STA both with 13%. Again this is reflected in the individual profiles, as all bar one of the students hold the NNEB qualification and all hold the STA certificate.

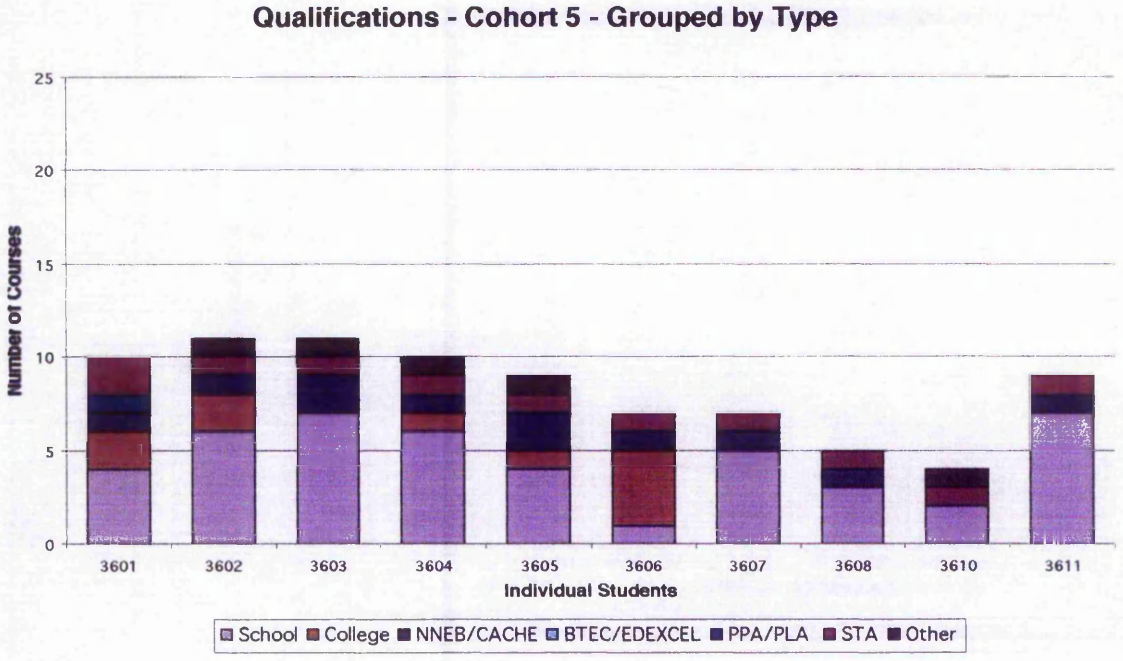


Figure 5.14

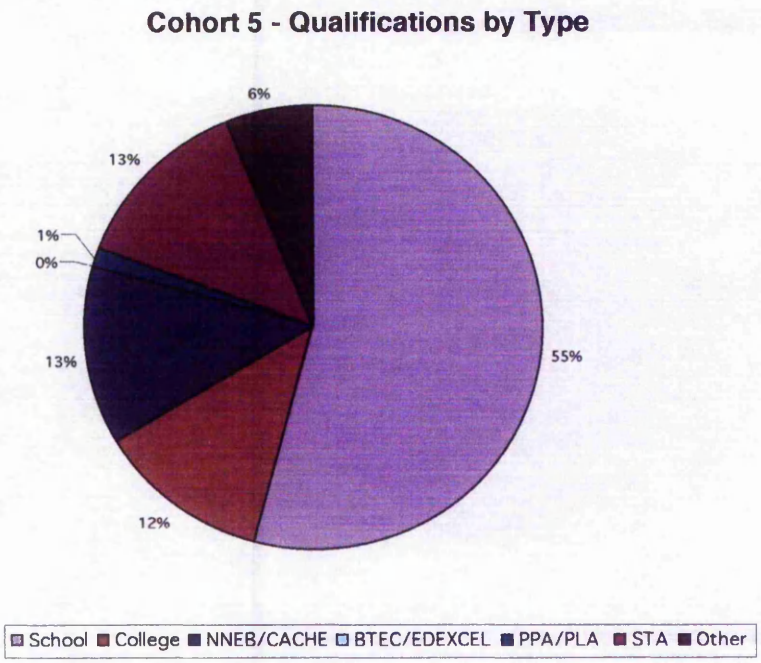


Figure 5.15

So the overall picture for all the cohorts, shown in Figure 5.16 is that the largest percentages for qualifications are those achieved in school with 71%. In the remaining 29% the NNEB / CACHE and STA qualifications along with those achieved at college and in 'other' ways are relatively similar. The PPA / PLA and BTEC / EDEXCEL however have very small percentages of only 2% and 1% respectively

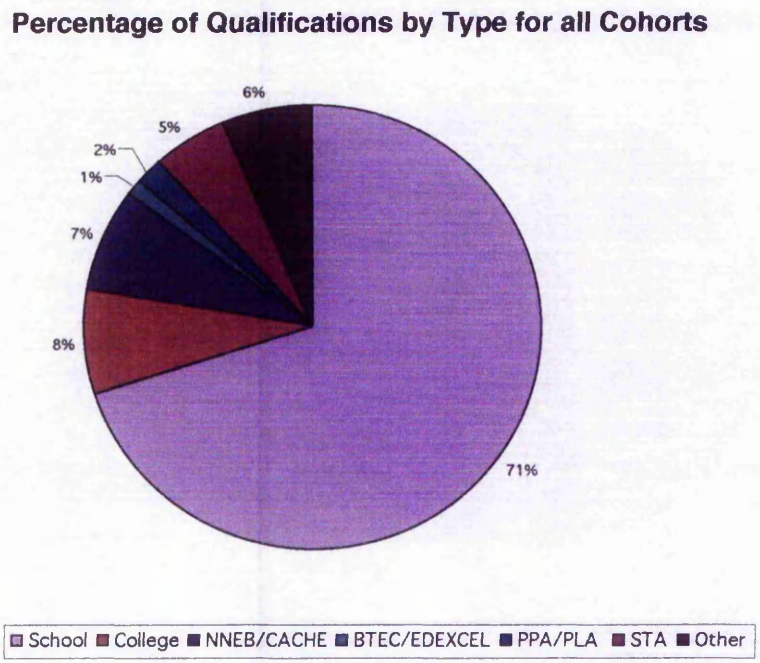


Figure 5.16

It is clear from the evidence that the students involved in the study have a great number of a great range of qualifications, yet they have not, with two exceptions, enrolled on any degree courses. The type and level of qualifications play a significant part in entry requirements for degree course with very specific demands for Initial Teacher Education degrees. The question then, is not about the number, range or variety of qualifications these students hold, but rather *what* are these qualifications and *what level* are they at, within the National Framework of Qualifications?

In order to examine this issue further, the data for school and colleges-based qualifications, which accounted for 79% of all the qualifications achieved by all cohorts, was broken down into the component parts of CSE, GCE, GCSE and A-Levels.

Again, there are clear differences between the cohorts, some of which can be attributed to the relative ages of the members of each cohort and the time at which qualifications were taken. A brief glance at *what* qualifications are achieved, shows an age spread of students which spans the changes to the British secondary school examination system that took place during the 1980's, when the Certificate in Secondary Education (CSE) and the General Certificate in Education (GCE) were replaced by the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE).

For older students in the study, their original school-achieved qualifications could be either or both of these first two qualifications. Any qualifications taken after 1986, would have been GCSE's. Hence, some of the older students hold some of all of these different types whilst younger students can only hold GCSE's. As 37 out of 52 (71%) of all the students were old enough to have left school by 1986 (i.e. been over 16 years old), this would explain the high proportion of CSE and GCE qualifications held by the students in this study.

Percentage of School and College-achieved Qualifications

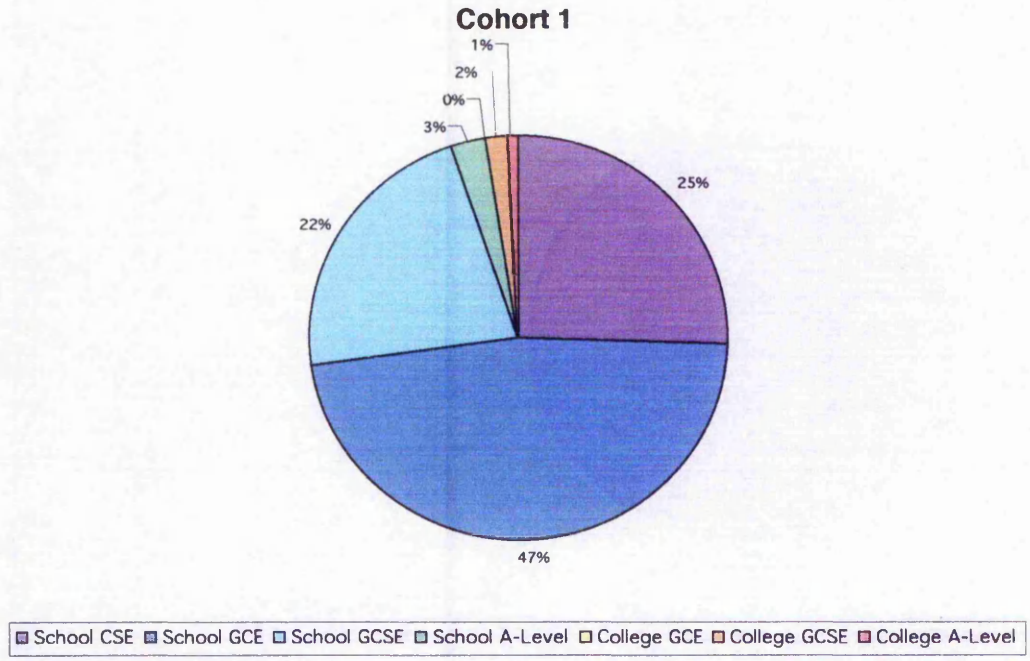


Figure 5.17

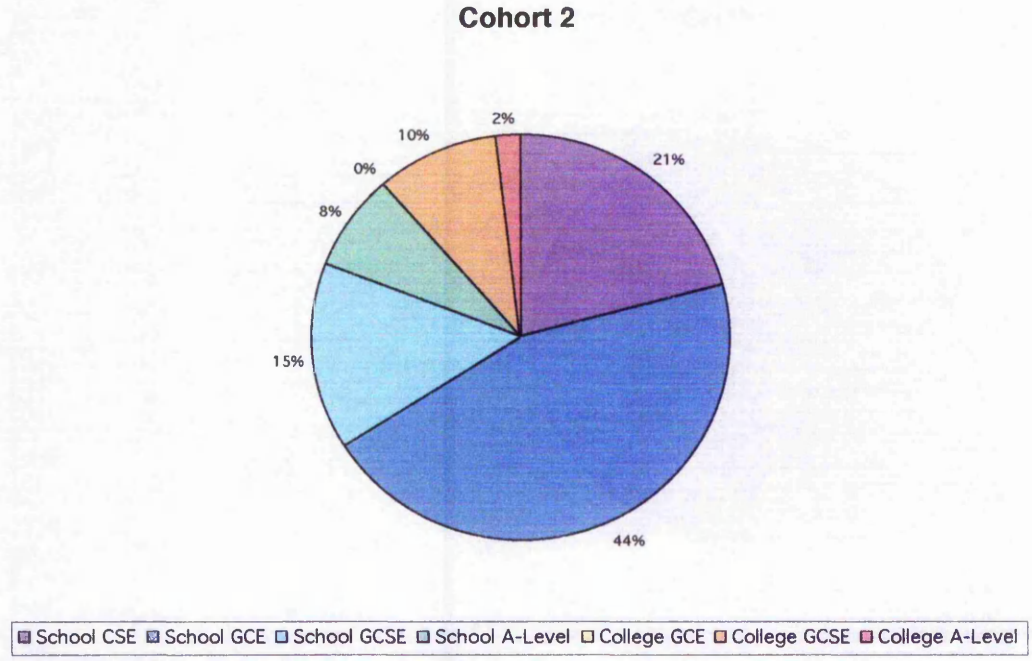


Figure 5.18

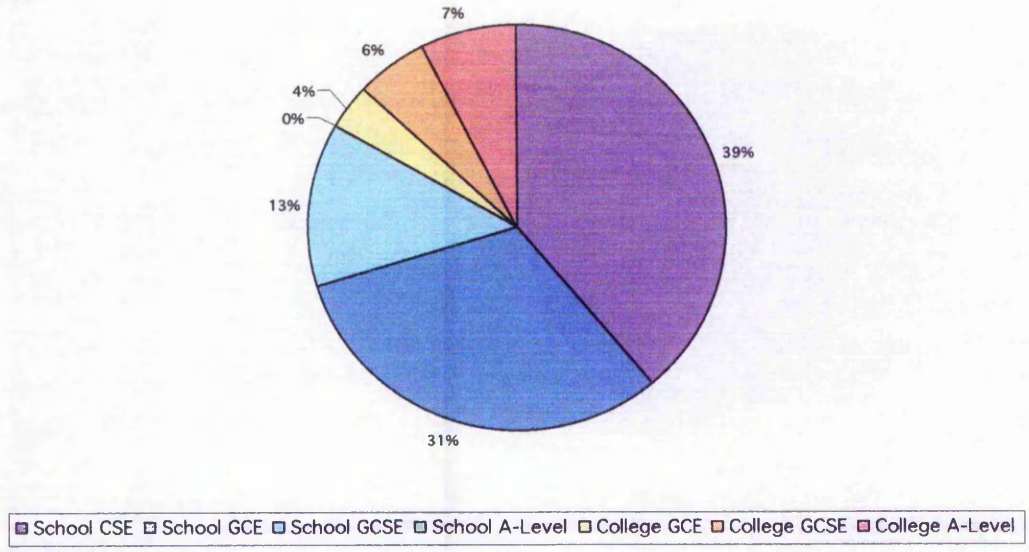


Figure 5.19

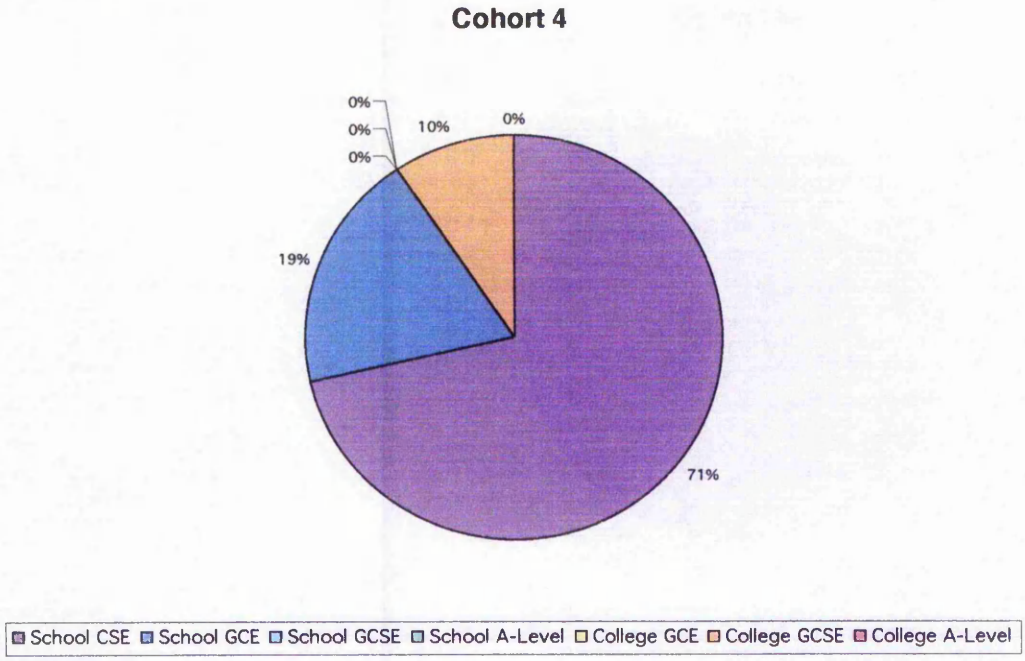


Figure 5.20

The high proportion of CSE's and GCE's is therefore particularly evident in Cohorts 4 and 5 shown in Figures 5.20 and 5.21. There is however, a large percentage of college-achieved GCSE's in Cohort 5 which suggests a marked attempt to upgrade and add to the original CSE and GCE qualifications held by this particular group of students. This may also be in response to the changing entry requirements for Initial Teacher Education degrees.

Of all the cohorts, Cohort 2 has the largest ercentage of A-levels achieved at school, and at school and college combined. Cohort 3 has the highest percentage achieved at college.

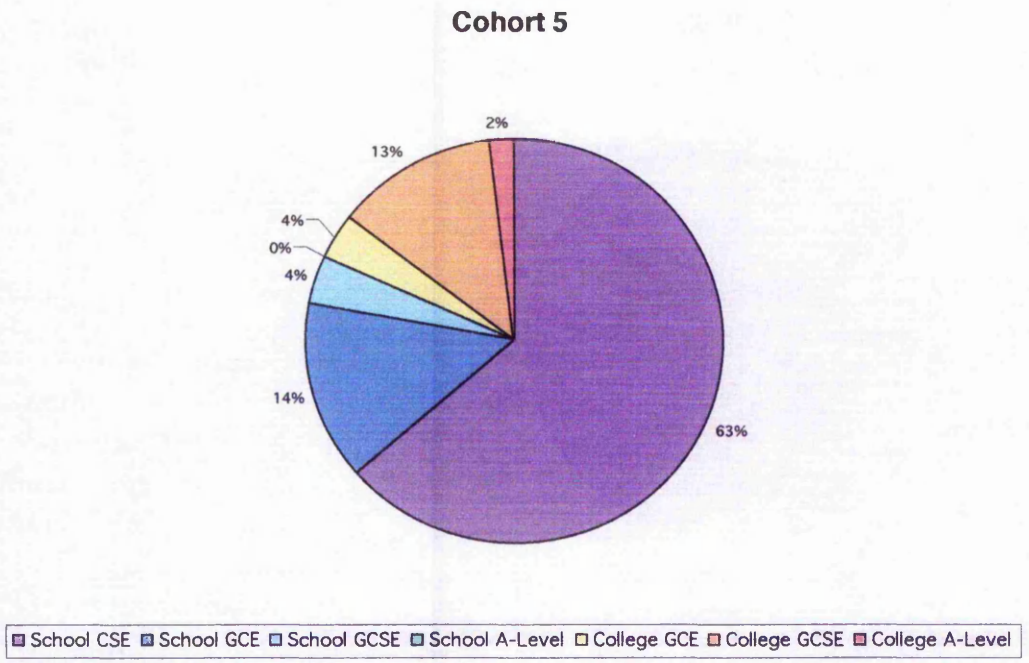


Figure 5.21

Overall though, the combined school and college percentage total of A-levels is only 5% (3% at school and 2% at college) of all the qualifications achieved by all the students, a fact that will be discussed in greater depth, further on.

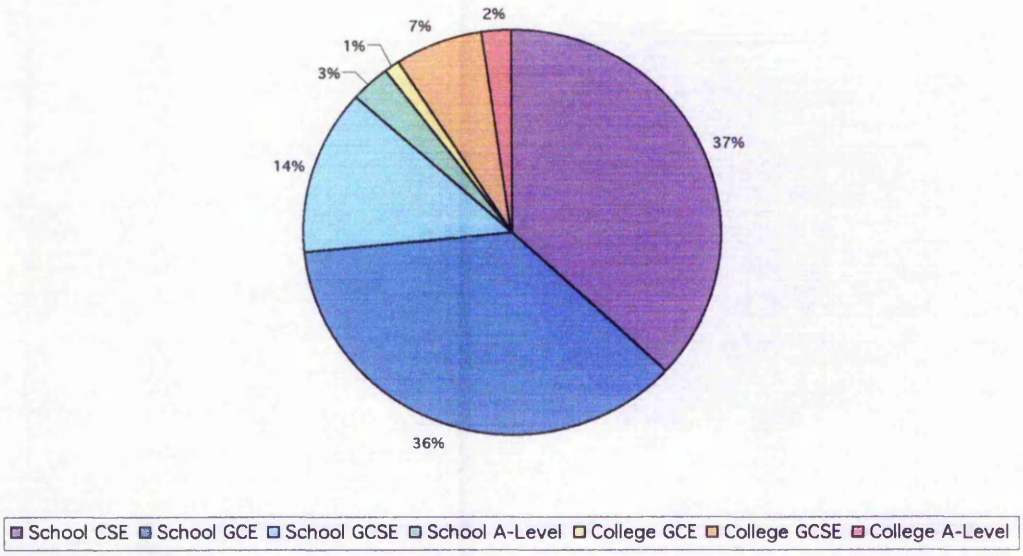


Figure 5.22

Job Titles

The third section of the questionnaire asked the students to supply a list of all the jobs they had held, which involved working with children. This was to include work experience and voluntary jobs as well as paid employment. The title of the job was defined as any title that had been used in a job description, by employers such as the Local Education Authority, school or private nursery. In addition to the title, the students were also asked provide information about the length of time they had spent in that position, the type of setting and the age of the children involved. This information helped to define the role more precisely.

Once again, a long list resulted. Most of the initial childcare qualifications held by many of the students allow for employment across a range of sectors not just education. Each sector had its own set of job titles and descriptions, some, but not all of which matched or overlapped with other sectors' descriptions.

Hence it was possible for the same individual to do a similar job with small groups of children in a range of sectors and yet have different job titles, different hours, different responsibilities and different pay scales.

Again face to face conversations with individual students and in some cases whole cohorts, allowed for some checking to discount duplications. However, even with these checks, a long list of 66 job titles remained. Difficulties in showing the whole list clearly within the graphs resulted in a decision to group the job titles according to sectors. It was felt this was a realistic way of dealing with the issue as the students had revealed in discussions that they used information about sectors described in job advertisements to determine whether or not to apply for jobs.

Hence a job advert entitled "Nursery Worker" which detailed "a private day nursery... with hours of 7am -7pm" would indicate one type of role and sector, whilst another with the same title but that detailed " 60-place school nursery ... with hours of 8.30pm-12.30pm" would indicate another sector and role.

The list was then sub-divided into the five sectors as had been suggested by the discussions. One was entitled "Personal / Home" which included all babysitting, informal child-minding, work experience and some voluntary work. The "Social Services", "Health Service" and "Education" sectors contain the job titles that each sector oversees, so for example the Social Services sector deals with playgroups and formal child-minding whilst Education deals with jobs involving schools. The "Private" sector covers jobs in establishments owned by private individuals such as private day nurseries or jobs with individual families. (Appendix 14)

By showing the data in three graphs for each cohort, it is possible to see, firstly which sector has offered the most employment and to whom, secondly which sectors different individuals have worked in and thirdly, the percentage of jobs per cohort held in each sector.

In Cohort 1 for example, the Education sector has clearly provided the most employment with 22 out of the 56 jobs held. There are also five individuals who have held 4 or more different positions within the same sector. It is also obvious that six students have only ever worked in one sector, five in Education and one in the Health Service. However, three individuals have worked in 3 sectors and the number of jobs held by individuals ranges from 7 down to just 1. This single case, is in fact the youngest student in the study. Overall, Education and Social Services sectors have provided the largest percentages of employment for this cohort.

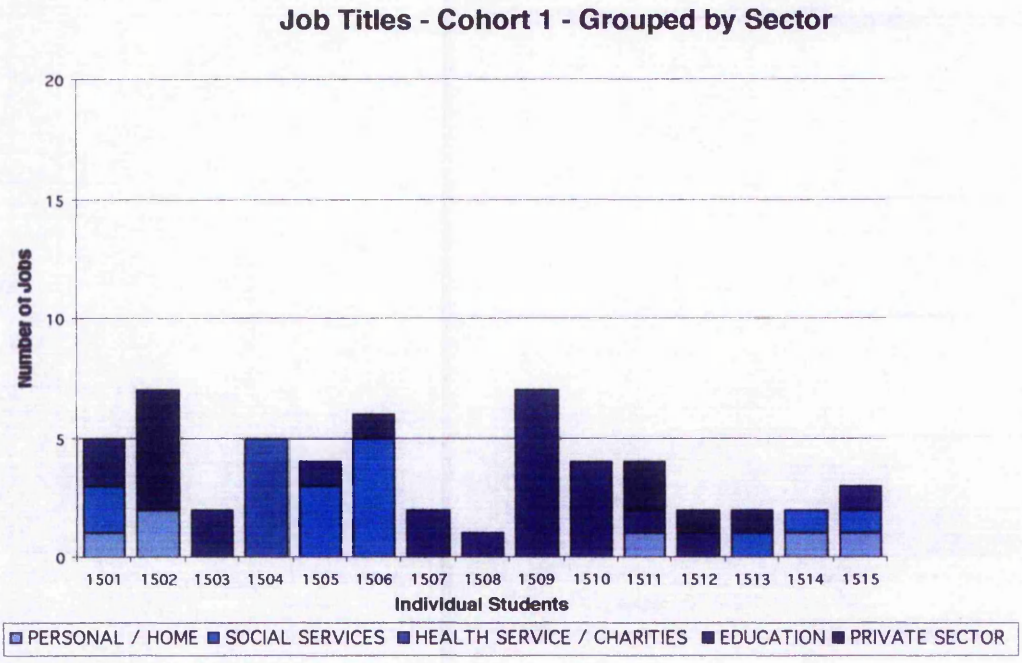


Figure 5.23

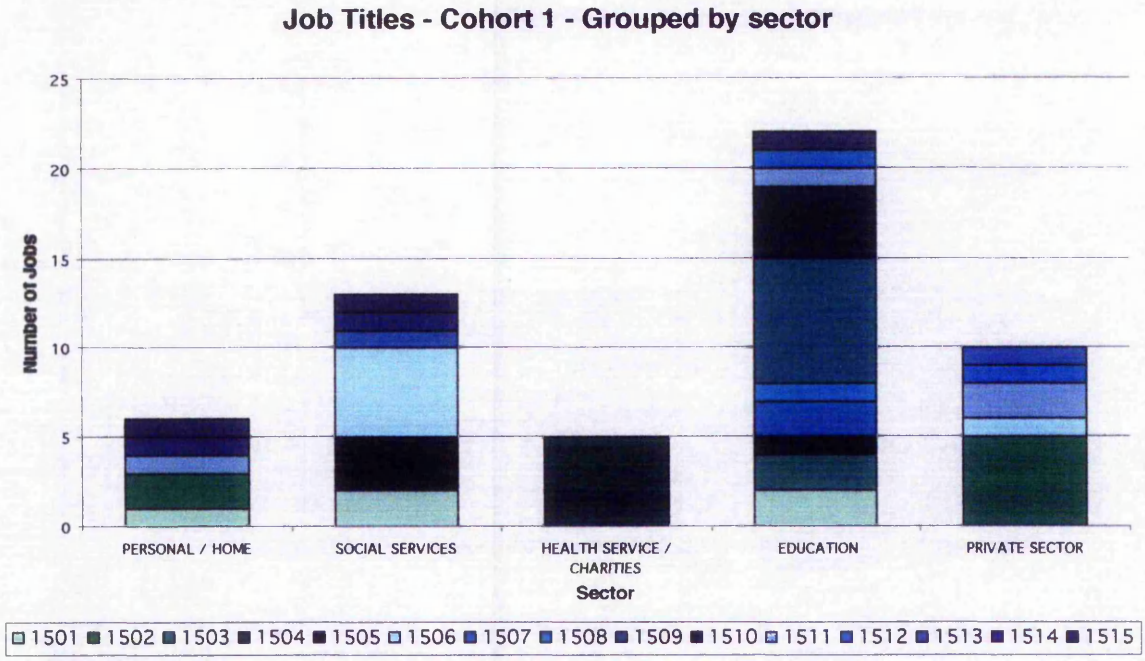


Figure 5.24

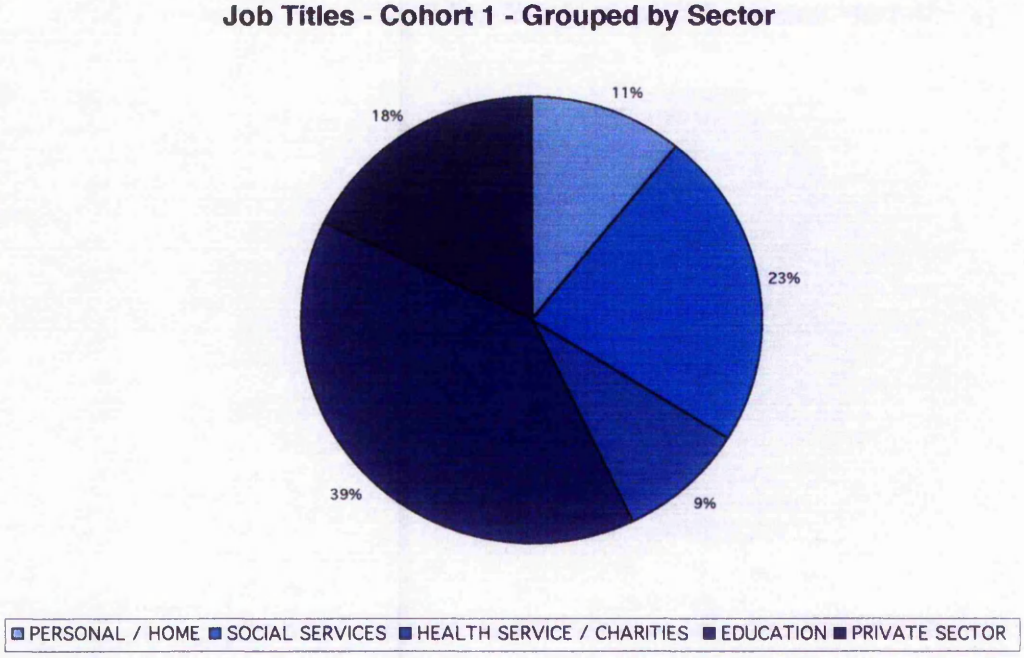


Figure 5.25

For Cohort 2, the Education sector once again provides the majority of the jobs with 24 out of a total of 60, with only three students had been employed in 4 or more jobs within the same sector. Closer examination shows three students had worked in only one sector and of those two had only had one job. In contrast to this however, three students had worked in four out of five sectors and again the number of jobs per person ranged from 7 down to 1. Overall, the Education and the Social Services sectors still provided the largest percentage of jobs with 40% and 23% respectively.

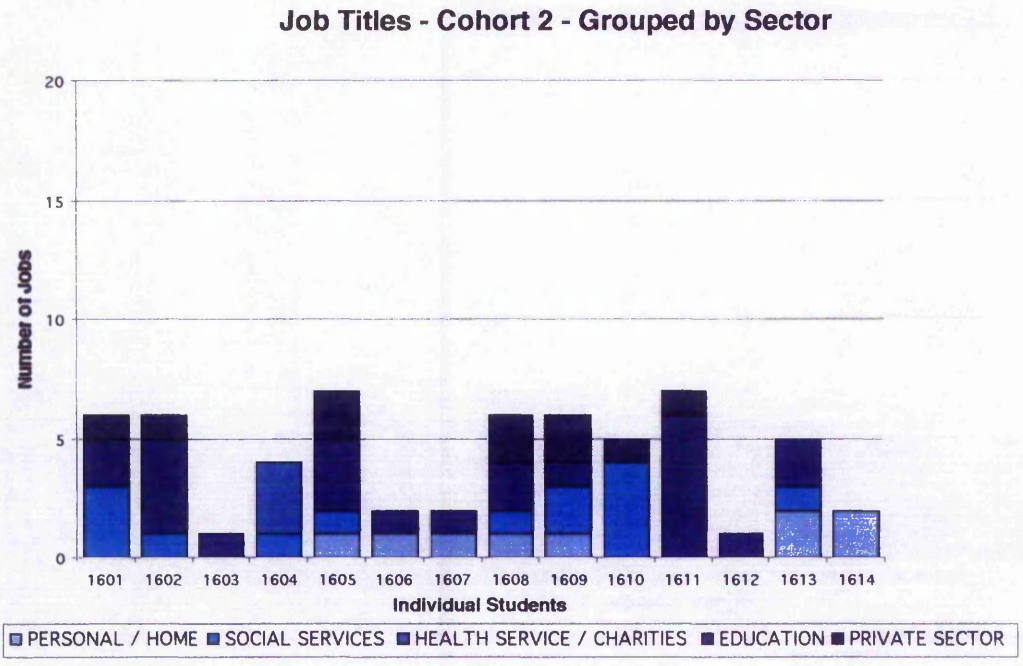


Figure 5.26

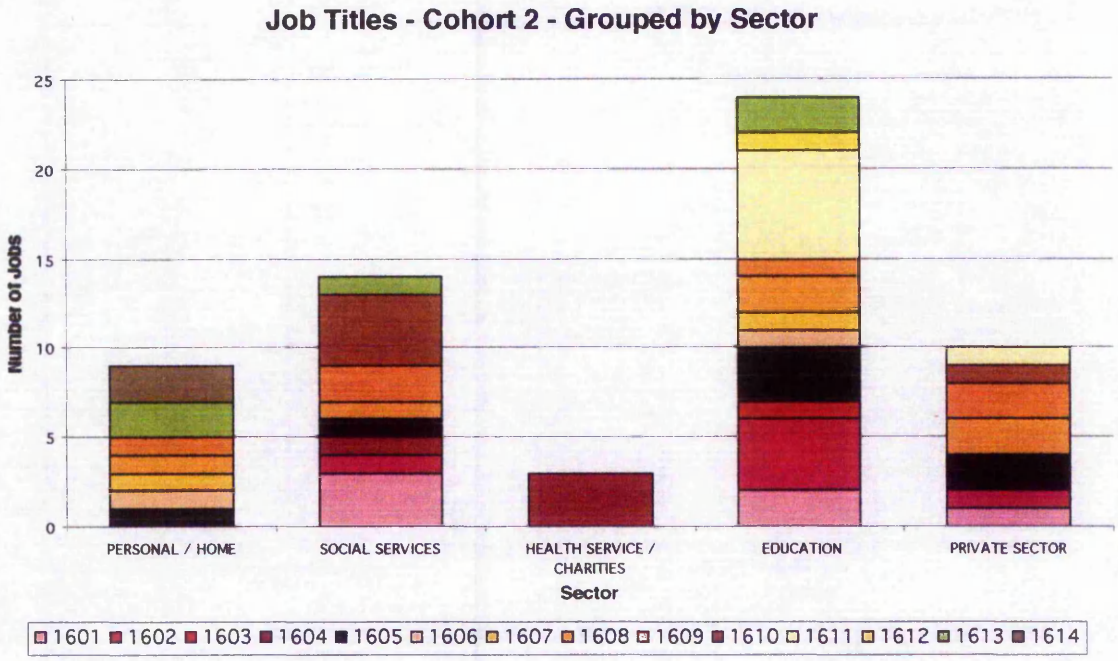


Figure 5.27

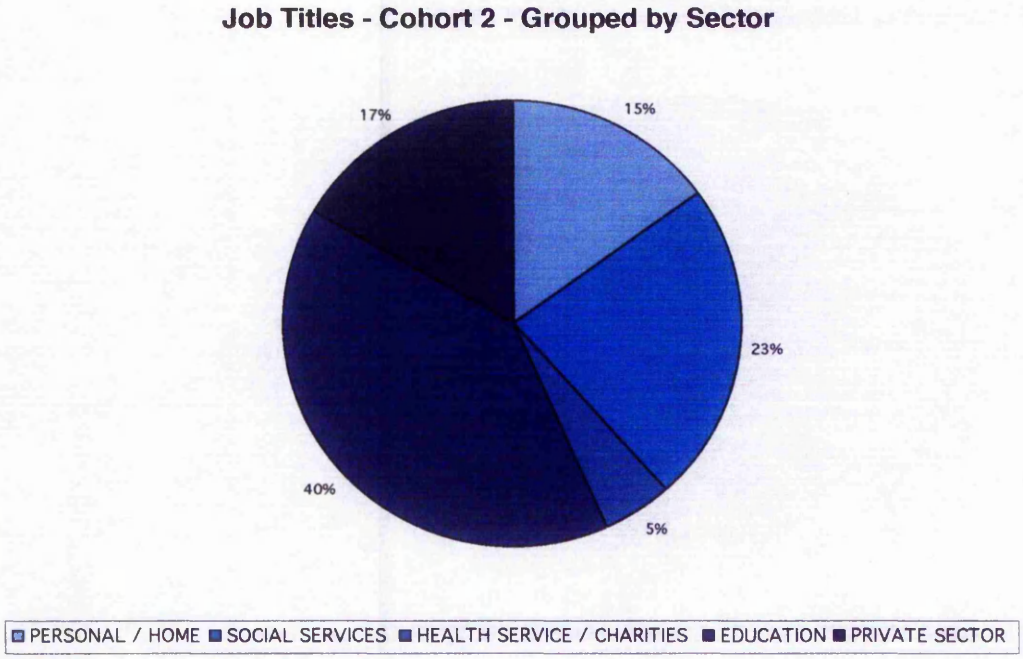


Figure 5.28

Interestingly in Cohort 3, perhaps due to the small number of students, no individual had worked in the Health Service sector, although in the previous two cohorts (with larger numbers of students) there had still only been one individual per cohort working in the sector, albeit in a number of different roles.

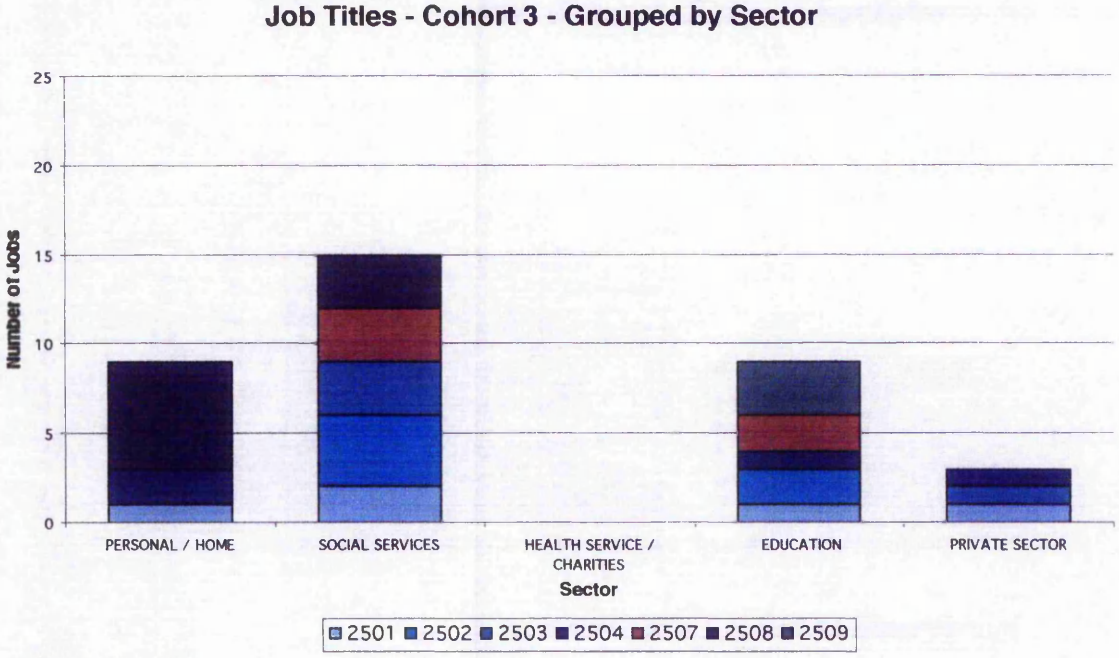


Figure 5.29

This cohort also differs from the first two, in that the Social Services sector has provided the most employment with 15 out of 36 (42%) jobs and five out of the seven students have found employment within the sector. A different combination of five of the students have also found employment in the Education sector. Only one student has remained working in one sector whilst one other student has held jobs in four of the five sectors.

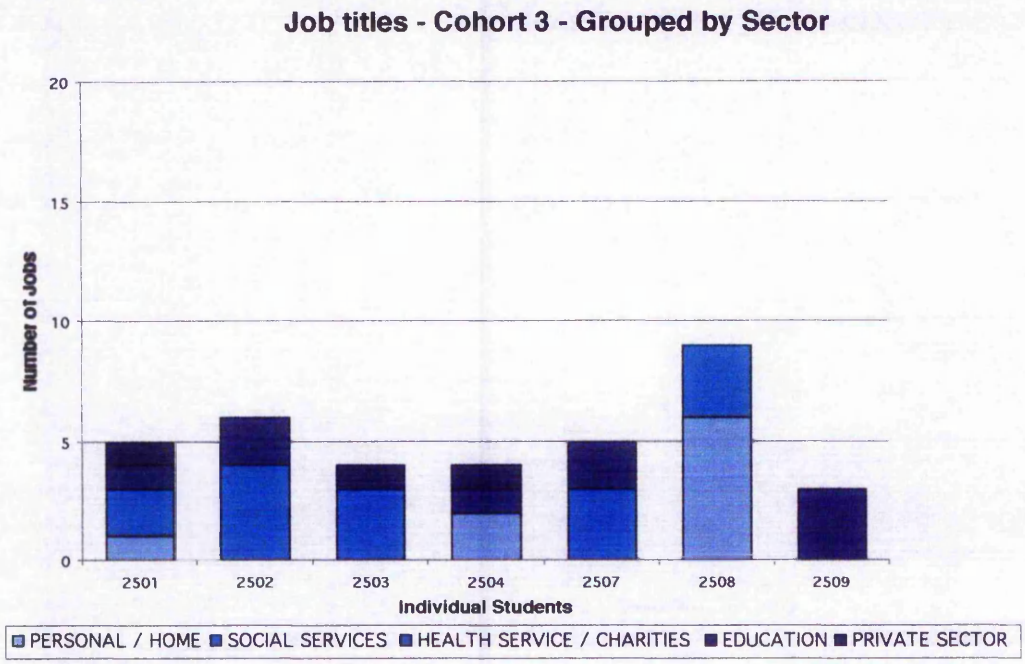


Figure 5.30

Overall, the Social Services and Education sectors accounted for 67% of all the jobs held, but the former had the largest percentage with 42% whilst the latter was identical to the Personal sector with 25%.

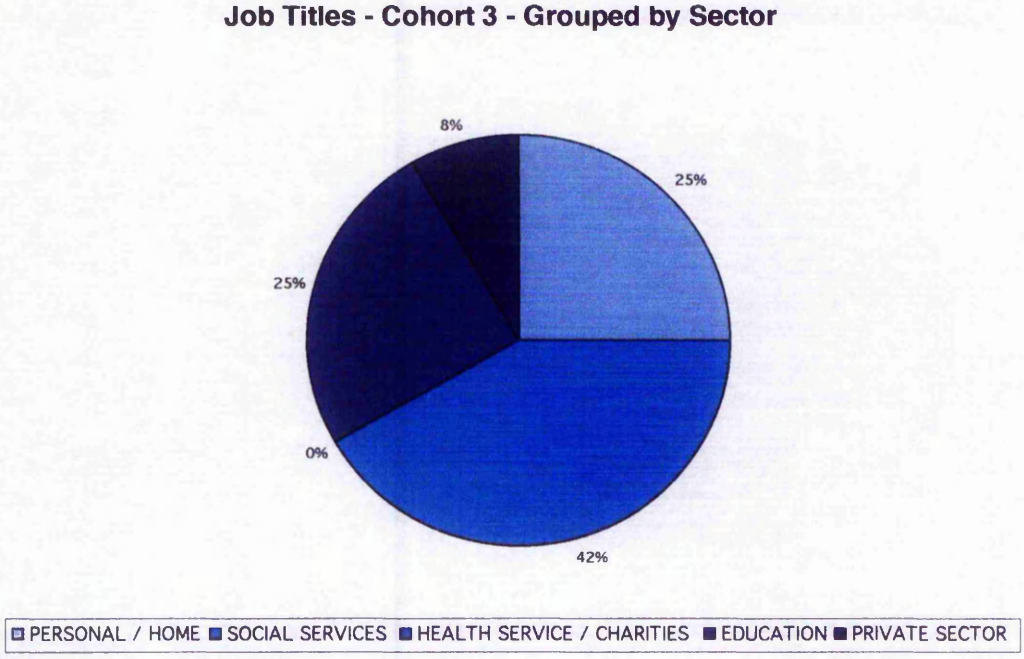


Figure 5.31

In Cohort 4, with the least number of students, the emphasis changes again. This time the Personal / Home sector accounts for 20 out of 47 jobs (43 %) with five of the six students gaining work experience with children in three of more 'jobs' each. Roles in this sector may be voluntary, yet the experience gained is seen as worthwhile particularly when individuals are being considered for entry to basic childcare courses.

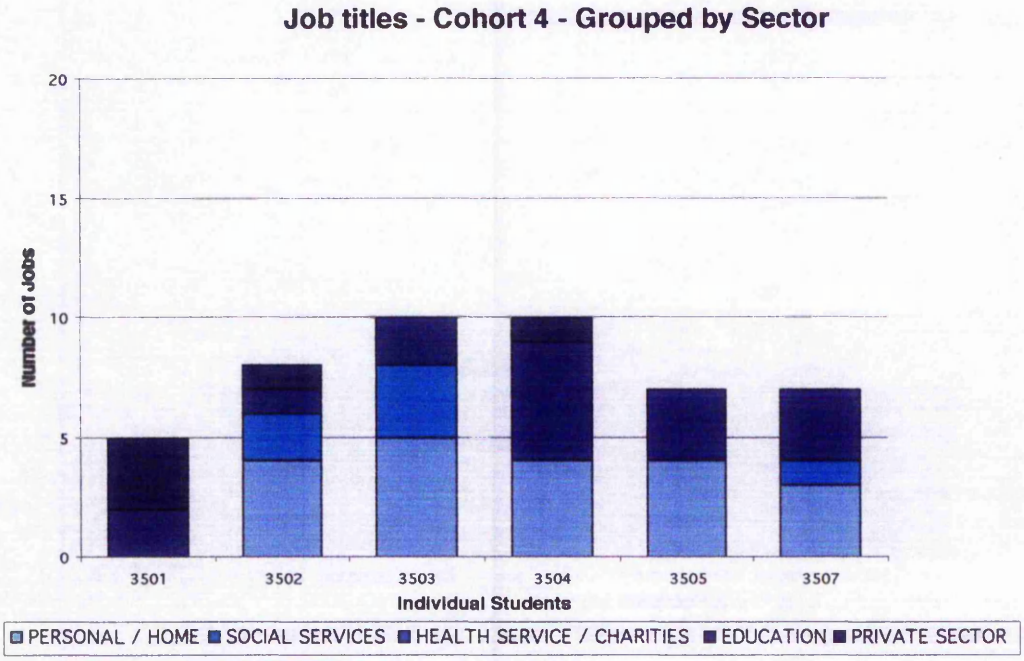


Figure 5.32

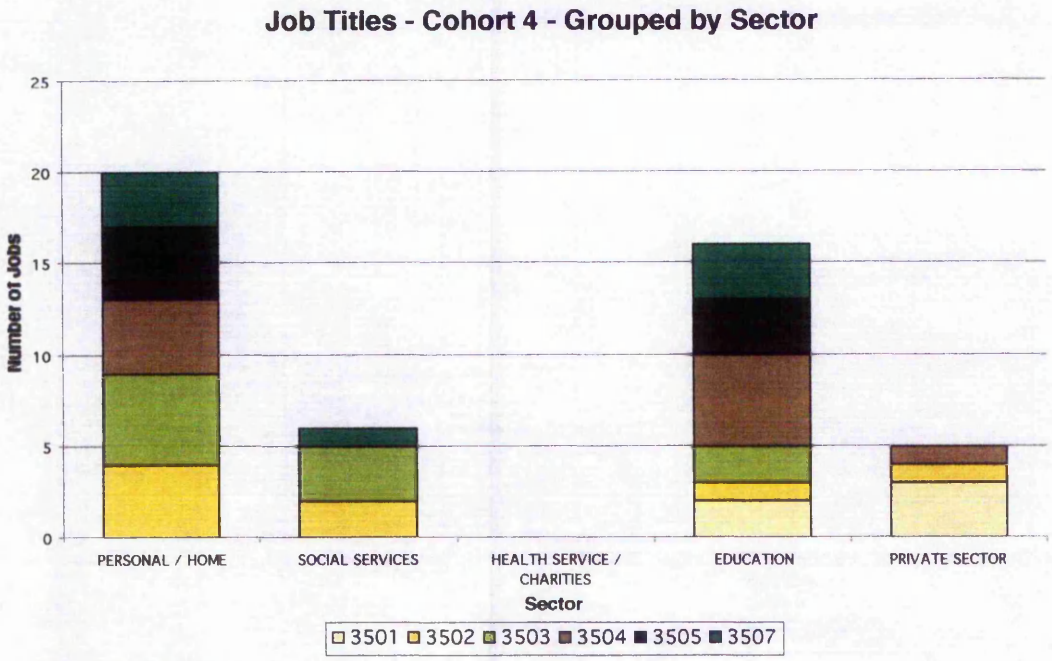


Figure 5.33

This is also the first cohort in which one sector, Education, has provided employment for every individual in the cohort. But again no student has been employed in the Health Service and Charities sector. All of the students have worked in at least two sectors, with some in three or four. The number of jobs range from 10 down to 5.

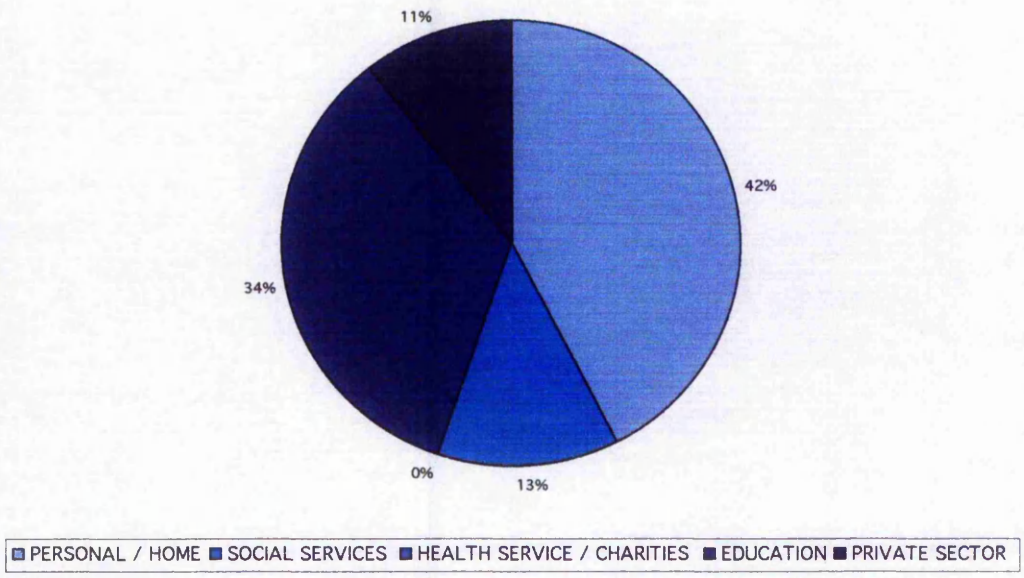


Figure 5.34

Overall, the largest percentage of jobs held is in the Personal / Home sector with 42% with those in the Education sector accounting for 34%.

Cohort 5 sees a return to the largest percentage of students being employed in the Education sector. The interesting aspect about this cohort is the sheer number of jobs held by this group of ten students. Between them they have held 126 roles. This is twice as many as any other cohort. A consequence of this has been the need to alter the axis scales on the graph in order to accommodate all the information.

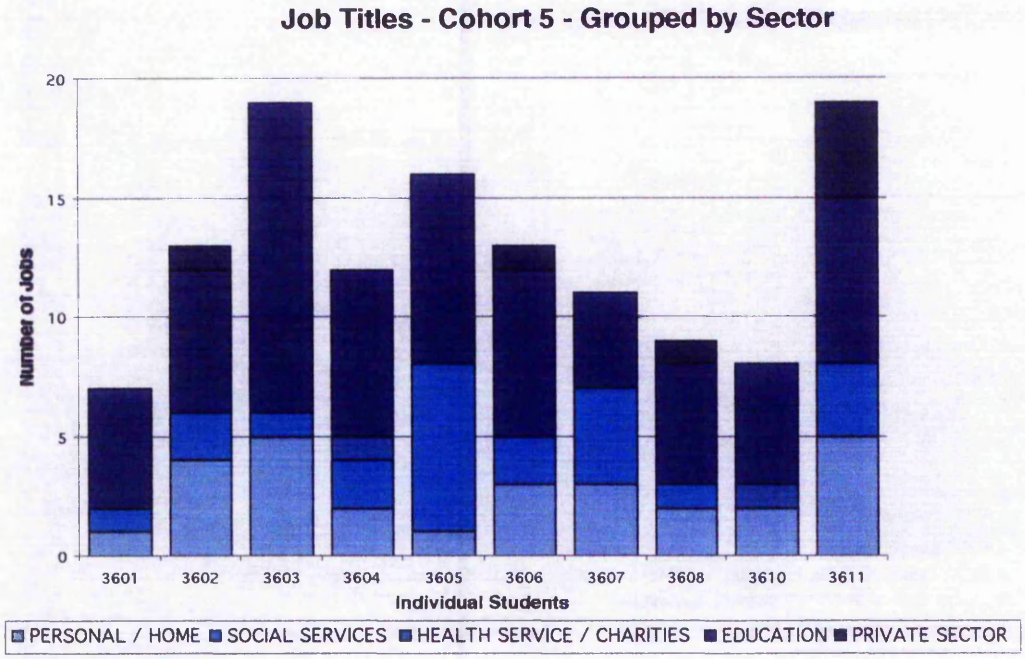


Figure 5.35

Another interesting feature of this cohort is that every student has held a job role within both the Education and Personal / Home sectors and only one individual in the group has not also held a post within the Social Services sector. Perhaps this is because this individual is one of only two to work in the Health Service sector.

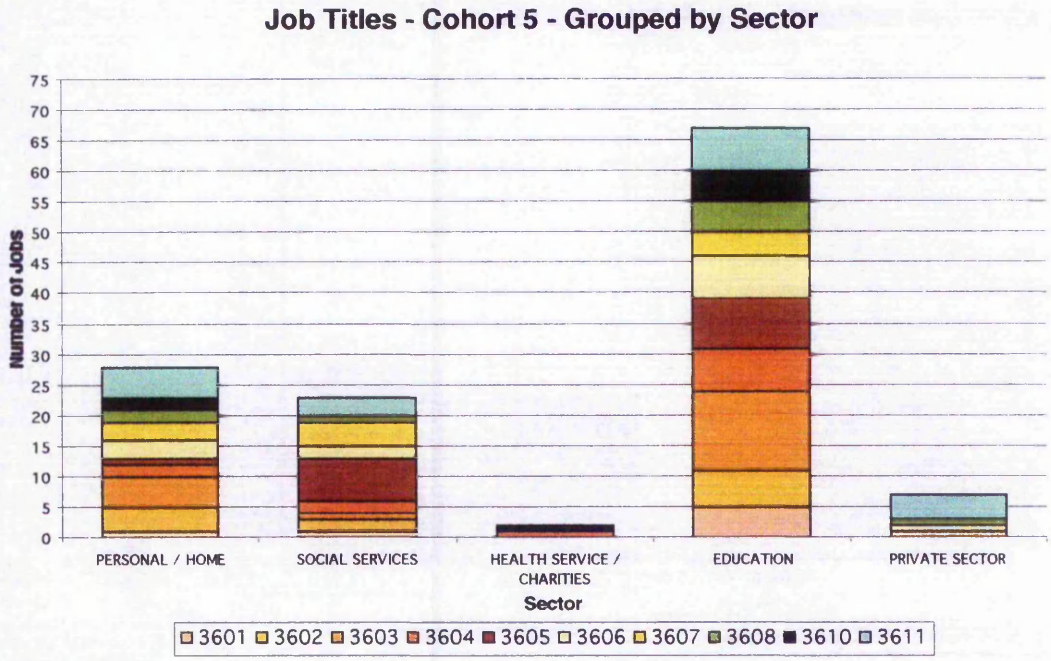


Figure 5.36

Looked at individually this group also appears unique in the study as every student has worked in at least three sectors and some in four. The number of jobs held range from 19 to 7 but significantly the number in the Education sector range from 13 to 4 and encompasses every student. Overall the education sector, although having the largest percentage, still only accounts for 42% of all the jobs with the Social Services and Personal / Home sectors sharing second place with 22% each.

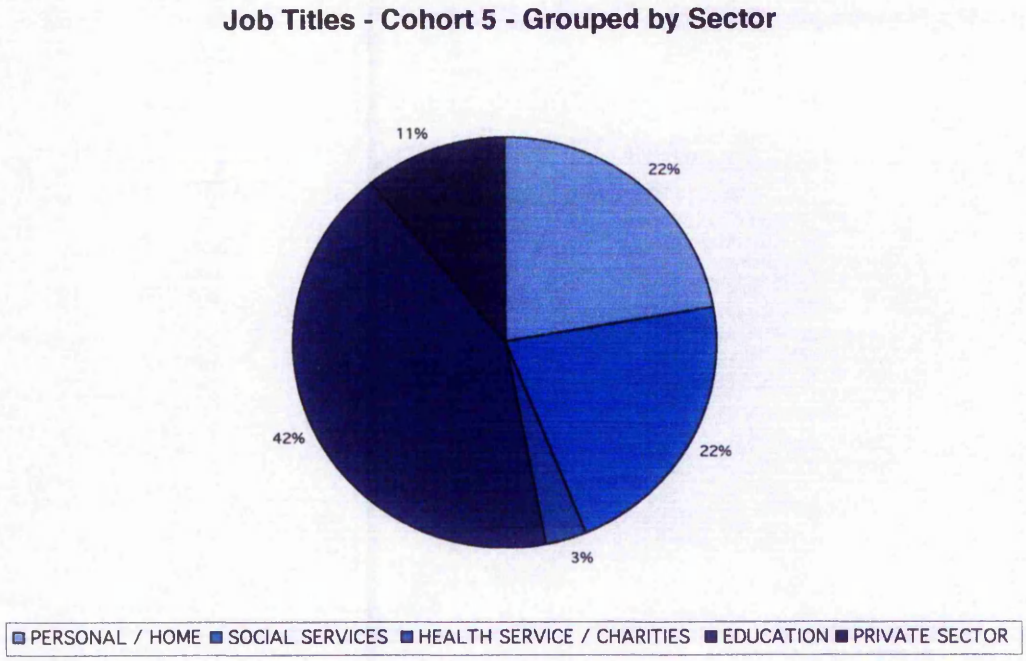


Figure 5.37

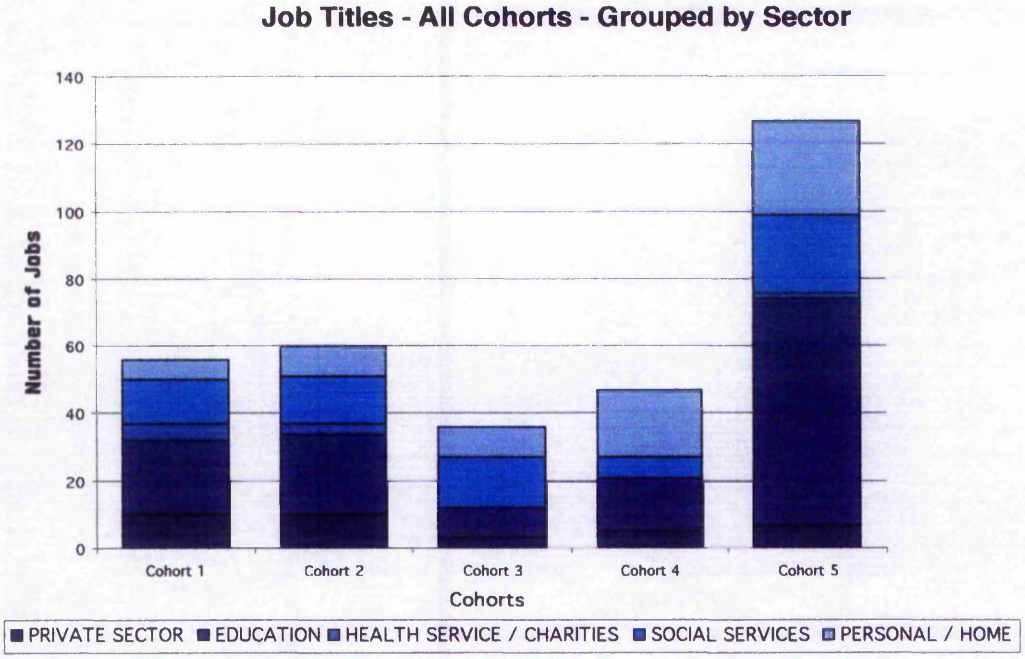


Figure 5.38

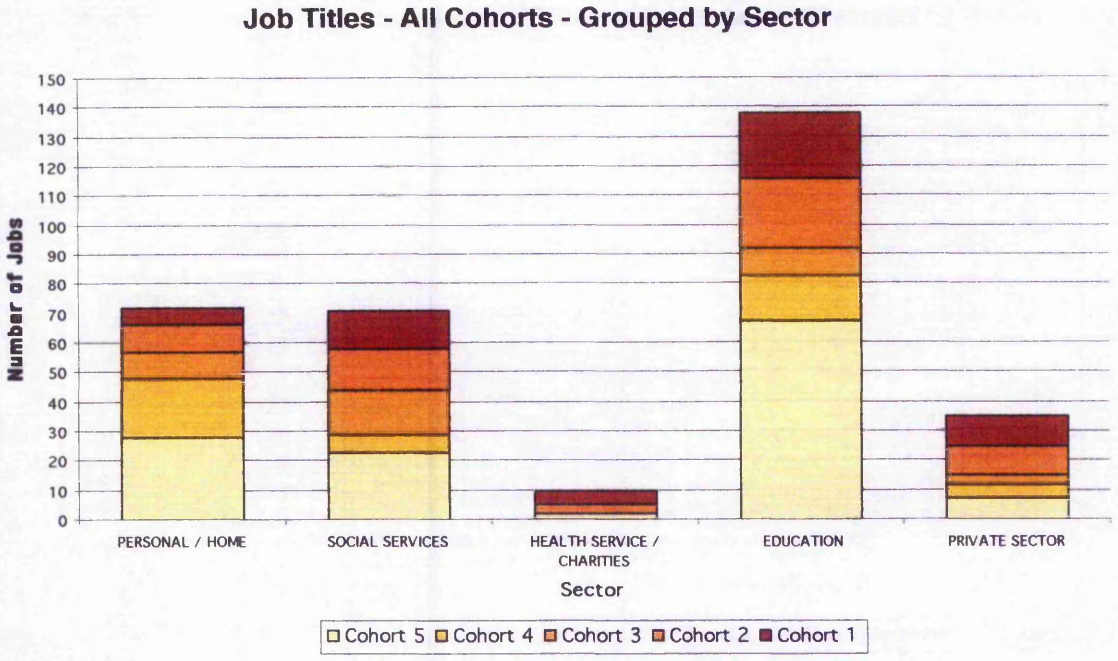


Figure 5.39

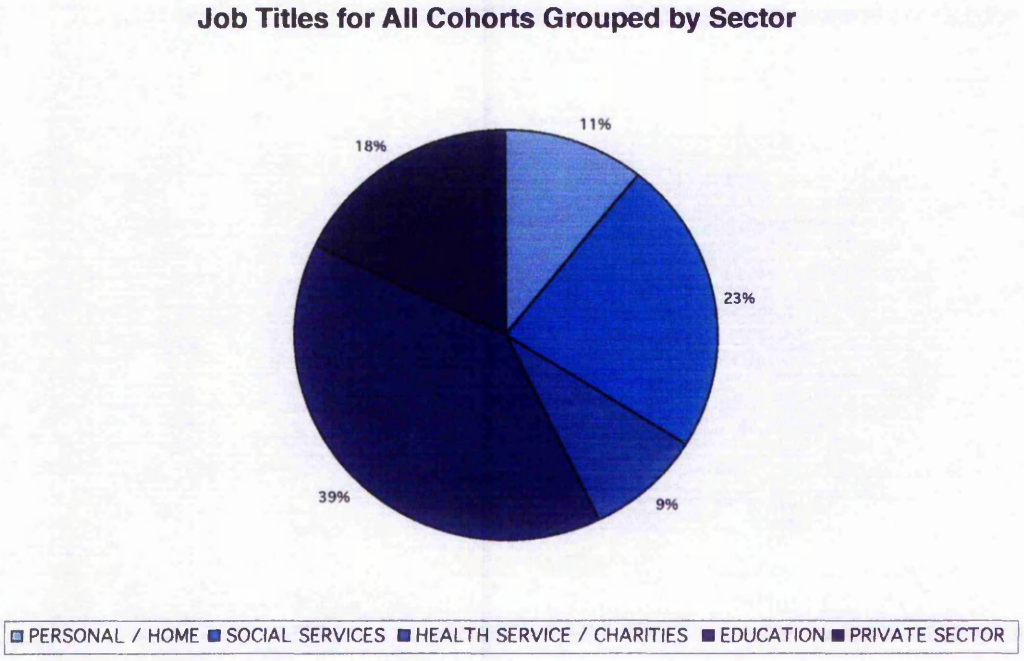


Figure 5.40

INSET Courses

The final section of the questionnaire related to all In-Service Training Courses (INSET) that students had been able to access as part of their employment. Each student included a small list within their responses but when grouped together, this rapidly became a very long list. It was therefore necessary to recheck the various courses listed via face-to-face and whole cohort discussions and then attempt to eliminate any duplication. In the event there were very few and the final list of course titles numbered 66.

This was clearly too difficult to show on a graph so a decision was taken, to group the courses together in similar types. From the informal discussions with students it emerged there were seven main focus areas for INSET courses. There were three areas that dealt primarily with educational issues - Play, Curriculum Areas and Management, three that dealt with social care issues - Child Protection, Social and Emotional Issues and Social Service Management and one that dealt with Health and Safety. (Appendix 15)

The three graphs per cohort demonstrate firstly the number and range of courses taken, secondly, which individual student did what type of course and thirdly, the percentages of each type of course across the cohort.

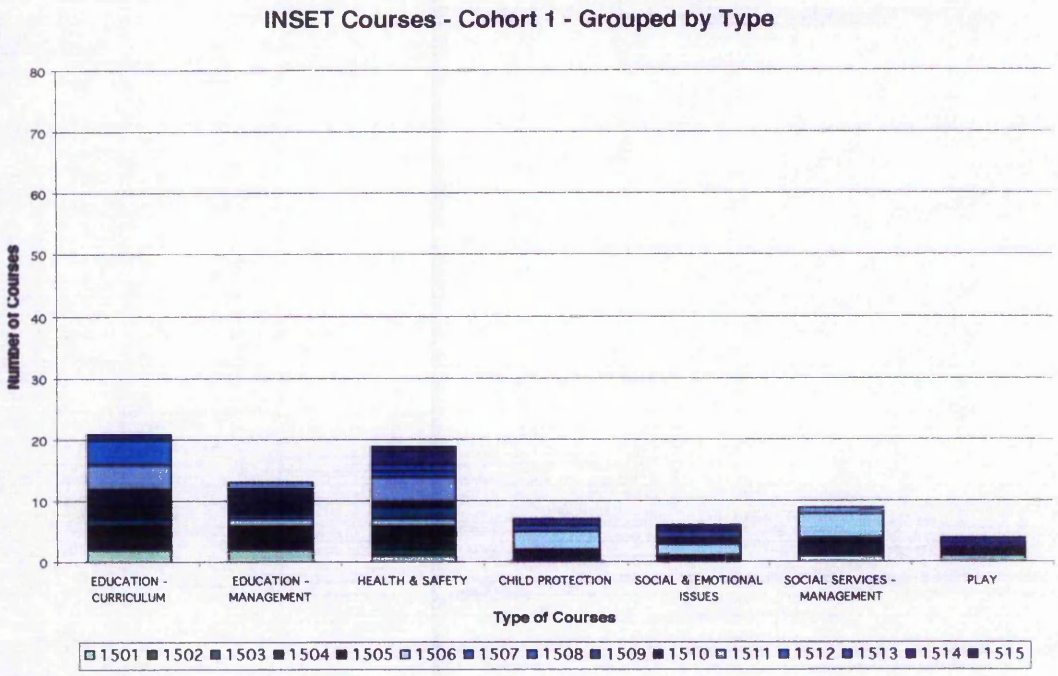


Figure 5.41

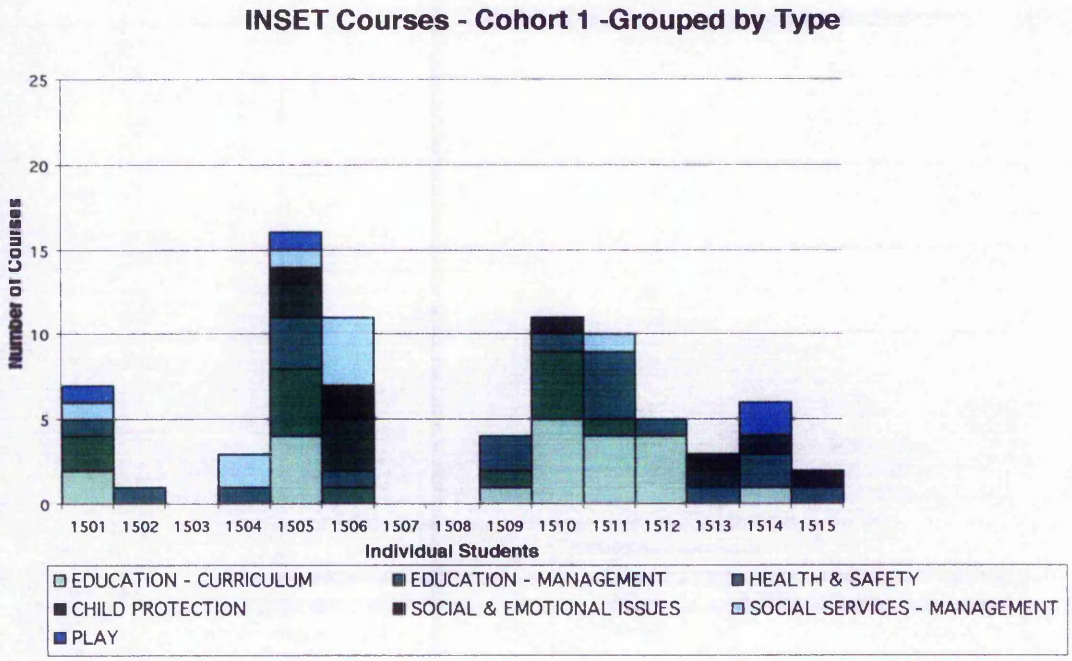


Figure 5.42

In Cohort 1, the number of courses studied, range from 21, dealing with 'Education-Curriculum' issues, to 4 dealing with 'Play' and amount to a total of 79 courses in all. The minimum number of students studying any area was three in 'Play" and the maximum was12 in 'Health and Safety'.

Closer examination highlights three students who have undertaken no INSET courses at all and one student that has only taken one. In contrast, the student with the most number of courses completed, having 16, has also taken courses in each type category.

Cohort 1 - INSET Courses - Grouped by Type

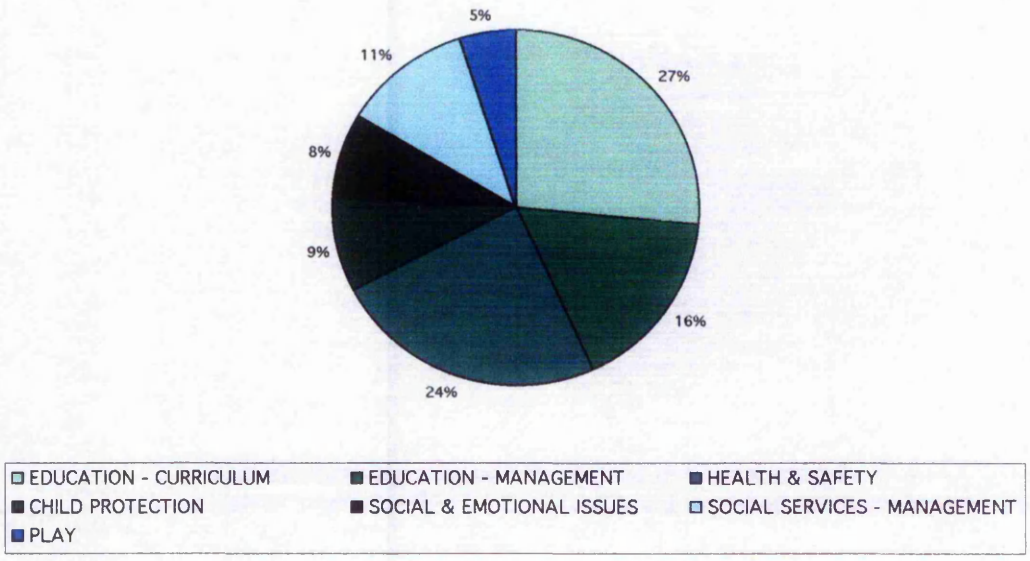


Figure 5.43

Overall, the three educationally-focused types of courses account for 48% of all of the courses undertaken by this cohort, with 'Education-Curriculum' courses being the largest single area with 27%. It is notable that the second largest single type of courses is 'Health and Safety'. The three social care focussed types of courses are reasonably even in size being 8%, 9%and 11%.

Cohort 2 has less variation between most of the types although the number of courses do range from 16 to 7 with the total number of courses amounting to 68. However, on this occasion no individual has taken any INSET courses that are 'Play' related. This apparent evenness between the different types of courses is better explained when it becomes clear that the data only refers to six of the fourteen students. The remainder had undertaken no further training in the form of INSET courses.

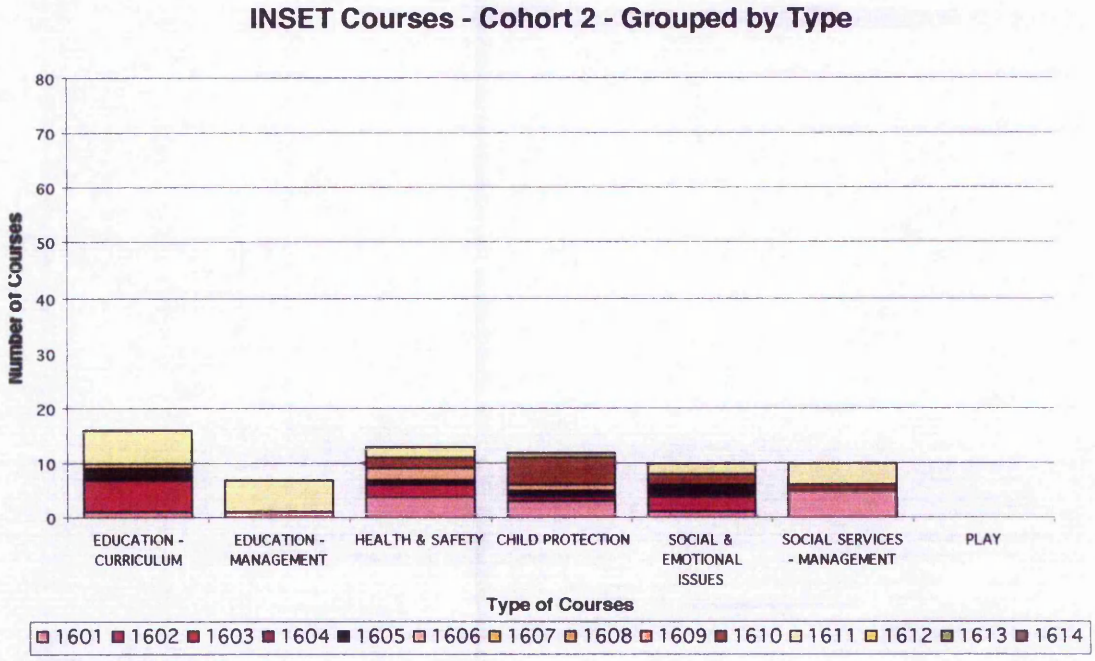


Figure 5.44

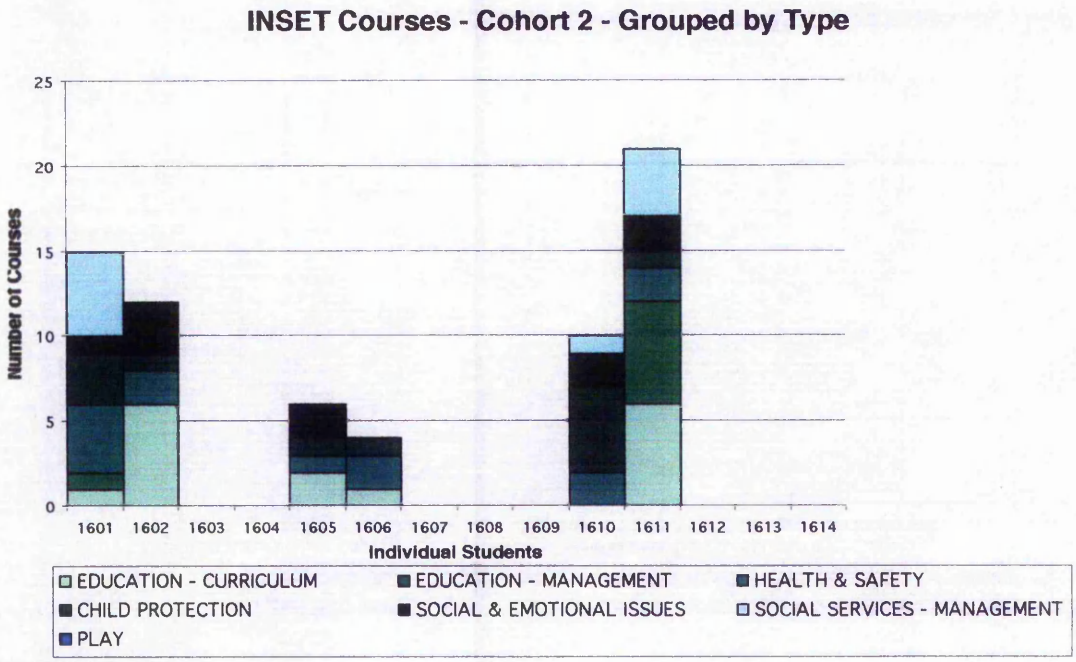


Figure 5.45

However of these six students, even the individual with the least number of courses had, nonetheless taken them across a range of three different types. Both the students who had completed the most number of courses had also managed to take six out of the seven different types, only courses in the area of "Play' were absent from their profiles.

The individual with the most number of courses, 21, had interestingly accrued 6 or more courses in both the 'Education-Curriculum' and 'Education-Management' areas, suggesting a considerable amount of time spent in educationally related jobs. This can be confirmed when it can be seen that all bar one of her seven jobs have been in the Education sector. Overall, the percentage figures are more evenly divided, probably as a result of the small sample. The combined educational areas only account for 33% whilst the social care areas combine to make 48%. However, 'Education- Curriculum' courses once again have the largest percentage with 'Health and Safety' courses next with 19%.

Cohort 2 - INSET Courses - Grouped by Type

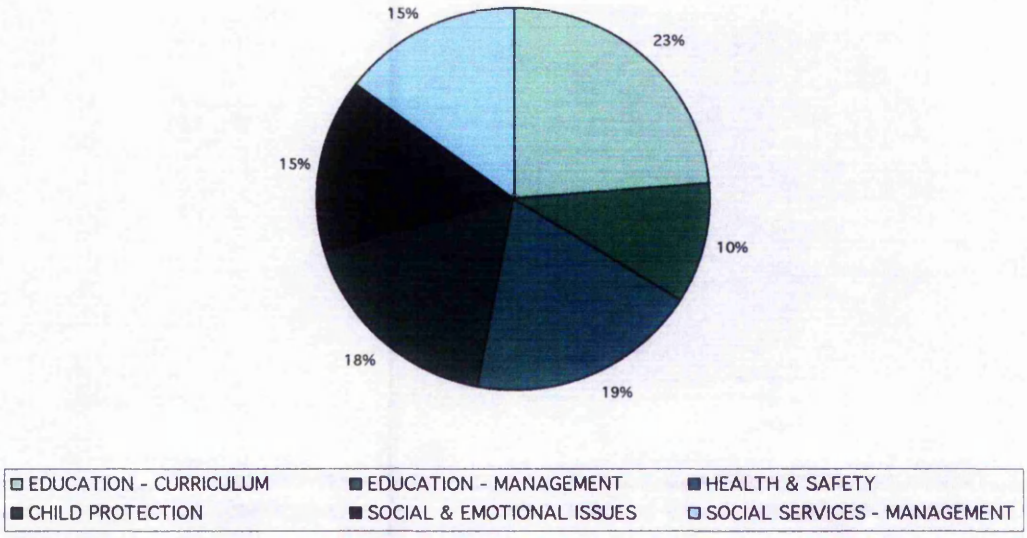


Figure 5.46

Cohort 3 is one of the smaller cohorts with the number of courses ranging from a maximum of 17 to a minimum of 1 in individual areas, whilst the total for all the students is 46. The smaller number of students is also reflected those taking courses in any particular area, with 4 being the most and 1, the least.

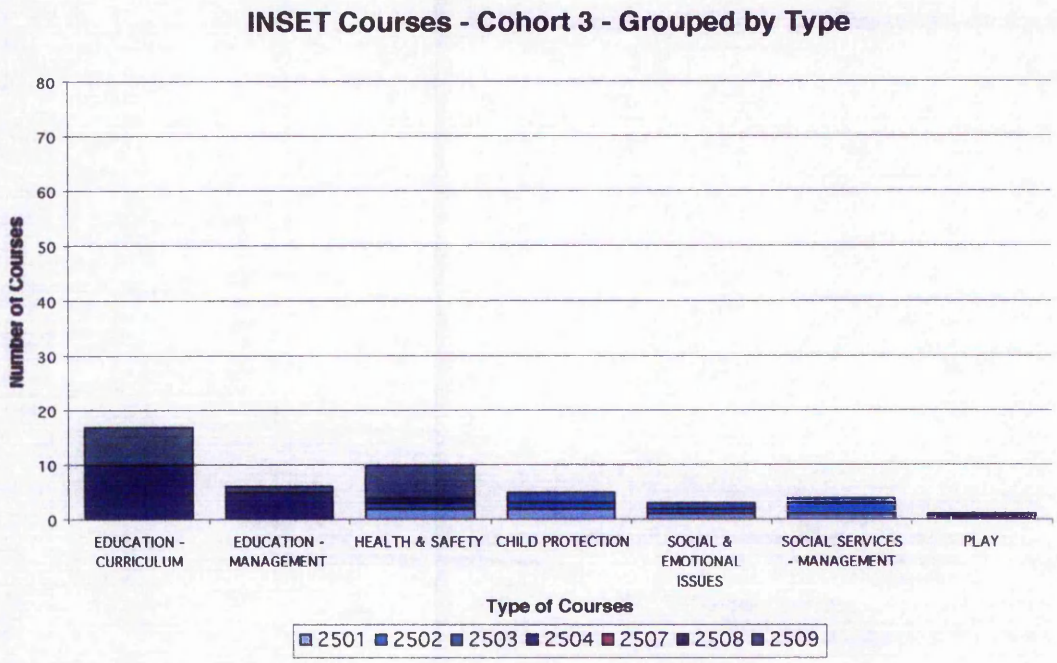


Figure 5.47

Closer examination of the graphs shows an interesting divide. One student in the group has completed no INSET courses and one has completed a single course in the area of 'Play'. Of the remaining five students however, each has taken courses in three or four of the areas but significantly each individual has concentrated on either all education or all social care based courses with a small amount of 'Health and Safety' in addition. This suggests these students have worked only in one of these main areas, a fact that can be confirmed by examining the job titles for this cohort.

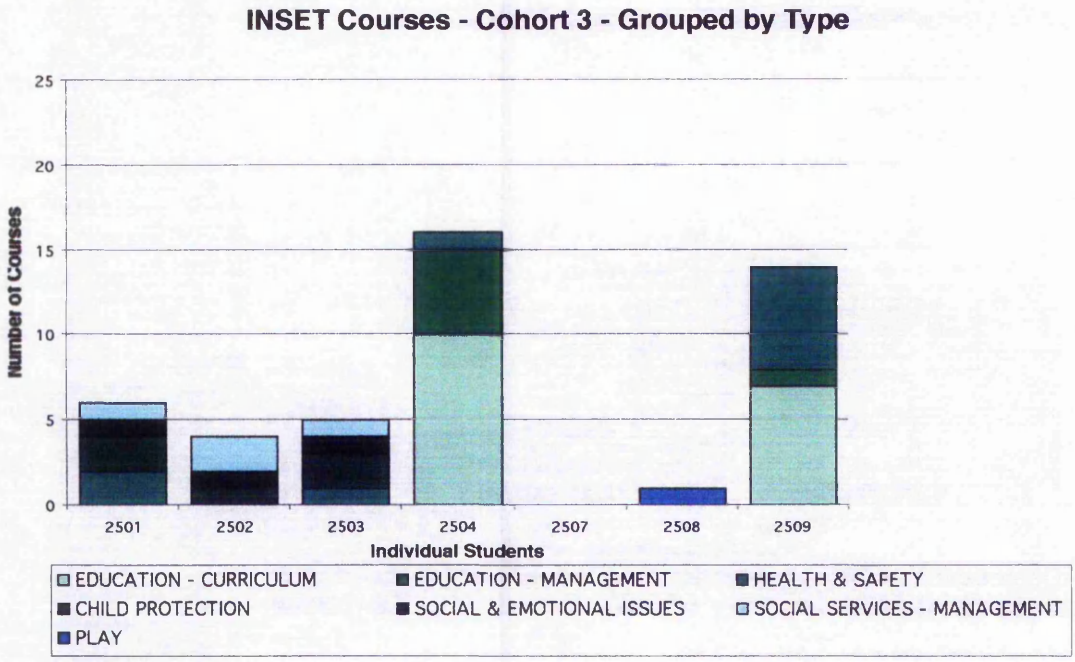


Figure 5.48

Overall the educationally-focused courses accounted for a total of 51% of all the courses with again 'Education-Curriculum' having the largest percentage with 36%. The combined social care focused courses amount to 27% with Health and Safety being the second largest percentage overall with 22%.

Cohort 3 - INSET Courses - Grouped by Type

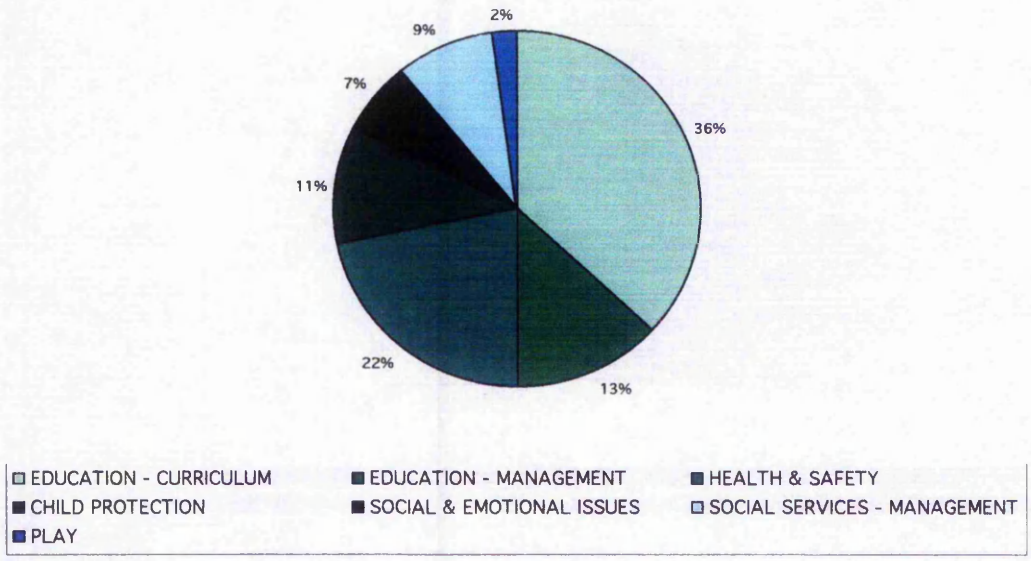


Figure 5.49

Cohort 4 is something of a surprise. It is the smallest cohort with only six students, yet it has the highest number of completed INSET courses, 98, of any cohort up to this point. There is also a greater difference between the type of INSET with the most number of courses, 'Education-Curriculum' with 51, and the lowest, 'Social Services-Management' with one. Interestingly, each student has managed to complete more than one course in both 'Education -Curriculum' and 'Education-Management'. Of the six students, three have focused exclusively on courses in education areas with Health and Safety whilst the remaining three have taken courses in five or more of the seven areas. The range in number of courses taken between individuals is 23 and 6whilst the range within areas is between 6 and 3.

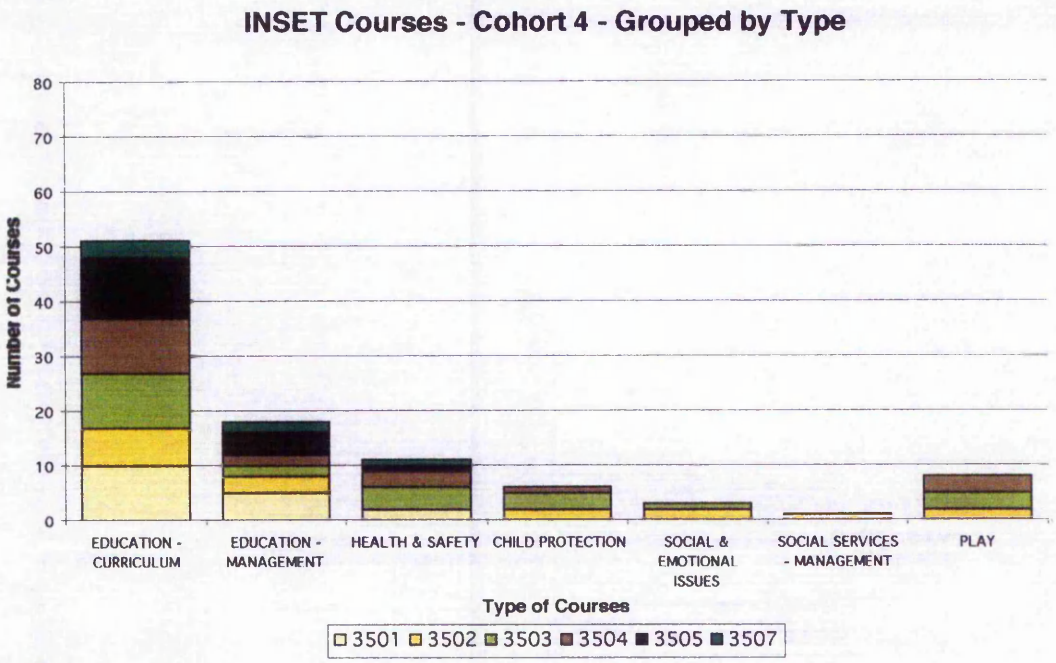


Figure 5.50

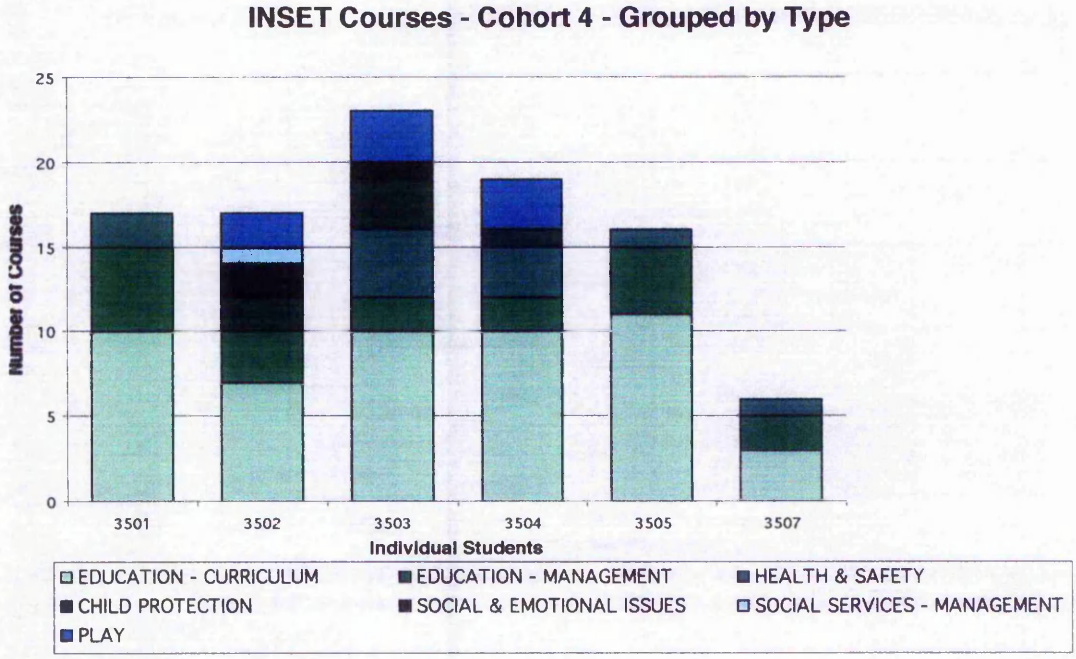


Figure 5.51

Overall 'Education-Curriculum' courses account for the largest percentage with 53%, which when combined with that in 'Education-Management' amounts to 71%. 'Play', whilst still a small percentage of the overall number of courses, has re-emerged with 8% but the 'Social Care' areas even combined, only amount to 10% 'Health and Safety' continues to exert a presence within the overall percentages.

Cohort 4 - INSET Courses - Grouped by Type

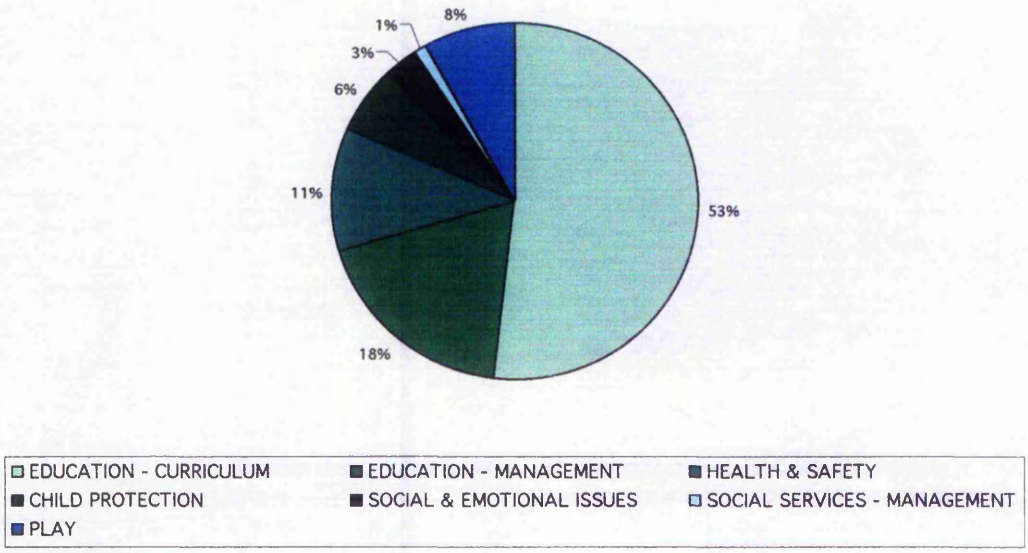


Figure 5.52

Cohort 5, whilst not the largest cohort, still manages to exceed the total number of INSET courses taken by Cohort 4, by completing 138. It also takes the prize for the greatest difference between the type areas with the most number of courses, as 'Education-Curriculum' has a massive 70 and 'Play' only 3. In this cohort however, only in the area of 'Health and Safety' has each student managed to complete a course, though some have managed to complete more than one sort.

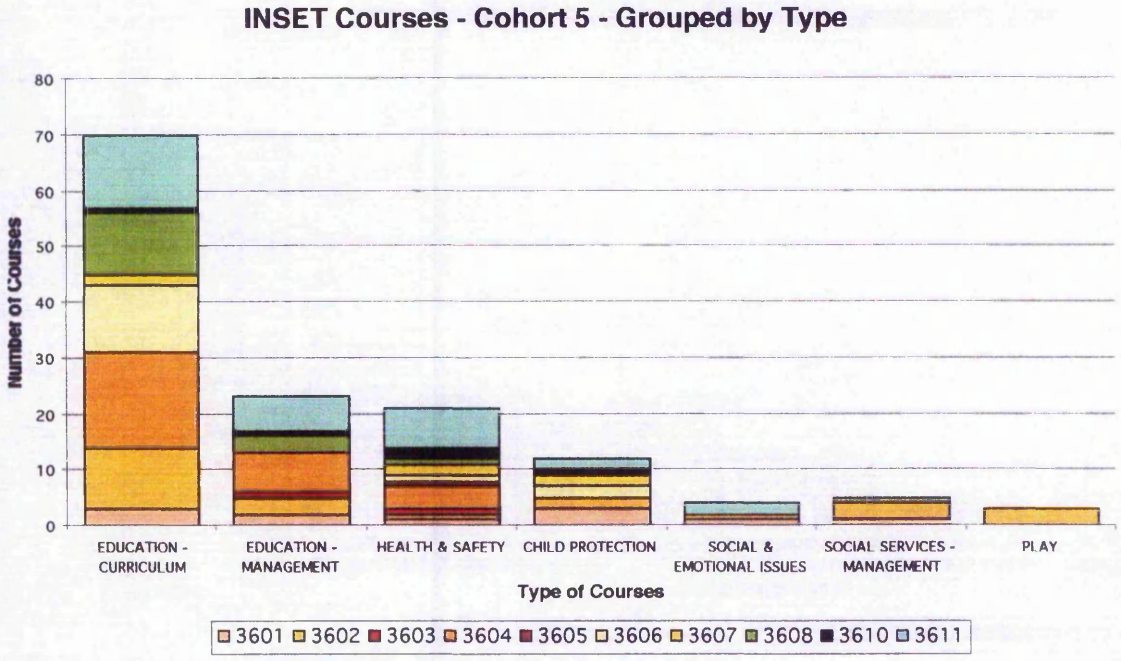


Figure 5.53

Amongst the ten students' individual profiles, there are again great differences both in number and type. The largest number of courses completed by a single student is 31 whilst the smallest is just one. In terms of type, one student has completed courses in each of the seven types and two in six types. The student with the single case is also the student with the least number of different types unsurprisingly. Again there seems to be students who concentrate on educational courses alone whilst others add to these with social care courses.

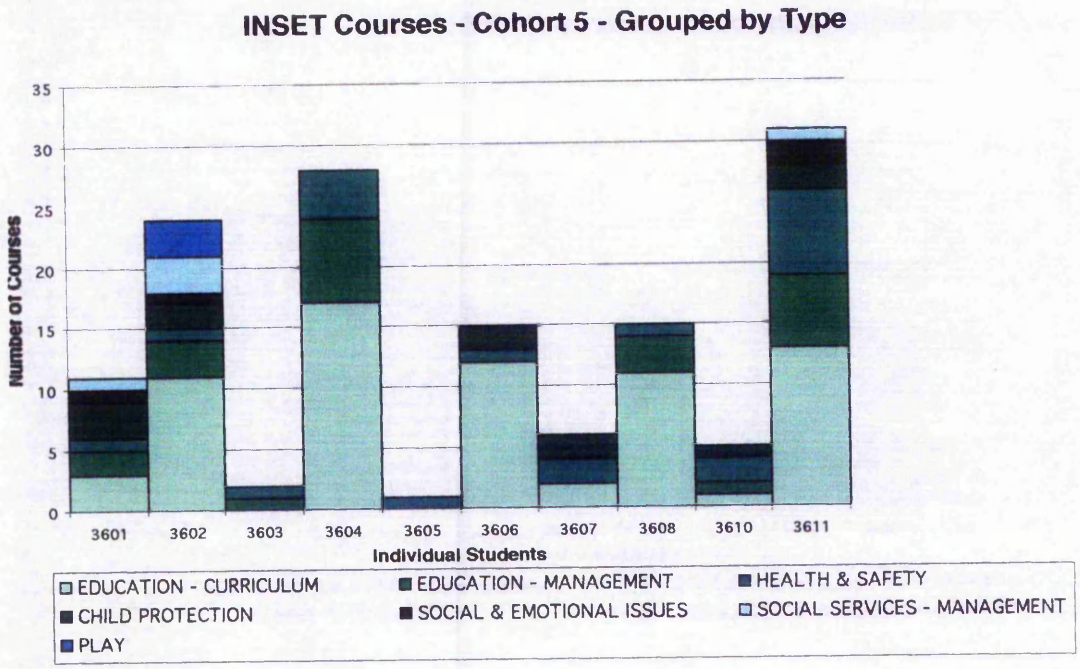


Figure 5.54

Overall 'Education-Curriculum' courses account for 50% of all the courses undertaken by this cohort which when combined with 'Education-Management' and 'Play' rises to 69%. 'Health and Safety' courses maintain a 15% share of the overall courses whilst the combined 'Social Care' courses only amount to 16%.

Cohort 5 - INSET Courses - Grouped by Type

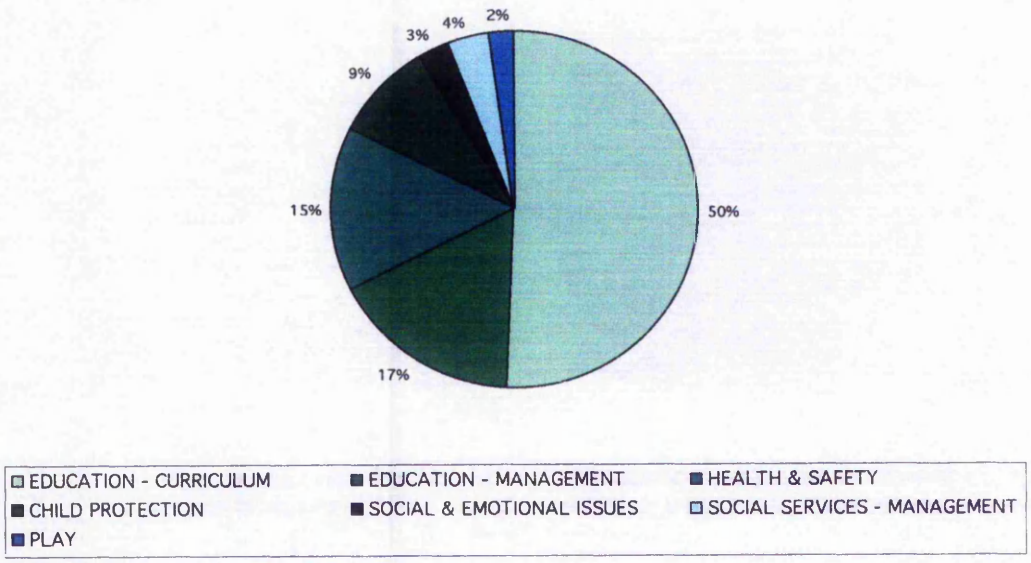


Figure 5.55

When the data for INSET courses is combined across the cohorts it can be seen that, apart from Cohort 2 with no courses reflecting 'Play', every other cohort has someone who has completed courses in each of the six remaining type areas. Whilst cohorts vary a great deal between these type areas within themselves, when all the cohorts are put together, the percentages for each type area is not so extreme.

For most of the cohorts the area of 'Education-Curriculum' proved to be the largest percentage and when combined with 'Education-Management' and 'Play' accounted in some cohorts for more than half of all the courses undertaken.

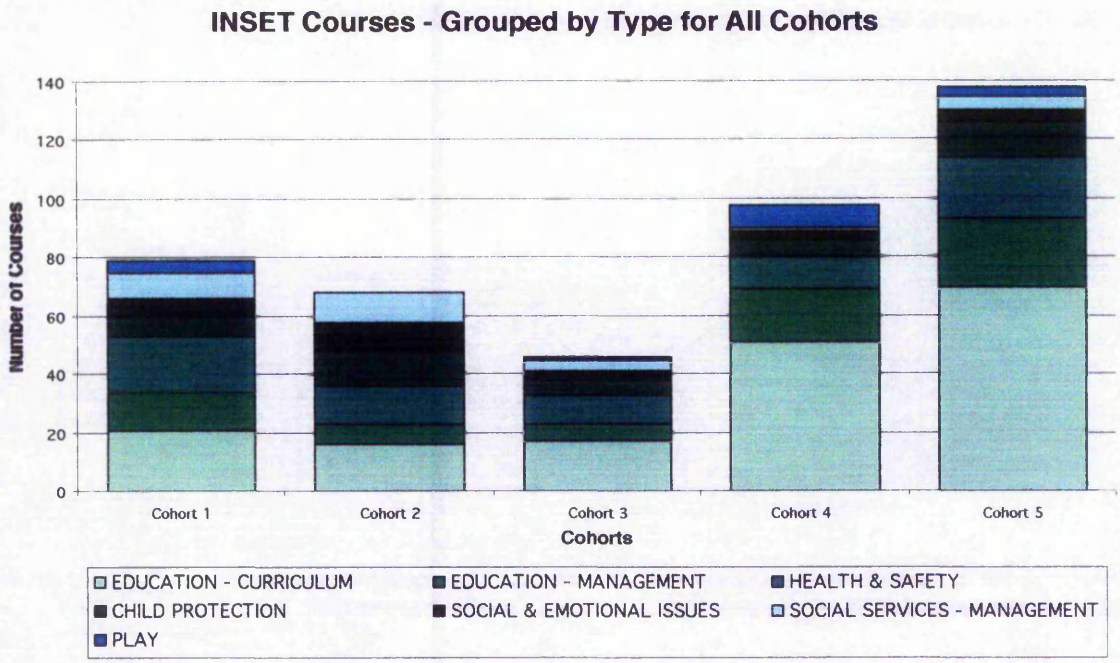


Figure 5.56

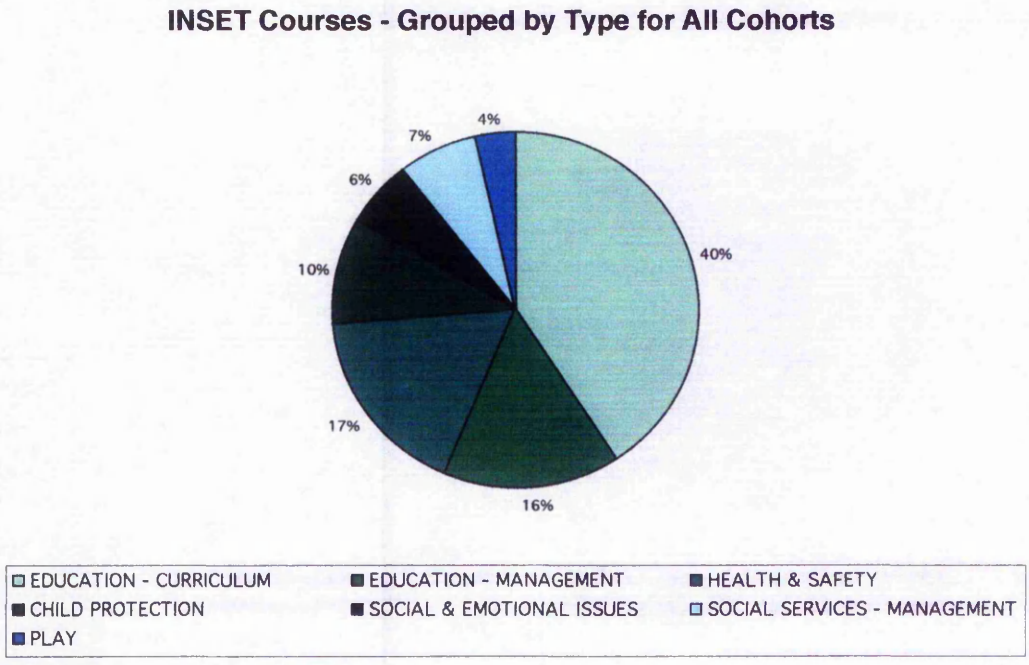


Figure 5.57

When put together overall, the same was still true, with 'Education-Curriculum' accounting for 40% yet when combined with 'Education-Management' and 'Play' totalling 60%. Within individual cohorts the three 'Social Care'-focused types accounted for between 10% and 48%. Overall they account for 23%. Interestingly the 'Health and Safety' INSET courses have emerged with a steady presence in each cohort and overall. Within the cohorts these courses accounted for between 11% and 24% emerging overall with the second largest percentage after 'Education-Curriculum' of 17%.

Summary

The questionnaires were intended to provide data concerning individual students' profiles related to their age, qualifications, jobs held and INSET courses completed. As the project focussed on individual students' understandings of their own experiences as they progressed into Initial Teacher Education, the role of the cohort was not initially consider to be particularly significant to these understandings. However, as the demographic data was analysed, it became increasingly obvious that the cohort any individual student might find themselves in would firstly, provide a context and framework from which to understand their own experiences and secondly, expose them to a range of other individuals, some with very different experiences to their own.

Using the four focussed areas to examine the data at cohort level provides some interesting issues. In terms of age, the width of the range is somewhat surprising. The expectations prior to the data collection had been that this type of course of further studying would only be attractive to those who already had some years of experience, perhaps had already had a family and yet were not too old to continue onto a 3 or 4 year B.A degree, in short an age span of between 25 and 35 years old.

This is blatantly obviously not the case. What had been assumed to be around a ten-year span, in the evidence collected, was a thirty-year span. The 'selling point' for the HNC course, judging by provider's informal comments, had been that it would lead to a degree either in education or health and social care.

It had therefore been assumed this would be the main reason individuals would enrol on the course and so an expectation grew of a probable 10-year age span to the student population. Students later revealed in interviews, more diverse reasons for enrolling on the HNC, from job promotion, to boredom with the work role, from the need to understand the work role better or to just taking the next step in a progression.

Initial analysis of the age of the students in ten-year age bands revealed that Cohorts 3 and 4, with the fewest students, had the majority of the younger students in the 18-27 age band. Cohorts 1 & 2 however, with the largest number of students had the majority of students in the 28 -37 age band. Cohort 5 had the majority of older students in the 38-48 age band.

However when grouped in five year bands, only in Cohort 2 did the majority of students stay in their original 28+ band. In every other cohort the majority moves into the older of the two five-year bands, hence Cohort 1's majority moves from 28+ to 33+, Cohort 3 and 4's from 18+ to 23+ and Cohort 5's from 38+ to 43+ .

This tells us little more about the cohorts apart from the fact that the five-year banding is slightly more revealing than the ten-year banding. In short, on its own, the data about the ages of the students simply shows a wider age range than had been expected, with each cohort having a different pattern, resulting in some cohorts having a larger percentage of older students and other cohorts having younger students. It is only when the age of the students is considered along with the other data areas, that its significance is revealed.

The qualification section provided a list of qualifications as well as diverse examination and awarding bodies. The final list totals 43 with a range from CSE's taken at school at sixteen years of age to a degree taken at a University between 18 and 21 years of age,

The decision to group similar qualifications according to examination or awarding body allowed for the wide age span of the student population. For example, some of the older students held an NNEB National Diploma (examined by the National Nursery Examining Board or NNEB) When the board amalgamated with CEYA and became CACHE NNEB; the National Diploma was also updated, altered in places and renamed. Colleges that had offered the earlier course simply replaced it with the 'new, improved' version. Hence younger students only knew the course with the new name and in the new format.

This same type of reorganisation occurred for BTEC with the London Examining Board to form EDEXCEL and when the Pre-School Playgroups Association became the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Each time their courses altered and were renamed accordingly. Hence the wide age span of students in the study meant some students held the qualification in one name and others in another. The change in name simply highlighted when the qualification had been achieved.

The national funding changes that led to changes in the 'Link' project, created the need to include students from other courses but with similar experience profiles to the HNC students. A group of Specialist Teacher assistants then enrolled on a Certificate of Higher Education within the University were the obvious solution to the dwindling sample problem.

However, in terms of the qualification profile, this may well have skewed the data, in that there is a much higher proportion of STA students (24) represented overall than would usually be expected amongst a group of Early Years workers.

The initial decision to group together the school and college-achieved qualifications was an attempt to focus on the childcare and 'other' qualifications held by the students and demonstrate possible progression routes. In the event, it proved too diverse. However it became increasingly obvious with more than half (and sometimes more than three-quarters) of each cohorts' qualifications achieved in school or college that a breakdown of these courses needed to be attempted. It was at this point that the relative ages of the students in the various cohorts became more evident. For the older student there had been two qualifications open to them at 15 and 16 - the CSE and the GCE, followed if successful by the A-level. For anyone younger than 26 (i.e.16 in 1986 when a new single qualification replaced the two older ones) then only the GCSE at 16 was available in school.

Although these qualifications were available at college in the same time period, because the CSE was at a lower academic level than the GCE it does not appear to have been on offer. Taking GCE's at college, meant one of two things - either 'retakes' after failing examinations in school or adding to GCE's already held if the school did not offer particular subjects.

This 'retaking' or 'adding to' premise also applies for the older students after the change in qualifications in the 1980's. As it was no longer possible to retake a failed GCE, older students had to begin again in the subject with GCSE's. Hence older students can hold CSE's and GCE's from school days and GCSE's from a later return to studying in college. This is particularly true for the subject of mathematics, of which more later.

A-levels could be taken both at school and at college yet the combined range for the cohorts is from 10% to 0%. Overall, A-levels only account for 5% of the qualifications achieved by the students.

When it is remembered that 31 out of 52 students hold an NNEB National Diploma, a qualification that usually begins at 16, is full-time and lasts for two years, it is hardly surprising that few students stayed on at school to do A-levels.

So an individual's age can determine what level of qualifications are available within the school or college system at any particular time. The high number of CSE's in some cohorts with older students (4 and 5) suggests either more students who struggled academically or a school system in the middle to late 1960's that did not consider higher qualifications necessary for pupils who had declared an interest in future work with children. That these students have persevered and gained further higher level qualifications suggests either they needed more time to mature academically or they were vastly underrated by the school system at the time and responded accordingly.

The data demonstrates the problems that students with these qualification profiles have when attempting to enrol on degrees. Despite the number of childcare and other courses available, few have A-level equivalence.

Degree entry requirements can differ between degrees and institutions, though there tends to be a cut-off point. At the point the study was being conducted, the general, university defined requirements for entry onto a degree consisted of 5 GCE/GCSE's at C and above and 2 A-levels. For the Initial Teacher Education degrees however there were some added specifications from the TTA, initially from Circular 14 / 93 and amended in Circular 4 / 98

However as the ITE degree at the university involved in the project was also extremely popular, the criteria had been raised to 3 a-'levels. There was no Early years strand to the ITE course at the time, so there was no possibility of using APL strategies to account for the childcare courses like the NNEB or BTEC National Diplomas held by students. The main problems was the insistence on one of the A-levels or equivalents, relating to the Primary National Curriculum which very few students had. Of these two childcare courses, only the BTEC National Diploma was equivalent to 2 A-levels so these students were still required to gain another A-level in a National curriculum subject.

Clearly many of the older students in the study did not have the qualifications to progress easily into Initial Teacher Education and were frustrated that their expertise and qualifications in childcare were effectively non-applicable in this situation.

The students' ages and qualifications also naturally have a bearing on the jobs they have managed to acquire over the years. One of the big issues that arose out of the informal discussions with the students was what they were called. Some students, especially those working in schools, hated the old-fashioned term 'Nursery Nurse' saying that as they worked in schools and did no nursing, it was a complete misnomer. Others hated being called 'Assistant' be it 'Classroom', 'Teacher's' or 'Learning support' as in many cases the reality of the role was they had autonomy and devised their own work for children in collaboration with the teacher rather than following the teacher's instructions. Interestingly, neither the DfES and its predecessors nor the TTA can agree on a title for Early Years practitioners. The former tends to use 'Learning Support Assistant' (LSA) and the latter Teacher Assistant (TA). As many of the students have been involved in supporting groups or individuals one-to-one, the title that rankled least was 'Learning Support Assistant'

This is less of a problem within the Health and Social Services who have their own titles for jobs for workers with children, and these tend to be more formalised and hierarchical. Hence in a social service run day nursery, the job titles clearly indicate levels of promotion and differing responsibilities. Hence the most senior position would be Officer in charge followed by Deputy OIC, Day Care Worker / Nursery Officer, Assistant Nursery Officer etc.

In the Heath Service or within a charity this also would appear to be the case as can be demonstrated by a case of one of the students in the study who worked for a charity as firstly a Mobility Officer for the Blind, then as a Technical Officer and then as a Rehabilitation Worker for the Visually Impaired.

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For most students however, employment has overlapped across the sectors. Seventeen students have worked in 2 sectors, 16 in 3 sectors and 9 having worked in four of the five sectors. This overlapping across sectors naturally means the same individual with the same qualifications, has held a variety of job titles, some of which have had very similar responsibilities, although not always with the same level of salary.
The significance of the various job titles in indicating different sectors and different experiences is not always obvious especially to admissions tutors and other 'gatekeepers' for degree courses. The range of jobs also has an affect on the range and type of INSET courses undertaken.

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For the answers we need to look again to the focus of the courses. Those in Health and Safety, as has already been stated, seem to be available to all sectors equally, perhaps because of the legal implications of failure or 'bad practice' which has the potential to not only damage the Early Years practitioner but also the children in their care. In order to function in the work environment and keep it 'open' for children, some individual workers need to have up-to-date knowledge and expertise in Health and Safety procedures. This may explain the high rate of completion for these types of courses - without these qualifications, there would be no personal, professional or legal protection and the work-place would need to close.

Legal requirements may also be at the root of the issue of take-up of social care INSET courses. Many of the issues relating to social care that workers within the Social Services sector need to address have legal ramifications. Hence INSET courses dealing with child protection, sexual abuse or bereavement will need to have experienced trainers who are aware of the legal requirements as well as great knowledge and sensitivity for dealing with the issue. As such, the trainers for these courses will all need to be highly trained and experienced in these areas and consequently it therefore may prove more expensive to put on such courses. As it may also be true that changes to the legal system are generally slower to come about than in the education system, and the information gleaned from such courses may be pertinent for a longer period of time, it may not therefore be necessary to offer these courses on a regular basis. So the cost of running these courses, and the limited number of places on a relatively small number of courses may mitigate against practitioners in the Social Services sector having easy access to INSET training. This would certainly explain some of the evidence from the study.
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Nevertheless, these changes have affected curriculum areas like 'art' or 'maths' and management areas such as 'assessment' or 'planning for the Early Years curriculum'. This has meant a constant updating of knowledge and techniques in all these areas for all the staff concerned, including Early Years practitioners.

However, it is obvious that whilst any trainer on an INSET course needs to be fully trained and experienced in their area that may mean different things in different areas. Hence some of the courses in social care already mentioned will need trainers with very specific experience, some of those in education, such as 'block play' for example may simply require a more experienced teacher or Early Years practitioner who has been highlighted as having 'good' or original practice in that curriculum area.

There will also be experts and advisors in both curriculum and management areas available from within the family of schools or even at Local Education Authority level, who can be called upon to offer training in these areas.

So in comparison to the social care focused INSET courses, the education focused courses can cover a wider knowledge and expertise spread, may not have such rigid legal requirements to meet and may be offered by a wider selection of experts or trainers. This allows for more courses to be on offer and at a lower cost to the individual or workplace concerned.

There is no way of assessing from the data the total number of INSET courses, in either Education or Social Care, that were on offer to the students during the time period of the study. All that can be said is there were more different Education courses completed than different Social Care ones and considerably more Education INSET courses were repeated across the cohorts than Social Care INSET courses.

So at both an individual and cohort level, age had a bearing on the qualifications available for study. Those qualifications that were completed successfully had a bearing on the type and number of jobs held and in which sector, which in turn influenced the type and number of INSET courses completed. Sadly, whilst not irredeemable, missed opportunities or bad advice at an early stage in this process could have long term effects.

Overall the demographic data was surprising as it revealed, contrary to my expectations...

- a larger age span of students with
- a wider range of qualifications, who had held
- a greater number and type of jobs (particularly with the mobility between sectors) resulting in access to
- a greater number and type of INSET courses.

Further, the demographic data provides evidence of a more experienced, well-rounded group of individuals in terms of their expertise and knowledge than had previously been accounted for in degree admissions procedures. The influence of the evidence of individual students' profiles on their understanding of their experiences is discussed further in the following chapter.

Summary

The questionnaires were intended to provide data concerning individual students' profiles related to their age, qualifications, jobs held and INSET courses completed. As the project focussed on individual students' understandings of their own experiences as they progressed into Initial Teacher Education, the role of the cohort was not initially consider to be particularly significant to these understandings. However, as the demographic data was analysed, it became increasingly obvious that the cohort any individual student might find themselves in would firstly, provide a context and framework from which to understand their own experiences and secondly, expose them to a range of other individuals, some with very different experiences to their own.

Using the four focussed areas to examine the data at cohort level provides some interesting issues. In terms of age, the width of the range is somewhat surprising. The expectations prior to the data collection had been that this type of course of further studying would only be attractive to those who already had some years of experience, perhaps had already had a family and yet were not too old to continue onto a 3 or 4 year B.A degree, in short an age span of between 25 and 35 years old.

This is blatantly obviously not the case. What had been assumed to be around a ten-year span, in the evidence collected, was a thirty-year span. The 'selling point' for the HNC course, judging by provider's informal comments, had been that it would lead to a degree either in education or health and social care.

It had therefore been assumed this would be the main reason individuals would enrol on the course and so an expectation grew of a probable 10-year age span to the student population. Students later revealed in interviews, more diverse reasons for enrolling on the HNC, from job promotion, to boredom with the work role, from the need to understand the work role better or to just taking the next step in a progression.

Initial analysis of the age of the students in ten-year age bands revealed that Cohorts 3 and 4, with the fewest students, had the majority of the younger students in the 18-27 age band. Cohorts 1 & 2 however, with the largest number of students had the majority of students in the 28 -37 age band. Cohort 5 had the majority of older students in the 38-48 age band.

However when grouped in five year bands, only in Cohort 2 did the majority of students stay in their original 28+ band. In every other cohort the majority moves into the older of the two five-year bands, hence Cohort 1's majority moves from 28+ to 33+, Cohort 3 and 4's from 18+ to 23+ and Cohort 5's from 38+ to 43+ .

This tells us little more about the cohorts apart from the fact that the five-year banding is slightly more revealing than the ten-year banding. In short, on its own, the data about the ages of the students simply shows a wider age range than had been expected, with each cohort having a different pattern, resulting in some cohorts having a larger percentage of older students and other cohorts having younger students. It is only when the age of the students is considered along with the other data areas, that its significance is revealed.

The qualification section provided a list of qualifications as well as diverse examination and awarding bodies. The final list totals 43 with a range from CSE's taken at school at sixteen years of age to a degree taken at a University between 18 and 21 years of age,

The decision to group similar qualifications according to examination or awarding body allowed for the wide age span of the student population. For example, some of the older students held an NNEB National Diploma (examined by the National Nursery Examining Board or NNEB) When the board amalgamated with CEYA and became CACHE NNEB; the National Diploma was also updated, altered in places and renamed. Colleges that had offered the earlier course simply replaced it with the 'new, improved' version. Hence younger students only knew the course with the new name and in the new format.

This same type of reorganisation occurred for BTEC with the London Examining Board to form EDEXCEL and when the Pre-School Playgroups Association became the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Each time their courses altered and were renamed accordingly. Hence the wide age span of students in the study meant some students held the qualification in one name and others in another. The change in name simply highlighted when the qualification had been achieved.

The national funding changes that led to changes in the 'Link' project, created the need to include students from other courses but with similar experience profiles to the HNC students. A group of Specialist Teacher assistants then enrolled on a Certificate of Higher Education within the University were the obvious solution to the dwindling sample problem.

However, in terms of the qualification profile, this may well have skewed the data, in that there is a much higher proportion of STA students (24) represented overall than would usually be expected amongst a group of Early Years workers.

The initial decision to group together the school and college-achieved qualifications was an attempt to focus on the childcare and 'other' qualifications held by the students and demonstrate possible progression routes. In the event, it proved too diverse. However it became increasingly obvious with more than half (and sometimes more than three-quarters) of each cohorts' qualifications achieved in school or college that a breakdown of these courses needed to be attempted. It was at this point that the relative ages of the students in the various cohorts became more evident. For the older student there had been two qualifications open to them at 15 and 16 - the CSE and the GCE, followed if successful by the A-level. For anyone younger than 26 (i.e.16 in 1986 when a new single qualification replaced the two older ones) then only the GCSE at 16 was available in school.

Although these qualifications were available at college in the same time period, because the CSE was at a lower academic level than the GCE it does not appear to have been on offer. Taking GCE's at college, meant one of two things - either 'retakes' after failing examinations in school or adding to GCE's already held if the school did not offer particular subjects.

This 'retaking' or 'adding to' premise also applies for the older students after the change in qualifications in the 1980's. As it was no longer possible to retake a failed GCE, older students had to begin again in the subject with GCSE's. Hence older students can hold CSE's and GCE's from school days and GCSE's from a later return to studying in college. This is particularly true for the subject of mathematics, of which more later.

A-levels could be taken both at school and at college yet the combined range for the cohorts is from 10% to 0%. Overall, A-levels only account for 5% of the qualifications achieved by the students.

When it is remembered that 31 out of 52 students hold an NNEB National Diploma, a qualification that usually begins at 16, is full-time and lasts for two years, it is hardly surprising that few students stayed on at school to do A-levels.

So an individual's age can determine what level of qualifications are available within the school or college system at any particular time. The high number of CSE's in some cohorts with older students (4 and 5) suggests either more students who struggled academically or a school system in the middle to late 1960's that did not consider higher qualifications necessary for pupils who had declared an interest in future work with children. That these students have persevered and gained further higher level qualifications suggests either they needed more time to mature academically or they were vastly underrated by the school system at the time and responded accordingly.

The data demonstrates the problems that students with these qualification profiles have when attempting to enrol on degrees. Despite the number of childcare and other courses available, few have A-level equivalence.

Degree entry requirements can differ between degrees and institutions, though there tends to be a cut-off point. At the point the study was being conducted, the general, university defined requirements for entry onto a degree consisted of 5 GCE/GCSE's at C and above and 2 A-levels. For the Initial Teacher Education degrees however there were some added specifications from the TTA, initially from Circular 14 / 93 and amended in Circular 4 / 98

However as the ITE degree at the university involved in the project was also extremely popular, the criteria had been raised to 3 a-'levels. There was no Early years strand to the ITE course at the time, so there was no possibility of using APL strategies to account for the childcare courses like the NNEB or BTEC National Diplomas held by students. The main problems was the insistence on one of the A-levels or equivalents, relating to the Primary National Curriculum which very few students had. Of these two childcare courses, only the BTEC National Diploma was equivalent to 2 A-levels so these students were still required to gain another A-level in a National curriculum subject.

Clearly many of the older students in the study did not have the qualifications to progress easily into Initial Teacher Education and were frustrated that their expertise and qualifications in childcare were effectively non-applicable in this situation.

The students' ages and qualifications also naturally have a bearing on the jobs they have managed to acquire over the years. One of the big issues that arose out of the informal discussions with the students was what they were called. Some students, especially those working in schools, hated the old-fashioned term 'Nursery Nurse' saying that as they worked in schools and did no nursing, it was a complete misnomer. Others hated being called 'Assistant' be it 'Classroom', 'Teacher's' or 'Learning support' as in many cases the reality of the role was they had autonomy and devised their own work for children in collaboration with the teacher rather than following the teacher's instructions. Interestingly, neither the DfES and its predecessors nor the TTA can agree on a title for Early Years practitioners. The former tends to use 'Learning Support Assistant' (LSA) and the latter Teacher Assistant (TA). As many of the students have been involved in supporting groups or individuals one-to-one, the title that rankled least was 'Learning Support Assistant'

This is less of a problem within the Health and Social Services who have their own titles for jobs for workers with children, and these tend to be more formalised and hierarchical. Hence in a social service run day nursery, the job titles clearly indicate levels of promotion and differing responsibilities. Hence the most senior position would be Officer in charge followed by Deputy OIC, Day Care Worker / Nursery Officer, Assistant Nursery Officer etc.

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CHAPTER 6

UNDERSTANDINGS?

As the journey progresses further, new experiences and events add to those already encountered. This accumulation of, and exposure to new experiences, can both confirm and/or challenge longheld beliefs and attitudes and can result in new understandings.

The experience of undertaking the HNC or CHE courses means the students' understandings of what teaching is about and their desire to teach or not, are also challenged and consequently subject to revision.

This chapter presents and examines the data relating to the students' perceptions and attitudes to teaching revealed in face to face interviews.

CHAPTER 6

Understandings?

Introduction

The data from the questionnaires was used to create a representative sample of students from across the areas of age, qualifications, jobs (seen as experience), and INSET Courses (seen as specialisms). From this list students were approached and asked to take part in face to face interviews. Those who agreed were given a copy of five questions, which would be addressed during the interview.

After this was set in motion at the first college, problems arose to do with course timing and contact with some students, such that it was not possible to organise interviews with the remaining cohorts. As Cohorts 1 and 2 from the first college, were the largest groups and comprised more than half of all the students in the study, it was decided a larger sample from amongst these cohorts would be interviewed to allow for the problems with other cohorts. However on the return visit to conduct the interviews, it was found some substantial changes had occurred to one of the cohorts.

Initially there had been a total number of 29 students, made up of 15 students in Cohort 1 and 14 students in Cohort 2, from which to select a sample. Cohort 2 however was much changed, with six students having withdrawn from the course and a further two on long-term sick leave. The reasons for withdrawal had been various and were all fairly life-changing.

There had been severe financial problems, separation and divorce, moving out of the area, a diagnosis of cancer and in one case a mental breakdown. This therefore left an overall pool of students from which to draw a sample of 21 (15 & 6). Added to this, not all the students who had originally agreed, were now willing or able to take part.

Eventually, interviews were conducted with seven students from across both cohorts. In terms of being a representative sample, whilst small in number, there was nevertheless a wide spread of experience. Their ages did cover the full 30-year age span of all the students. They had completed qualifications of every type, had held jobs in every sector bar 'Health Services' (like 3 out of the original 5 cohorts) and had completed INSET courses in all but the 'Play' category, again like the original Cohort 2.

The interviews were conducted with the students individually, more to ensure they felt they were being given undivided attention and that their opinions and understandings mattered, than to guard against them influencing one another's opinions. Apart from the students having been involved in discussions about the 'Link' project with myself and their tutors, the nature of the HNC course (and the STA /CHE course) meant there had already been discussions within the various cohorts about schools, teaching and the students' own career progression. It would not have been possible to conduct the interviews with anything like 'experimental' conditions in place. Early Years practitioners, by their jobs and training are constantly involved in discussions with others professionals about what their job entails and what constitutes 'best practice'. Many are also keenly aware of their status within the various sectors and hold strong opinions about their positions, professionalism and limited career progression.

As I had already had informal discussions with some students previously, both individually and within their cohorts, it was decided to keep the interviews as relaxed and naturalistic as possible, bearing in mind the presence of a small tape recorder. The students were all aware of my dual role as researcher and being involved in the 'Link' project. The interviews were therefore conducted from the point of view of being a realistic discussion between someone who understood their training backgrounds, job situations and had insight into possible ways forward into ITE, and individual practitioners who wanted to be part of a process that could improve the lot of, if not themselves, then other Early Years Practitioners.

The level of general discussion already operating within the cohorts and within the course because of the 'Link' project and individuals' interests meant little was served by preventing sight of the questions until the interview. Accordingly, all those students who had originally agreed to be interviewed were given copies of the five questions that would form the basis for the structure of the interview. (Appendix 16)

The five questions arose from ideas gleaned from conversations and some anecdotal experiences I had had previously, in my role as teaching and pastoral tutor to NNEB and BTEC National Diploma students. The order of the questions was significant in that it allowed the students to talk in general terms about their understandings of teaching and then to focus specifically on whether teaching was something they wished to do. The second two questions related to the main influences they had had in terms of people and work experiences. There was also the potential here for talk of past influences as well as the current ones involving their experiences on the HNC course. The final question was an opportunity for them to declare their 'passions' about teaching and education - to let them talk about the things that excited them or made them angry. It was hoped this final question would help to reveal more about the students' understandings and motivation.

Prior to starting the interviews, I asked individuals again about the level of confidentiality they felt comfortable with, for the purposes of writing the thesis. Initially, most had agreed for their first names to be used but when they realised that the college might be identified, most said they preferred to remain anonymous so they might speak openly. Accordingly, the quotations from the interviews are only identified within the text by a number representing each student.

In order to analyse the interviews, the tapes were first transcribed as individual interviews (Appendix 17). Following this, each individual's data relating to a particular question was extracted and amalgamated to create a list of all the answers to a particular question. (Appendix 18) Each set of answers was then examined for emerging patterns such as similarities and differences. The features that arose are included in the following pages as quotations with evaluative comments.

Q.1 What do you understand teaching to be about?

Not all the students interviewed, were at the time working in schools or even educational settings. Indeed, some had very limited experience within the Education sector. Consequently, some answered this question based on past experiences, whilst others answered it from the viewpoint of current, daily experience working with teachers in schools.

As this was the first question, there was an element of checking that took place, with students unsure they were answering 'correctly'. When reassured that it was their viewpoint that was required and not some magical 'right' answer, they relaxed.

> Is that alright?
> *Yes that's fine, there are no right and wrong answers. I want to know what you feel now.*
>
> 1
>
> What, from a personal aspect? (at the start of the interview)
> *Yes.*
> (and at the end of the interview) That's from a personal aspect.
> *That's fine, that's what it's got to be about really.*
>
> 2
>
> So have I answered that question do you think?
>
> 3

Ironically, Question 1 was also seen by a couple of students as the most difficult.

> Hmm, what do I understand teaching to be about? This is the one that really... I can answer all the others; this is the one that I've been pondering over.
>
> That's the one that when I read it I thought, 'Oh I don't like that one.'
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> But teaching, what do I understand teaching to be about? Hmm.
> *What do you think the job is?*
> What do I think the job is ? Hmm that's a really difficult question.
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Most students felt teaching was concerned partly with the communication of knowledge in terms of subject facts and of life experiences. This communication allowed for developing levels of understanding and skills and provided the basic foundation from which children could move forward.

> On a basic level, I'd say that it's somebody communicating, it's communication. You're communicating what you've learnt to children or adults or whoever it might be, so that they learn what you have learnt.
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> Hmm, well from the experience that I've had, I think it's delivering a varied curriculum to the children, giving them the basic foundations...
>
> ...I think from the teaching aspect, it is to give them... I think to influence the ground rules of everything, guidelines and basic understanding of most of the subjects before they go up into Year 1 and year 2.
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> 2

> I suppose really, it's to transfer your knowledge to somebody else. I think as a teacher, especially nowadays, you've got to have a lot of knowledge because of the National Curriculum. You've got to be able to transfer that knowledge to the children, taking into account their age, ability and putting it over to them in the most fun way possible, to learn.
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> Giving the children a good start, learning them the things they need to go on with.
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There was also the issue that teaching, whilst concerned with curriculum issues should also address childrens' needs both generally and specifically.

> Helping a child to progress... also physically and mentally and socially as well. I mean 'cause some children find it really desperately hard socially to attract others and you have to like, like guide them in certain areas and tell them... probably give them a little more insight of what, what life is like.
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> I think well, to be a good teacher you've got to be somebody who can hmm, work well with children. I think you've got to be very much on their level.
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> I think developing the personality regarding self-confidence, self esteem, giving them the basic skills so that they can, you know, achieve in whatever area they're in. I mean the area that I deal with, we've got special needs children as well as quite bright children, so making sure that you meet the needs of all the children really.
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Part of the addressing of needs focussed on the necessity for teachers (and the students themselves) to build good relationships with children, their parents and other staff members and thereby provide stability for the children.

> I mean I know for a fact that one child in our class at the moment... um, his parents are splitting up and he's been having a lot of problems and he comes to me and I'm always there. If he comes into school sometimes crying and I'm always there for him, I'm like the stable figure that he goes to ...and I'm helping him with his reading, one to one and I'm just somebody that, I'm not going to just disappear like people do in his family.
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> 1

> I think that working in the nursery especially... it's getting on with the parents and talking to the parents and understanding from, I mean really if we can understand, if we can get as much information from the parents about that child, we know so much more about that child. So I think it's a lot to do with being involved with the parents and being able to talk to lots of different sorts of people... So I suppose it's down to sort of the children being able to relate to you, the parents being able to relate to you and other members of staff as well, I suppose really.

However, for some students, the definition of teaching, and the teaching role, was problematic. On the one hand they referred to the work they did with children as 'teaching', yet had a completely different type of activity in mind when they referred to teaching in other classes or settings.

> I mean, the sort of teaching that I do, is very different from like reception, sort of very much... it's very much free choice. The children are choosing what they want to do and they're choosing how long they want to spend at an activity, whether they want to work alone or with another child or with another you know, another member of staff...

> I've never actually done any proper sort of, I was going to say 'proper teaching' but if you like you know 'proper teaching' hmm, where the children are all sitting down at desks. I've never done anything like that and I don't think I'd like to do that, I think, to me it's very like hmm, it's almost like you've got a power, sort of thing over them.
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> I think that the children should learn, but the age we're primarily teaching, they learn through hands-on experiences and through experiencing for themselves and I think if they learn that way, they will remember it better. So the sort of teaching that I do is very different to in a school because I'm in a nursery school.
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> I think it's more than a lot of people think, standing in a classroom telling them what to do, it's not, a lot of it's nothing to do with it really, I don't think.
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For at least one of the students, the whole issue to do with the low status of Early Years practitioners and their role in comparison to the teacher, and the consequent financial rewards, was clearly a difficult one.

> I am doing the same job as the teacher's doing, there's, nobody could walk in the room and say 'that's the teacher, that's the assistant.' I do all the assessments, write the reports out, I do as much as the teacher does and that grinds on me. And I think why should I?... and I consider myself to be better at it than the teacher I'm working with actually, but it's very unprofessional of me to say so. I am better with the children than she is and ... I mean the age she is, she's probably earning twice the amount of money as me and that's really like, it's annoying. And so that's one of the reasons that I think I should go into teaching ...
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But for another student, who worked outside the Education sector, the overlap between what she understood teaching to be about and some aspects of the requirements of her job were unproblematic, possibly due to her experience and seniority of position.

> It's difficult isn't it; it's different from my job, really. I suppose part of my job is also teaching..., I suppose teaching people that come to the school or come to the college... they're actually coming to learn a specific skill or whatever. Where in my job, it's more people come because they have a problem, but they still often need to be taught or shown, shall we say, how to cope with basic life skills or whatever. So in a way, it is very similar. I think probably in my job people wouldn't actually know that's what they were coming for. They had the problem, they wanted the problem solving, somebody else often to solve that problem for them but actually they need to solve their own problems really. You just a facilitator, almost like teachers. You've still got to have certain knowledge, I suppose like a teacher in that way.
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In addition to communicating knowledge, giving children the basic foundations and providing stable and positive relationships, it was also recognised that teaching might involve other aspects, such as dedication and enjoyment.

> I also think teaching is, you have to be extremely dedicated I would think to pull it off, to make a success of it, because I would imagine it's very difficult to get what's here in your brain into someone else's brain. Which is basically what it is, isn't it?.... Also enjoying it as well... I imagine you have to enjoy teaching. Yeah, that's what I would put that down to.
>
> 4

> You've got to be able to transfer that knowledge to the children, taking into account their age, ability and putting it over to them in the most fun way possible, to learn. I mean being in special needs I find that you've got to go over the same thing a lot of the time just to get through a basic concept. You've just got to make it, do it different ways, make it fun for them.
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Getting the students to talk in general terms about teaching enabled them to relax and made it easier to begin talking about why they did, or did not want to teach. From the outset it had been decided that students who definitely did not want to teach would also be asked their reasons for not choosing to progress in this way. Their initial response in the questionnaire to the question of 'to teach or not to teach?' was used as a starting point.

Q.2. Why do or don't you want to teach?

Of the seven students interviewed, only two were still keeping to the decision they had expressed on the questionnaire. These were the two students at either end of the continuum... one had always wanted to teach and for the other, teaching had never been an option. The remaining five students were interesting in that they had all changed their minds in the interval between the data collection by questionnaire and the interviews. Two of these students were still undecided and continued to change their minds whilst the others were gradually moving from not wanting to teach towards it becoming a distinct possibility. There were numerous reasons for the differences, both for individuals and between individuals but for all of the students there was initially a desire to work with children.

The student who worked outside the Education sector and for whom teaching had never been an option, explained how her job with children just changed and how she moved with it

> *Why did you choose your job and not teaching, you obviously wanted to work with children?*
>
> Yes that was the basic starting point for me. Yes, going back 30 years, the job I than took on 30 years ago was working with children, caring for children and then that job changed. I mean everything about it changed as well as the position I held changed. So then, I mean if you look at me in the later stages, then you have a staff team so that was training people constantly as well. So going back to the teaching, you've sort of got the staff team, plus also the people you were working with. At that time it wasn't just children but it was children and their families and just adults as well. So I suppose teaching for me never really came into it at that point. It just became working with families, which was then involved with teaching the families how to cope and how to have life skills.
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You've actually got quite a lot of similarities with someone whose teaching, in the sense of the techniques that people use, but you're just doing it for a slightly different purpose?

That's right and I think on this course as well, I've heard the girls talking who are actually assisting the teachers and they have the children what's probably got their problems and they find it really difficult then because they've got a real line, or they feel they have, because they can't interfere with home life. Whereas, I suppose really, for me it's easier really because that's part of the job.

7

For all the rest of the students, there were key points in their lives that seem to have affected these decisions (and apparent indecision), from their own school days right through to their experiences on the HNC course. For the student who had always wanted to teach, this took the form firstly of poor exam results...

I've always wanted to teach, but because I didn't do particularly well with the O-levels, well, I like wanted to leave school basically.

...coupled with teenage determination...

And I wanted to be a teacher for the deaf but I went into Nursery Nursing because it was 2 years and it was like... you know what you're like at 16, it was like, I want to do this.

...that with hindsight, affected her job prospects.

So I've always wanted to work with children and specifically deaf children. Or children with a hearing or visual impairment, but as I've got older I've realised that I should have stayed on and done my O-levels and A-levels. Although it's not stopped me doing the jobs that I've wanted to do. It's just that you're not given the responsibilities that you would be as a teacher...So from the teaching aspect, it's not stopped me doing what I wanted to do, but obviously you've not been able to go any further in your career and obviously the financial rewards are not the same.

However, even though this student still has a strong desire to teach, she does have issues about the entry requirements and cost of giving up work that would be necessary for her to be able to attend university full-time.

> And the reason why I'm not going onto University now is because I haven't got the O-level Maths. (GCSE) and I don't particularly want to sit and do that one again and it's the taking the time out from not working. So they are the two main things, the Maths. and the financial side of it really. But no, I've always wanted to teach, so.

When asked if she thought she might overcome these problems her reply highlighted another issue.

> Umm, I think if I could overcome the O-level Maths., then I would consider it, but also it's the not having a guarantee of a job at the end of it. I mean I like the job that I'm doing at the moment and it's a safe job and it fits in with my son and things like that. So there's a lot of other things that come into it. But no I've always wanted to do it, work with children and teach, so.
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Interestingly in these few short exchanges, the student reiterates she has 'always wanted to teach' on four separate occasions! Quite whether this is by way of a mantra to convince herself that it is external factors that prevent her achieving her dream, rather than stumbling blocks she is putting in her own way, is debatable. However, the problems of finance and meeting qualification entry requirements are also mentioned by the two students who could not settle on a decision.

The first student is clearly in a quandary...

> Do you know, I change my mind every single day. I really do. Part of me says just go for it, and like we've had teacher training students in and they've said 'you're good at your job, why don't you do it, you should do it.' And then part of me sort of, well I struggle over the assignments here, well I don't always struggle but I find it difficult to fit the time in and like recently married and it's sort of you know you want to sort of be spending time with your husband.

...wondering about whether she has the staying power for the course...

> ...if you're studying solidly for 3 years then I think well, what if I give it up, give up the job and I start doing it and then I think, well I can't cope with this, I can't cope with doing work every day, then what happens?, then what do I do? So part of me thinks 'you should quit now while you're ahead. You know you've done your HNC it'll be on your CV, it looks good for any jobs you apply for, you know you've done what you set out to do, quit while you're ahead' and the other half of me says 'well I could earn that extra money and you could do this and...', it's ever so difficult.

...and how she can gain a maths qualification.

> ...it's very difficult. I'm really, I think, I think I feel, I mean I haven't got a Maths so that's another big issue as well. So I'm thinking maybe I ought to wait and see how I feel at the end of next year. And then if I haven't got a Maths... if I have to do my Maths. that's putting it off another year isn't it?

The 'putting it off' in this recently married student's case, is not about going to train to be a teacher, but about the issue of having a family.

> And plus, yesterday, my husband pointed out to me that ... if I decide to do teacher training next year he'll be 33. So if I did 3 years he'll be, 36 /37 by the time I've finished. I think we will have children, so if we do, we won't be having them till he's 37 and that's the first child. And then it's sort of like, I mean I don't want to be old when I have children and I'm already 28 and it's like all that sort of thing. I hadn't thought about that till yesterday, so now I'm thinking about that and it's very difficult.
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The other student, who had found it hard to make a decision, eventually changed her options completely after time spent in school as a helper.

> Well it's hard, because I've changed my, well not changed my mind but I'm going to do something else next year. I don't know really, see how it goes. I went into school as a helper, sort of like placement from school. I've always enjoyed it. I've seen the nursery nurses at school and what the teachers do and basically we doing the same for less money.
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However, for one of the three students who were gradually moving away from not wanting to teach, it was this same type of experience as a helper in a school, coupled with their own previous good experiences of primary school, that made a positive difference.

> Why do I want to teach? I didn't actually to start off with. I wanted to be a nurse and so I went to look at the hospital and realised that I just couldn't cope with it. Umm and with working voluntary at the school I decided that, I liked going in there and I liked what they were doing and I thought that, I prefer the younger children and I thought that I could perhaps make quite a good teacher because I've got the gift of the gab, I can talk to anybody. And I can relate to how they feel because I remember being at school and sitting there thinking I don't understand this and being too scared to ask and I want to be the type of teacher where they put their hands up and ask straight away and not really be too bothered. Umm, I think it's experiences you have... I mean I always had a nice time at school, primary school especially. I loved it. I loved it, I really enjoyed it and I think that's what it is. That's it really.
>
> 1

The remaining two students have had gradual changes of heart. For one it was the news of other degree courses that may be being offered part-time that was proving attractive.

> I still feel tempted, I was a definite No to start with, but I've heard about this B.A. Hons. that C_____ is going on. There are a few of us that are interested in it and one of the students has come in today talking about a course at Leeds and apparently it's starting up this year. Personally I would prefer to wait until I'd done my year off for lots of reasons and knowing that it is the first year (of the course running), from my experience with first years, I would like to wait. But from what C_____ has said, they seem very enthusiastic and have actually said to go over once a term, to get to know the place, to listen to a lecture. It does sound very interesting and yes, I would be interested to do that and would like to then do a PCGE. Whether I am capable of doing it? I'd have to find out, but yes I am still tempted. I think there's part time and full time places. I need to ring but unfortunately I haven't but I will get in touch and find out. I think it's part time, it's probably one day a week but at the moment I just want to finish this course and spend next year looking. Apparently with this course, the HNC, you could go onto the second year but with it just starting, there isn't a second year, it would be worth waiting another year.
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> 6

For the other student it has been a natural progression from the work she had been doing working with children, as a nanny.

> When someone asks why you want to do something it's very difficult to explain why you do want to do it and it's all cliché stuff isn't it? But I suppose I want to do it because it's a natural progression from what I've been doing and I feel hopefully, I will have a lot to give. At the moment I'm dealing with 3 children and I feel sort of stifled, I feel I could give more to more children at the same time. So that's really why I want to do it, just a natural progression.

And progression was the key word here, as she had just heard she had been successful in gaining a place at the university to study to be a teacher. However, it had been a gradual process ...

> Well I'm not going to say 'because I've always wanted to', because that's a lie. It's only over the last sort of 3 or 4 years, though I've wanted to work with children since I was about 7... but it's been sort of a gradual thing and now I really can't wait to get cracking on with it and make a success of it.

...where she had built on her skills and expertise in caring for children, added to her life experience and now seems ready for a new challenge.

> I know about the care side and now I want to know about the teaching side. I know it's going to be very, very hard work especially doing four years at University for a start off, without even teaching. Yeah, but I know I want to do it, it's been my ambition for a few years not since I was a kid. If I'd have done this when I was 18, thinking how I was when I was 18, I was a kid myself, no way I could have been a teacher then. I also feel better because you've been through life when you get to 31 And you've got your life experience to add to what you're trained to do which I think helps as well. Primed and ready!
>
> 4

So clearly there have been some experiences or factors that have influenced a number of students in their decision making whilst for other students it has been a more idiosyncratic mix of work and life experiences that are affecting that process. The next two questions deal with exactly what effects there may have been, in terms of people, events or the students' academic and professional experiences on the HNC course.

Q.3 Are there any events or individuals that you feel may have influenced your decision?

Some of the responses to this question were very general, particularly with reference to events or situations. It was however, a different story when talking about individuals, as there were some who had been very specifically involved in some cases. For the student working outside the education sector, with children and families with problems, this question was the least applicable. Yet in a way, her decision to remain in this field of work rather than change career path was indicative of how settled she had been in this work.

> *Is it something you always wanted to do?*
> Yes always... so I think I just got into that profession and then things just went along from there. I went with it, yes and then doors opened I suppose and...
>
> *Are you pleased you went with it, it's still something that gives you a buzz?*
>
> Oh yes! I think I've been very fortunate because we had some really hard times over this period. We had some difficult times with the children and things like this, but on the whole I really think I'm fortunate, to have enjoyed what I did, for all that length of time. A lot of people don't get that. I didn't probably have as much success in some cases as we'd like, but then I think it's difficult to measure success anyway.
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> 7

The most telling event or situation for the other students was their experience of primary school. Whilst they were aware they had had some teachers who had inspired them, names and specific cases were not always remembered. What was remembered was the environment and ethos those teachers had created. However this also worked in reverse with some students remembering no-one inspiring in their own education.

> I'd always wanted to teach, I don't know why I just have and then I changed my mind, and then I went back to the idea. There were one or two teachers at school who were probably really good and then there were others that sort of made me think well I could do better then that.

5

Urmm. I think in the infants and juniors I had some very, very good teachers who inspired. I can remember being very young and very enthused and couldn't wait to get back to school the next day because they were very, very good teachers. I would say the infants and the juniors were the most influence. I don't know if that's how other people feel.

2

I think I really, really enjoyed primary school because secondary school I didn't enjoy at all. I remember the good times about primary school... and my parents split up and I remember going to school and it was, it was the stable place to go. Everything... nothing ever changed just went to class and you changed round. It was a little village school about 90 children. So they never, it never changed, I always had the same teacher. I mean she wasn't exactly very nice, not somebody you could go and talk to if you were upset, but she was there and if I see her now, actually she speaks to me in town. And I still have very fond memories, I mean I think you always remember the good things don't you?

1

In some ways, negative experiences of secondary school also seem to heighten the positive primary experience with the possible effect of maybe even distorting it slightly to make it appear even more special.

No I was erm, I'd just turned 11 when I went to secondary school. My birthday was in August and I started in September, and I'm late August and I was just barely 11 and it was awful. I went from a school where there were 90 children in the whole school to a school of about 500 children. And I just wasn't ready for it. I could have done with another a year really at primary school. And the adjustment, it took me a year to adjust and by then I was so far behind that I ended up being in the second to top class and I just never coped after that. I just, I just didn't feel that I could cope with it anymore so I just, I just didn't do very well all the way through it until my GCSE's and then I passed all of them. Apart from my Maths. but I'm not going to mention that.

1

I wouldn't like to say that happened in secondary school, I think that's probably what most people say. I mean up until my third year I absolutely adored school, did very, very well. In the third year I got very disillusioned, I didn't find the work particularly hard when we got to third and fourth year and then I think I got a bit rebellious. Caused my own problems really and just decided I wanted to leave school, you know as quickly as possible...I think you get a bit lost in the system at secondary school even if you're put in the top sets. I don't, I don't think always the enthusiasm's there for inspiring the pupils, which I think lower down the school there probably is.

2

For the rest of the students though, it was key people rather than events or situations, who were significant in their lives and affected their decisions about teaching. Some of these individuals were family members and some were people who had either observed the students working or who worked regularly alongside the students in schools and nurseries. For some students it was the practice they witnessed...

I've been very lucky because I've worked with lots of different people and like especially when I worked at _____, I worked with a male teacher there who was just marvellous. I learned so much from him and I think, I mean, I haven't had loads of different jobs but every single job I've learnt different things. But I learned so much from him ...and the way he was with the children and his attitude and his sort of, the way he was with the parents, he was just wonderful... really so kind and so calm, you know.

3

So he was very influential and ...I worked with somebody at a day nursery...there was a deputy there who was brilliant with the children and really sort of 'right let's do this' and really, so spontaneous. She just said right 'OK kids, sit down I'm going to do a play' and she'd just make up a story as she went along, with hats and bags and scarves and she was Mr. So-and-So and then she'd be Mrs. So-and-So and it just, it was just like... WOW... you know she should have been on the stage really. But the kids were just like this watching her, you know, and there was always a brilliant ending as well. It was interesting working with her, getting ideas from her and sort of you know, things that you could do with children.

3

...whilst for other students it was what these key people said to them or how they supported them that proved significant.

> And then errm, I think my Mum suggested working with children, we'd been on a holiday and we'd been on this farm and there were lots of children and I sorted of ended up looking after them, playing with them the whole week and really enjoyed it. Mum said 'well why don't you work with children then?'

Indeed in some cases there was more than one of these 'significant events and significant others' that seemed to add weight to one another such that eventually even the most stubborn student had their ideas challenged.

> I suppose the main event was when I applied for this course, I didn't actually apply for it, I applied for an NVQ ...and I wrote off what my qualifications where and what I'd been doing and the tutor come back and asked, 'would you like to be interviewed for this course'. And that's when I realised I could probably do something a bit more with myself other than what I had been doing up to then. Then my husband...I was saying 'I don't know if I can do that' ... there was a slow realisation on my behalf. I said 'what do you think?', yeah I could do that, I feel myself that I can do that, with my assignments and things that I've been doing.
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> 4

> You know yourself, it doesn't matter how many people flannel you and say 'You're wonderful', you know yourself whether you're up to it. And if I didn't think that I was, then I wouldn't, especially giving up a full time job to go and do something if you're not going to do it properly then you might as well not bother really. I think there's something good to be said for taking up higher education at a later age although I never would have thought I'd hear myself say that a couple of years ago. I do honestly think there is, well for me, there is anyway. I haven't got any children at the moment, which is probably to my advantage as well. I would think if you had got children it would be very, very difficult.

In this case there were four elements that came together - applying for the course, having her potential recognised by a trained professional, her husband's support and then her own self-realisation that it might be possible to achieve her ambitions. Yet the last student in the group had an even more poignant tale to tell about one of her significant others when asked who had influenced her.

Well, the head at my school, who died unfortunately. A couple of days before that, he'd put this idea into my head and obviously he thought I had the confidence to do it, or he had the confidence in me to do it, I should say. I feel I want to do it for him as much as for me, he had a great influence on my whole life, not just this last few months and not just this particular decision but on a lot of things both personal and career.

So you valued his judgement?

Oh definitely valued that, yes. There's also... they've also just appointed a new head in the school and she was the deputy until last July and she's now returning and she is so... she won't replace him, nobody could, but she's the nearest thing they'll get. She also encouraged me, she's a great one for doing extra training, I know she would be 100% behind me. And the other person is my sister, she thinks her little sister is capable of a lot more, she's always been there, with lots of problems I've had, she's listened to me and encouraged me. Those 3 people.

Q 4. What do you feel you've gained personally and professionally from the HNC course?

This proved to be a more difficult question to answer than had been imagined. All the students were effectively on a new course both for the college and nationally. As such they were guinea pigs as any first few cohorts of students are through a new course. Hence there was some mismatch of expectations between students and the college staff that emerged in the responses. Individual students' expectations therefore determined how they approached this question and there were both very positive and very negative reactions.

On the down side, some students felt the problems with marking criteria and assignments had affected what they had been able to learn from the course.

I don't know if I should say that, but it's not very well organised. It is, because it's new and we were like the guinea pigs...it's very, very muddled and sometimes we're given an assignment and ...um, you think 'I could do loads for it' and you do loads and you get a pass and then you do next to nothing for another assignment and you get a distinction. So it's very... the marking system needs looking at a little bit, about, the amount you get given for each assignment.

1

At the moment I can't say I've got a great deal out of the actual HNC because of all the problems that we've had, but hopefully they're going to be rectified so we shouldn't have the problems for next year. Errmm, I can't really comment on the individual lectures as such, because they're not always relevant to what you're doing but they can't meet everybody's needs, I mean you know that yourself, it's difficult. I don't really know what...how it will help me when I've finished it

2

I don't feel as though I've gained, I don't feel as though I've learnt that much that I've been able to take back to the classroom. Which I've been a bit disappointed about.

3

One student was very disillusioned by the whole process, but this may also have been as a result of being turned down for entry into the university following interview.

I don't think I've gained nothing at all. To me I feel it's been a complete waste of time. I've enjoyed it at school, I really have, but I mean we've had trouble with tutors (*long-term sick leave*) I mean that's added to the hassle. To me it's gave me nothing at all. I mean I did go to see _____ the other week and ....she says I'll have the qualification and that's it. But the thing is, if I'd applied 2 years ago to university, I'd have stood an equal chance then as I have done this time. I honestly feel I'd have been better doing my 'A' levels.

I went to _____, I didn't get a place and there were 3 of us went and I didn't get a place, _____ didn't and _____ did. When I consider what I've done and I think about 'A' levels, the only thing, I rang up and asked and they said it was my interview technique which is fair enough but the difference between the 3 of us is _____'s got 'A' levels and the other 2 haven't. That's probably not the reason but it still stands out as, you see what I mean.

Sadly, this student had been given misinformation by a headteacher she knew, about entry requirements for university, and she had believed him instead of what she had been told by her course tutors involved in the 'Link' project. Even a separate discussion at the end of the interview to try to clarify the actual requirements, appeared to fall on deaf ears.

In contrast, other students found the course helpful and challenging, building on skills and knowledge they already had, but were able to develop in more depth, or use it to fill in gaps in their knowledge

> Erm, I think working professionally at the hospital, we did play at the very start, and we touched on play when we were doing my other course, the one I did at Boston, my diploma, and this is more in depth and I understood why children enjoyed playing so much and what experiences it gave them. I was actually put in charge of the playroom and I could actually plan it out. I had a small play area with sand in it and I had another area for small world play with little Duplo things all in one corner and then one for crayoning and I used to change it all around and that's something I've learned from here.
>
> 1

> I think because my basic training was with adolescents and then it was sort of experience with the families of the adolescents I didn't have anything sort of early years experience. Although I had management of people, there was still nothing in early years. So there was nothing I could sort of take along and say I can work in an Early Years setting. That was the little bit that was missing, so that was for me what I needed to do. I've found it really interesting and enjoyable but it's hard fitting everything else in too.
>
> 7

> Well, professionally I suppose it's enabled me to go on to university because without this course there is no way I'd have been able to do that.
>
> 4

However, most students found there were benefits personally if not professionally and also cited the benefits of having a cross-disciplinary cohort.

> It's been an eye opener being with all the different age ranges and we all get on really well in our group. I don't know if anyone else has said that we all get on really, really well and we help each other if there's a problem then. And we have sort of a very heated debate about things, very heated debate, so I just sit there and don't say anything because I think I'll get my head bitten off. No, it's very good I've enjoyed it.
>
> 1

> I've enjoyed meeting other people that have come from different areas; they're not always in childcare. Social services, nurseries, some are not childcare related at all. I've enjoyed that, meeting the people.
>
> 2

> ...but personally I've found that, I say it's socially the mixing with other people who are doing similar jobs to yourself and I've found it a great help being on the course with the other girl who works at my work place as well. That's been sort of, we've been able to chat saying 'well what do you think about this?', you know, 'Am I doing the right thing here?'

In terms of personal benefits there was a great deal of confidence boosting and challenging of ideas...

> It's given me some more confidence, a lot more confidence writing. I don't feel confident in writing things out so I word process them, just because I don't feel my writing's neat enough. I think you get stuck in a rut and you think to yourself I just can't... and you just think this is as much as I can do and then you realise you can stretch yourself and do even more.
>
> 1

> So I think it just makes you a bit more self-reflecting. You look at what you're doing and perhaps you think, oh yeah I could improve on that. So I think it's helped professionally that way. You're a bit more challenged and channeled with what you're doing.
>
> 2

I think I feel as though my confidence has bloomed really...

...but now I feel like I can sort of um, it sounds really daft, but like say big words and know what they mean, whereas before it's been like 'what does that word mean?'. My brain has finally been opened up. I feel as though I've been a bit sort of brain dead for the past few years and I think, I mean I've sort of, years ago I thought, right you've got to open your mind a bit and I did lots of reading and I went travelling for a bit and I sort of felt as though I was learning more things through doing that and I feel that was really good for me. But this has been more like I've been really learning.

3

Personally for me, I've learnt quite a lot on it from the fact that I was one of the few people on my course who'd never worked in a school. Never had any school experience, classroom experience anything like that. A lot of the girls knew vaguely what the tutors were talking about, I'd never had anything like that, I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. I seriously didn't, so it's been a help in both, really like that. I felt that I'd be wasted doing the job that I was doing, after doing this course.

4

I suppose I feel that the fact that I've got nearly to the end, I'm sure I will get to the end now, it is an achievement. It's something that I didn't think I would do, I didn't think I was capable of doing, to get the grades I've got as well, it's boosted my confidence. In fact I think some of the assignments I've been able to do. I suppose a lot of the work I've done, because I've worked in mainstream and special for a long time I know a lot of the work that we've covered. It's been like a great confidence boost for me...It's like OK I've done this so it's given me more responsibility so I think that's nice as well. Yes, it's an achievement.

6

...yet this too is coloured by the success of individual students. For those who are going back to permanent jobs with increased responsibilities and pay the course has been successful. For those who are moving onto further studying or onto degrees in universities, the course has been successful. However for a couple of these students, their dreams of going to university have not yet been achieved, and their temporary job contracts are coming to an end, so for them the course has not lived up to their expectations.

Q.5 Are there any key issues about teaching and education that you really feel strongly about?

The final question of the interview was to give students opportunity to air their concerns about teaching or education. Predictably, many of the issues raised were those that concern the whole Education sector and included OFSTED, League tables, SATs and class sizes. However every student spoke from their experience about how these issues were affecting them in practice, professionally and many used actual examples to illustrate their concerns. This practical, realistic approach was also evident in the issues that had less national relevance but were clearly workplace or experience specific. Generally though, there was little overlap with every student focussing on a different issue.

In terms of OFSTED, League tables and SATs, some of the students had had first-hand experience.

> I do think there's too much assessment in schools. Too much paperwork now and not enough right let's...
> *Have you been 'OFSTEDed'?*
> Well yes, we had all the paperwork and everything in line anyway, we're quite lucky but I mean I feel like with the National Curriculum there are so many tick boxes and like with SATS, I don't altogether agree with that, because I think a teacher already knows where their children's at. I think it's geared to the league tables and I don't particularly agree with that. So that's one thing I strongly disagree with but other than that they're very broad things.
>
> 2

> Those (*things*) that I don't agree with, on the subject of OFSTED, that's a farce and I think that those schools that were inspected at the beginning of all this were disadvantaged and those that are inspected now should come out with a brilliant OFSTED report because of all the people's advice. There's just no need for it. I mean, I think there should be some form of inspection, but to be given months and months of notice. There used to be these inspectors and advisers that kept a check on schools and helped them and advised them rather than putting teachers through hell. I don't agree with that there's a lot of money spent on that, I think it's unnecessary.
>
> 6

My own children's school came top within _____shire, the poor head doesn't want it because what he actually wants is the children to come to the school because its a lovely family-orientated, well-disciplined, happy, little school. A village school. Unfortunately people are ringing up saying 'Can we come, because you're top of the league table'. It's not right, he doesn't like that. If it were at the bottom, you'd worry, yet when it's at the top; you can't win, can you?. So things like that I just think children should be disciplined, have respect for their teachers everybody else around them and learn in a happy environment. That's the ideal world but unfortunately it doesn't exist.

6

For one of the students it was the issue of class sizes that was significant.

Class sizes, class sizes really annoy me. Where I work at the moment, she is newly qualified last year, so it's her second year and she's got 38 children in her class and they are aged between 6 and 7 and she copes... she's actually admitted that she can go home and some days she can realise that she hasn't spoken to a child, she's missed them and all day she's not spoken to them. She's probably taken their work in from them, and ticked it, but actually physically spoken to them and spent time asking if they're OK?... she says she knows roughly what's going on but if she didn't have a special needs Down's girl in there and a full time assistant, she wouldn't cope. Normally she wouldn't get an ancillary; the only reason she's got one is because she's got J____ and she's got a boy in there who's got a mental age of 4. She just...it's just absolutely worn her out.

1

When asked whether they had always felt this way the student replied...

It's because I've seen it. I've been in there and I've seen it and it's chaos. I mean she rules them really, she's very strict and she's not normally with her classes but she has to be. She has to make sure that when she clicks her fingers they stop and listen to her because she wouldn't get it through what she's trying to tell them, if she didn't. So I'm really quite sorry for her.

And I hope that that will never happen to me, but I'm sure it will and I just feel so sorry for her because she's so disillusioned. She was so enthusiastic in her first year and now she's just absolutely worn out. Absolutely worn out... class sizes need definitely looking at, definitely!

1

There is also a suggestion in this student's comments that the presence of special needs children in this large class, whilst adding to the size and complexity of the class also has beneficial effects for the teacher, in that there is another adult present in the room to help those children specifically, and the teacher more generally. Other students too have mentioned the recent (at the time) introduction of a Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs but felt there were still issues to be resolved.

> I do think although the Code of Practice has brought in more support, I think for special needs children...I don't think there's enough specialist teachers and support workers working with them. I think at times, they're statemented and given hours, but not given the support that is really required...You know, that children are given the basic skills and children with special needs are given a properly appointed person, not necessarily somebody that works in school already. You know, if they're given the hours then they should be hours that are really going to benefit the children.
>
> 2

For the student who was currently working in a special school there were added problems of job insecurity...

> Yes, there's this Code of Practice that's probably going to start, I know there's one particular unit that may be closing down in _____. A special unit, because of the Code of Practice. It's all right having this code of practice and keeping children in main stream, but you're putting more burden onto teachers and are they actually qualified and experienced enough to actually to cope with these children?
>
> It's such a shame because the children in our school, the fun they have... they're taken out on so many trips. They have 'hands-on', it's not all writing. I mean it's what they need, where as unfortunately children left in main stream, I suppose there are advantages. I'm sure that there are, but the main disadvantage is that they feel isolated whereas in our school they are all the same. They may be bottom of the class in mainstream but top of the class in our school.

...and to support her argument she cited a particular child for whom she felt inclusion had not worked.

He came from one main school, had a terrible reputation and he just has learning problems. He's a slow learner I suppose, and he's in the same class as a boy with reading problems. He helps him, he doesn't ridicule him, he's a really caring lad and it's really brought him out, he's really blossomed, whereas left in mainstream, he'd be not going to school or kicking and abusing. I feel strongly about special needs, I think special schools are important.

6

In contrast to the issues with inclusion there are also issues surrounding exclusion. Ironically, although one student works outside the Education sector with children and their families, it is at this point, exclusions, that her job overlaps with education.

One of the most difficult things has always been exclusions from schools. But then again, if you look at it from a teacher's point of view, having a class of 30 children, it must be extremely difficult for them as well. And it's not all been bad experiences. We've got some very good relationships with schools and teachers as well. Sometimes you get them all don't you? Some teachers that can go along further than others with children that have got more problems than most. And then once they do get excluded from school, that's when the other problems start. Because it's getting really difficult... getting them back into a main stream school. Very hard, very hard.

Whose job is it to get them back in, is it the schools or is it yours?

It's education's, but we often need really to push very, very hard. Eventually, they get home tuition 2 hours a day, which is nothing and the longer they're out of school, the harder it becomes to get them back in. And then you do the rounds of the various schools trying to get places and often they don't want to know.

Are there some schools that end up taking more than their fair share?

Yes and you get to know which schools to approach...yes, you do know who to go to. Some as I say, are very good and really then you want your children to go on to those schools because you don't want them to keep having failure after failure. And some schools take them on reluctantly, so then the first thing that goes wrong, they're out again.

7

Other concerns raised by students' own experiences, focussed on the poor level of skills children had when entering nurseries and the amount of work needed to provide a good foundation to build on. There was also the feeling that some of the individual progress achieved by boosting self esteem within nurseries may be lost in the 'labelling' environment of school classrooms.

> ...and our data came back and there was definitely a language deficit which we knew before, but now we've got the evidence of it. So I think the main issues of the early years, I can't really comment up the school because I don't really deal with those children, is that they're coming into school with very poor social and communication skills, which I think in years gone by, there was quite a good foundation there and you could work from that, whereas now you have to go so much lower. So I think there should be more emphasis on that, the language side of it.
>
> 2

> ...and it's very much like, very labeling...And I think the schools are very much you know, 'you've been naughty', 'you are a naughty person', 'you are bad' and I think it's, you know, there's a lot of our children who we spend a lot of time on self esteem, building them up you know, and just praise, praise, praise for like the most, for anything that is praiseworthy it's like' that is wonderful, fantastic' and 'oh aren't you brilliant' and all the rest of it. And then they get to school and it's like wow yeah say, flatten them like a pancake again.
>
> 3

There are also issues concerned with the nature of the relationship with parents and whether and how they are involved with schools and nurseries.

> You know all that hard work we've done (*with self esteem*) and it's, I mean sometimes you feel like when they go home, they're going to get home and you know...
>
> 3

> The aggro from the parents, everybody really it's always in the news about teachers...it's their fault for this and their fault for the other. Some of ours are terrible. Headlice, we got the blame for not doing anything to stop the spread of headlice! They used to drop their kids off and then they'd go out and stand in a circle just so we could see them and we knew full well they were discussing us. Silly things, such as behaviour as well and you can't do anything to stop bad behaviour nowadays, can you? Not much, you're limited on that, but you're still getting the blame for it happening. A lot of it comes from home I think.
>
> 5

> I think there should be a lot of parental involvement. I find the special needs schools don't have much parental involvement. Parents that come in, we have children in school who have various backgrounds, it's usually children from middle class backgrounds whose parents that do come in to respond to things, the others unfortunately don't. I don't know what you can do to encourage that, at all. They won't even come in to discuss their children; they're coming in wanting to complain.
>
> 6

These views of schools and parental relationships are given a different slant by the student who has had no school based experience prior to the course. Her role as a nanny gave her access to a different world...

> I do feel quite strongly about it but saying that, I don't see that there's any simple solution to it, if you see what I mean. This is only something that I have noticed because of the job that I do, that the children that I look after all go to good private schools, where there's a lot of status attached to things and a lot of it is the money orientated issues. Who's got what, where and how and who's got the biggest yacht and car and this, that and the other.
>
> The people I work for aren't really like that, but they have got a hell of a lot of money and the kids I look after have had a very good education. So far, aged 4 or 5 they've been at nursery since they were 3 and they are quite a bit further on than a lot of my friend's children are. Certainly the nursery helped a lot and I can't say whether they're bright children or not bright children but I've seen them progress really just like that and all I can put that down to is the education they've been receiving.
>
> I feel quite sad, I mean there's only something ridiculous like 8 in a class, and that must be it, because I wouldn't say the teachers are any better. I would

say they've probably got more resources and also they've got smaller class sizes and things like that.

So having identified possible causes from her own observed experience this student has formulated further understandings relating to equality of opportunity.

> I just think it's a real shame that all children can't have that opportunity ... I don't want to get into politics because people have a right to choose don't they, if they can pay for education? I don't think the best education should be out of price, I think all children should have a good education, whoever you are, however much money the parents earn.
>
> It just seems an awful shame that so many children miss out on all these resources and things like this...that other children haven't got those opportunities just because their parents haven't got. I was educated through the state system and did all right by it so, but it just seems like an awful shame to me.
>
> I've been to a lot of nurseries to be honest, but the nursery that I'm most used to, I can't say is fairly typical of what goes on, probably at all. I mean all the children are all extremely, well, they shake the teacher's hand as they go out the classroom and they've all got boaters and blazers and it's a totally different world.
>
> ...the classrooms that I've seen have always been really highly resourced, with 2 of every thing per child. They've got a teacher and a classroom assistant for about 10 kids and stuff like this, it's out of this world. Why can't everyone have something like that? It just seems such a shame really, cause there's some of my friends' children go to good schools, it's just they don't they have the staff to do it or they don't have the resources. It's nothing to do with the teachers or the education they're receiving, it's just, it just seems such shame that if you want that sort of thing you have to pay through the nose for it. I think it's awful, I don't know what it smacks of but it doesn't lie very well with me I have to say.

Having gained a place at university, she is also aware that she is about to face some serious changes to what she has already experienced.

> ...it's not the kid's fault it's what the parents teach them. It's horrible because I'm just not like that. That does get me but that's only a personal view because I have to see it every day. So yes, I'm very much looking forward to seeing the other side. I bet not many people say that, but I am.
>
> *So you're excited?*

Yeah I am excited very, very, very excited!

Summary

The five interview questions have revealed a wealth of experience and expertise that was merely hinted at within the demographic data collected from the questionnaires. The breadth of the answers encompass the students' youth as well as maturity, and are demonstrated in the experiences they have had and in the perceptions they have accordingly developed about those experiences.

There are mixed understandings about the role of teaching and education and about their own current role in relation to teaching, again affected by their own experiences and sometimes lack of experience. This is also reflected in the concerns they have for education in general and in the smaller more locally based issues each individual is tackling in their workplace. The influence of actual experience of these issues permeated the students' responses as they gave practical examples to illustrate their points.

There are clearly some students who have issues with the HNC course and how it has been managed. However, the more mature students are aware that as a new course nationally and within the college, there were bound to be teething problems and have dealt with them accordingly. Age and experience have provided different expectations of studying and new initiatives. It would also be unfair to suggest the course is the cause of all the problems experienced by some of the students. Temporary job contracts coming to an end and failure to gain entry to university will have added to their disappointment and helped form this negative view.

There is evidence of both positive and negative events as well as relationships, that have in turn coloured students' understandings of their role and potential career progression into teaching. Unsurprisingly, positive experiences of their own primary school days feature, even if named teachers do not. Interestingly,

negative experiences of secondary school seem to enhance these primary experiences rather than cancel them out.

However it would appear that the strongest motivators for some students are either a single individual or a number of ' significant others' who make an impact either with words or actions. In some cases, these individuals provide models of good, creative or imaginative practice, in others they offer practical support or words of wisdom that demonstrate a belief that the student 'can do it'. In all cases, these people were respected by the students and their belief in the student was seen by the recipients as genuine and not, as one student described it 'as flannelling'. Often the genuine nature of this belief was perceived as a result of long periods of time spent in the company of these individuals either within the home in the case of family members, or in the workplace in terms of friends and colleagues. It was also felt by students that individuals who had seen them work or be with children were better able to make judgements about their suitability for teaching.

Some of these factors would be raised again in later interviews with the four successful students who used the 'Link' project to gain access to Initial Teacher Education.

CHAPTER 7

PROVIDING EXCURSIONS

At various points on a journey the travellers may elect to have designated days of rest or periods of time in one place, without moving on, the better to explore it further. Often during this time there are additional excursions provided by individuals with local knowledge which allow the travellers to gain greater insight into the locality. For these locally provided excursions to be successful they need to be tailored in some way to the requirements of the travellers.

In the case of the inquiry the local providers can be seen as both the institutions involved and the individuals responsible for ensuring access to certain courses within those institutions.

This chapter focuses on the issues raised in interviews with the 'gatekeepers' and course leaders for the particular Initial Teacher Education course involved in the 'Link'. The issue of what is provided at national level is also explored.

CHAPTER 7

Providing Excursions

Introduction

Having begun to uncover the perceptions and attitudes of the students involved in the study within their interviews, the focus then shifted. It was now the turn of the other individuals, the tutors or local providers, involved on the courses to share their side of the experience. There were three levels of providers that were to be approached, those involved with the HNC course, those involved with the BA course and further afield, similar individuals at other institutions not directly involved in the study. This was an attempt to develop a national perspective.

In order to discover who might be an appropriate individual to approach at national level, another small survey was undertaken to identify the extent of provision of degrees in Primary Education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) that had an Early Years focus. From the Early Years literature and conference attendances, it was possible to identify a small number of Early Years researchers then working at some of the institutions who might be seen as representative of 'national providers'.

A number of different sets of questions were prepared for providers depending upon their local or national status and whether the questions were being sent by mail or email. Letters with stamped addressed envelopes were sent out before the summer holidays, but to little avail. There were no responses to the letters and only one to an email. At college level, the tutors who had worked with the 'Link' had now all retired, had moved to other jobs or were facing redundancy. They too were unable to respond.

Eventually, four providers within the university were identified, approached and agreed to be interviewed. Whilst clearly their responses form only a small part of the overall picture of provision, nevertheless they provide an interesting foil to the students' responses.

National Provision

The small survey conducted at the beginning of the study in March 1996 only revealed the local provision for pre-degree level childcare courses on offer in the further education colleges within four counties of the East Midlands region.

The following January, in an attempt to identify possible destinations for students on courses such as the HNC, who wanted to teach, a further survey was carried out. The UCAS handbook and fledgling website were used to identify higher education institutions then offering Primary Education degrees leading to Qualified Teacher Status. This search was followed with a letter to these institutions requesting a prospectus in order to confirm the courses available and asking for information about the acceptability of a BTEC HNC qualification as an entry requirement. (Appendix 19)

By April 1997 sixty-one of the sixty-nine institutions approached by letter, had returned a prospectus. As with the local survey, some institutions had also returned course leaflets and open day invitations in addition. Originally, it had been intended that only those institutions that offered Primary Education with QTS were to be approached. However, there were a number of Education and Primary Education courses that did not offer QTS but looked like possibilities as destinations for the students, so these too were included in the mailshot.

Using the UCAS handbook and the sixty-one prospectuses it was possible to focus on thirty-nine institutions that were offering degree courses both with and without QTS, that focused on the Nursery and Lower Primary age ranges of 3-7 or 3-8. It was felt these were the most likely courses to both attract HNC and CHE students and be the most willing to accept their particular qualifications.

The thirty-nine institutions were offering between them, for September 1998, a total of fifty-nine degree courses. Some offered different degree types whilst others offered different versions of the same course. So whilst Canterbury Christ Church College of Higher Education offered a BA/BSc with Joint Honours, a BA/BSc with Combined Honours and a BA Honours with QTS all in Early Childhood Studies or Early Years Education; Bradford and Ilkley Community College offered a B.Ed Honours degree for 3 or 4 years and in Nursery / Lower Primary and Upper Primary options. In a few cases it was unclear whether the course carried QTS status.

A full breakdown of the courses is given in Appendix 20, but Figure 7.1 gives a brief summary of the range.

Types of Degree	Total	Total QTS / Non-QTS
B.A. Hons. QTS.	21	
B.A / B.Sc. Hons. QTS.	8	
B.Ed. Hons.	15	
B.Sc. Hons. QTS	2	
		46
B.A Hons.	7	
B.A / B.Sc. Combined / Joint / Hons.	4	
B.Sc. Hons.	2	
		13
	59	59

Figure 7.1

Amongst the degree courses being offered by the thirty-nine institutions, a clear majority offered Qualified Teacher Status. However as has been previously stated, at this time period it was not always easy for Early Years practitioners to gain access to these courses, because of entry requirements. What is interesting to note is the growing number of degree courses relating to Early Years that do not have QTS and hence do not have the TTA entry requirements.

Of the thirteen Early Years degrees identified in Figure 7.2, five are referred to as 'Early Childhood Studies' degrees, yet are different degree types.

Title of Course	Type of Degree	Amount
Childhood & Society	BA Hons.	1
Childhood Studies	BA Hons	2
Early Childhood Studies	BA	2
	BA / BSc Combined	1
	BA /BSc Joint	1
	BSc Hons.	1
Health Sciences & Childhood Studies	BSc	1
Primary Education	BA / BSc Hons.	1
Primary Education 3-11	BA Hons.	1
Primary Teaching	BA / BSc in Education	1
Professional Studies Early Childhood Studies	BA	1

Figure 7.2

The growing nature of these type of courses is highlighted by Fawcett and Calder (1998) who maintain that during the writing of their chapter and its publication, which took about a year, the number of Early Childhood Studies courses increased nationally from five to fifteen. A quick trawl of the current UCAS website reveals this has increased further in the last four years, with about 400 courses listed for Early Childhood Studies. Some of these courses are HND courses but the vast majority are 3 or 4-year BA or BSc degrees, many in combination or jointly studied with other subjects. (Appendix 21)

Using this information, and that from Early Years literature and conference attendance, a number of individuals were identified as possible national providers. As has already been mentioned, although letters were sent requesting responses to a number of questions, there were no responses by mail and only one by email. (See Appendix 21) It was therefore decided the focus would be on the local providers' experiences.

Local Provision

In terms of data collection, the study finally involved just three institutions directly; two further education colleges and one university. The individuals responsible in each of these institutions were either course leaders, teaching tutors or admissions tutors, the so-called 'gatekeepers' who control the access to courses.

A different set of questions had been decided upon for these local providers and letters were duly sent to the colleges. But following a lack of response partly because individuals had retired or moved and no longer had responsibility for the HNC courses, the focus for the providers' point of view narrowed to concentrate of four individuals within the University.

The four individuals were all senior members of the Department. One was in a managerial position, two were or had been course leaders for the BA degree and one was an admissions tutor. Of these, two were also directly involved teaching groups of undergraduates, amongst whom were the four successful 'Link' students.

These four tutors were approached by email initially and were given a general outline of the project and asked to participate. (Appendix 23) Following agreement, they were given two sets of questions. One set related to managerial issues whilst the other referred to teaching matters. (Appendix 24) To protect confidentiality the four individuals will only be identified as A, B C or D

The first set of questions that individuals were asked concerned their roles as managers. One immediate problem was how to define the student group involved in the study, both as representative of being Early Years practitioners and yet still identify them as an identifiable group to providers. In the end, the term most providers already used to describe this group of students also encompassed other groups not working in the Early Years. The term was 'non-traditional' or 'non-standard' entry students. It clearly marks the group as somehow lacking something, in this case, 'traditional' or 'standard' entry qualifications. It is not a phrase I was happy with, preferring instead 'alternatively qualified' or 'alternative entry'. However, as this was the language the providers were accustomed to, it proved less problematic during interviews to use it, rather than having to explain the other term constantly. The problems of definition were to be a recurring theme throughout the interviews.

Q.1 What are your views on the recruitment of 'non-standard entry' students whose background is in the Early Years context?

Overall the four providers were very positive about recruiting 'non-standard entry' students to the course. Some of this was based on ideology, but for others, it stemmed from experience with actual students.

> I would wish to recruit people like that and I would wish to support them in their ambitions to enter teaching. The kind of people like um, nursery nurses who are working their way through the academic system, taking A levels and whatever. So on that level I would want to encourage them as much as possible and I am aware that there isn't a career profile, but career opportunities for nursery nurses. It's very much a kind of one layer job so that's one side of it.
>
> D

> Well, the only experience I have personally with these students, is when I was on the validating committee for _____ when he was bringing the CHE together. And on that day I met half a dozen, I think he brought half a dozen of these students in and because they were all mature, articulate, experienced, um, committed, they were very good. I have to say I was very impressed with them ...a) their enthusiasm, b) with their urge to get onto the course you know they were really desperate after committing themselves in the way that they had, to actually get on it.
>
> C

In particular it was the idea that these students offered a different viewpoint, a different approach and brought different experiences to the course.

> I'm very positive in terms of recruiting 'non-standard entry' students in general. I think that err, they bring a different dimension to a course like this and are able to extend and enhance the course because of the different range of understandings that they bring to it.
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As part of this 'extra' dimension, there was the element of the students' experiences being grounded in practice, which in addition, they were willing to share.

> I think the early years dimension of these 'non-standard' students again is in that same vein. It's bringing a different set of experiences and um, I'll talk about this later, but when I have been aware of having practitioners in my class they have certainly brought a dimension of reality up frequently. They say 'Well actually, for early years, what this might mean is...' and I've been able to use that as a teaching tutor to support and debate some issues and focus on in a way that it wouldn't be possible to if they weren't there.
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However whilst this was not only true of the Early Years students, it was acknowledged that they brought their own particular 'flavour' to the course.

> I think it's not just the case with early years, but with other aspects with people who've had different kinds of life skills. So I see non-standard entry student teachers as positive and encouraging diversity and early years brings a particular dimension within that.
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> A

There were however concerns about some other 'non-standard entry' students, again as a result of experience.

> If I was talking more generally about 'non-standard entry' I'd have much more concern, because the 'non-standard entry' we've met in the past via Access, you know the access route through _____ and so on, has been much less of the calibre that we'd be looking for. They've created as a group of individuals, more administrative and managerial problems than all the rest of the ordinary A level students put together. You know I can go through a whole list of names of mature students who came via Access courses who've really caused us a lot of difficulty. So all I can say is the group that I met on that day that came from this sort of background [*Early Years*] were on first impressions, a much different group of 'non-standard entry' people.
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> C

Again, this raises the issue of definition and what counts as 'non-standard entry' and who meets those criteria. There was clearly a historical perspective to the debate as new courses came on board and began to claim equivalence with A levels, as is demonstrated by the comments below.

> First of all we need to define what we mean by 'non-standard entry' and this is one of the bugbears that we've been blessed with for many years. To some gatekeepers, the 'standard' was 2 A levels and everything else was non-standard. But technically, if someone for instance applies with a BTEC ... BTEC Early Years is nationally acceptable as being the equivalent to 2 A levels and therefore they are not 'non-standard'. They are 'standard' entry, they are 2 A level entries. Likewise, an Access course has been kite-marked nationally as equivalent to 2 A levels therefore they again are standard entry students.
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> B

According to this 'rule book' definition, used by admissions tutors, 'non-standard entry' means something quite different to the way most of the providers were using the term.

> 'Non-standard' entry would be a mature student with 1 A level whose other experiences would count instead of that. In theory, somebody need have no A levels at all...need have nothing past GCSE and if they're mature, we would be allowed to consider them for entry depending on their level of experience.

I mean, I can imagine somebody for instance who rose to senior positions as a nursery experienced person without any... you know as they could in the old days...and we could then say, 'Look you've got no post A level experience', in theory we could say to them, 'Fine, come and do teacher training with your Maths. and English GCSE that you got in 1972.' We're not likely to do that, but there is a possibility that would be lawfully correct...not legally...you know what I mean...that it would fit the rules OK.

But to us 'non-standard entry' is less than 2 A levels or equivalent.

B

Another cause for concern in defining 'non-standard entry' was the difference between so-called minimum entry requirements and additional requirements made by either the TTA or individual institutions.

So it's 2 A levels, not 3 A levels?

No, 2 A levels or equivalent is the national minimum requirement. It's on page 48 of the prospectus of the University. The standard minimum entry, I think we always describe as 5 passes at GCSE / GCE O level or their equivalent. One of which must be in Maths., one of which must be in English, one of which must be in Science for those born after the, the 1st September 1979. In addition there must be 2 passes, which must be at Advanced level. So that's the sort of minimum entry requirement and it always says 'or equivalent'. So, yes GNVQ level 2 can and has been accepted as equivalent to GCSE and BTEC Nursery Nursing has been accepted as equivalent to 2 A levels. So in a sense the word 'non-standard entry' is not the word that worries me so much, it's 'non-A level entry' if you like which is the concerning one, 'non-traditional or non-orthodox or what ever you want to call it.

B

In addition to the problems with definitions, there is also the issue of subject specialism that were seen as causing particular problems for Early Years practitioners.

And there's been a dilemma that's been thrust upon us externally, over the last 10 years. Since early National Curriculum or even pre-National Curriculum times, there's been a considerable pressure on us to make our courses correspond to primary National Curriculum subjects and the content of the courses has changed dramatically.

From being roughly a third education, a third main subject and a third practical teaching, which is roughly what it was 20 years ago, to now massively and predominantly Primary National Curriculum and experience. So the education bit has dwindled colossally. So the pressure has therefore come upon us internally, mainly in response to that external change, to require Primary National Curriculum subject matter in the applicants profile at post GCSE level. That's, that's really what we're talking about here

B

So changes at national level to the school curriculum, were causing local changes in terms of TTA and institutional requirements. An attempt to address this involved identifying potential additional units or modules to the basic BTEC National Diploma course, which would focus on Primary National Curriculum subjects. However an attempt to test out the feasibility of this retrospectively ran into problems.

> There are additional units which we could consider and we've looked very carefully into it. We haven't just dismissed it _____ wrote to all the section leaders in the various subject matters asking for their views and so on. So we gathered together a list of these additional units and we seriously tried retrospectively to apply those to applicants, you know, I took the batch applications and looked to see if I could reasonably apply those and we decided, No, it's not practical.
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> It's not practical for several reasons. Many applicants don't list fully their units on their application form. For instance they list some of them or they summarise them for Year 1 which they've already completed and they list all Year 2 which they have yet to complete. Sometimes if they do list them fully, they use a different nomenclature than the BTEC form, they use the institutions' nomenclature. So we can't tell if they're the additional units or if they're not. Very, very, very complex. In the BTEC there's colossal variation and then when you add the variation in nomenclature that the institutions use on top of that, it just became an impossibility. So I'm afraid and this is in a way allowing difficulties to rule your principles I suppose, but what we have said is that for someone doing non-primary BTEC's, whatever they are, we will require an A level alongside those BTECS in a Primary National Curriculum subject.
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> B

Whilst this dealt with the immediate issue and avoided the difficulties of deciphering the various Unit titles and misinterpreting them, it nevertheless increased the workload for these Early Years students

> I'm worried about that because I know from people that do them, from talking to them, that whatever you think about the academic level of the BTEC, it's intensively work orientated. It's a major work commitment, placements and a lot of report writing and it's a heavy course. So to ask them to do an A level, is a lot. I'm very aware of that and it may be that we're wrong to do it, but as a manager that's what I...that's a simple solution to a difficult problem.
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> B

Another area of difficulty with entry requirements for Early Years students was a result of their original career choice often being determined by their GCE / GCSE grades.

> One of our other criteria for entry is quality and range of GCSE's or equivalent and there is a correlation between low performance at GCSE and BTEC. A significant proportion of BTEC students have a limited range and a low quality of GCSE passes, so in a way they're potential getting caught by both methods.
>
> The whole thing is competitive, but I have to admit that the only means of selection is on a competitive basis. If you have two and a half thousand or one and a half thousand doesn't matter, however many applicants you've got, it's concomitant upon you to accept the best and to have a set of criteria and to try and apply those criteria and select those who exceed those criteria by the greatest degree.
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> So that if we say one of the criteria is a wide range of GCSE's and a high quality i.e. above C grade, somebody who had ended up with 9 A's including Science, Maths., English and Arts or Languages, I'm duty bound to give them brownie points in entry terms as against somebody who's got 6 C's. I'm afraid to say that the 9 A's person tends to have been steered by the institution onto an A level course and the person with 6 C's tends to be steered onto a BTEC course.
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> But the dilemma's exacerbated by people on the HNC. I mean not only have they got a BTEC Nursery Nursing or BTEC Early Childhood qualification which is equivalent to 2 A levels, they've got a lot, they've done an HNC, a part time higher qualification so they are over qualified in terms of academic standard. But again the worry is, there's no subject matter there. How do I treat them, how do we respond to them?
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> B

There was also tremendous pressure from the TTA and from within institutions to use A level grades as indicators of success, which was acknowledged to work against 'non-standard entry' students.

> The other side of it is, the kind of TTA and university side of it which has got strong pressures, very strong pressures for us to achieve high A level averages of grades, to focus on academic backgrounds. So those are 2 totally contradictory drivers. [*the diversity of background*] And I'm sorry to say that, the university / TTA, because they're both the same, the university in fact if anything is rather stronger, you know publishing internal league tables and so on. They're, I'm sorry to say, they may have had more inference than I would have wished.
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> D

Q.2 Have you had any management involvement in the recruitment process? In what ways has this affected your views?

Involvement in any recruitment process can be at managerial, administrative and interview level. Arguably, different levels of involvement will offer different levels of insight into the process and help inform different perceptions of the student groups involved.

Of the four providers, one was only involved at managerial level, and as such only saw the 'non-standard entry' students, even the Early Years ones, in relation to University regulations and managing them as a group.

> No. There were some coming off the CHE course that were just joining...we did have to make a kind of special arrangement to make sure that they could join the course in Year 1. I'd never met them I'm talking about paper arrangements for them entering Year 1.
>
> D

One provider operated mostly at an administrative level and also saw the group in terms of them meeting the regulations. However, for this individual there was a personal slant in relation to the qualifications many of the Early Years students possessed...

> I have a Science background. I think that probably affects the way you think about the BTEC issue in general because I do actually see more value in a more practical, hands-on, post GCSE education, which is generally what the BTEC is supposed to represent. So I've always had that slightly positive view of it all. I do feel that the A level is, in some cases, so sort of abstract, so theoretical and I've just always had this concern about relevance. Although I've always had a positive view towards BTEC, I still say it is seen as the poor cousin of A levels. A tragedy really. So I've got a slight concern, as I think that people with... non-normal...unusual...non A level ...irregular...qualifications can actually end up, being our brightest or best students.
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> B

The remaining two providers had experience at all three levels and as such appeared to be able to focus on the actual students through the screen of qualifications and application forms.

> Previous to now, no. But obviously for next recruitment we've looked fairly hard at our range of criteria which we're attempting to use to bring students into the course, but it's getting harder for 'non-standard entry' students, with the fees aspects and all those things. The increasing debt burden that that is going to bring, is going to make it harder for people who have other demands on them, and generally those students are more mature because they've done other things
>
> I would want to value 'non-standard entry' students and in the recruitment process we look to those experiences as one of the dimensions of their

application. They still have to meet academic criteria as well obviously, but we would be positive in our view…and particularly keen to pursue 'non-standard entry' students…to look in a more positive light when you're reading through the application and if possible get them to the interview stage so that we can have a real good look at them.

A

However, the experience of dealing with students face-to-face once again raised concerns about the eligibility of some 'non-standard entry' students.

At one time we were looking to make sure we had enough students coming through onto the course in the low recruitment subject areas, so we actually gave the FE colleges [*offering Access courses*] a lot of autonomy…we got the feeling that perhaps they were not totally honest with us about the capabilities of the students that they were sending to us…some of the rigorous testing that we would have applied i.e. through the Literacy test or through some of the aspects that our ordinary 18 year olds go through were certainly not evident once they [*Access students*] were here. We were assured that they had the right study skills, literacy background, and were numerate but when it really came down to it they were very iffy in many ways. Some of them were good as they always are, but the proportion was greater than you would have expected given the endorsement of the FE colleges.

C

However, whilst experience had taught caution, it had also revealed the value of some students, often with Early Years backgrounds, who brought with them experience of schools and children.

So I'm just a little bit sort of dodgy about 'non-standard entry', if they're not coming from having worked in schools on a regular, long term basis and have not got, as we know from the Nursery Nurses, a range of skills and knowledge about the way schools work that are almost equivalent to a professional teacher. But people coming off the street via an access route into teaching I'm less certain about.

C

Q. 3 What do you think are the financial implications for providing opportunities for this group of students in ITE?

In some ways this was the most difficult question to answer as it raised both the problems of fees and under-funding as well as institutions trying to meet the various regulations surrounding admissions.

I think this is where as a manager I'm in a dilemma. Because I think Universities in general, I think we're under funded. Evidence of that is our staff to student ratio which I'm responsible for, is up to around 23 to 1. So you know, there's a direct implication of now fees in theory will bring more money into the institution. So at that level, obviously the University needs more money.

> My course needs more money. I need to be able to do things with my course and alter teaching styles and support learning in ways that make demands on money or the income that we have. So part of me thinks, 'Well, OK fees, fine, OK,' The other aspect of me thinks it's a mess basically. Currently there's a kind of mess where for some students it would be the students that are paying fees, for some people it would be other supporters either parents or partners that are paying those fees and it's kind of a hotch-potch at the moment.
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> A

Trying to organise courses such as the HNC or CHE which allowed entry at different stages in the BA degree course, for example in Year 2 or Year 3, affected the numbers of students who could access places in Year 1. This also had financial implications.

> If we went down the line which we started to go down 2 or 3 years ago which was to arrange HNC courses which were effectively paralleling our first year of our BEd. course then that does have financial implications. It effectively means we're very restricted in the number of places we're allowed to offer and we fill x number of those with people for whom we're getting no money. OK, we're not getting an income from them for one year and that's quite serious. I think that's why the STA course and the HNC thing which I thought were quite good and imaginative and I thought yeah, that's the way I'd like people to come in, but then like every thing else it has financial consequences for the institution.
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> B

Apart from the direct issue of funding the actual places for students, there was a perception that other financial implications were to do with the expense involved in terms of staff time spent either sorting out the different issues that arose with 'no-standard entry' students or identifying who might meet entry requirements in the first place.

> No I don't think it is more expensive, directly. There might be some indirect costs because sometimes 'non-standard entry' students bring more problems. Sometimes OK., not always... sometimes. You certainly can't generalise here, also 'standard entry' students bring us problems as well. Quite often for these students the problems are directly self inflicted. Whereas the 'non-standard entry' student problems are to do with other demands like family demands or financial demands or those kinds of things which they're struggling with. You want to help but they do cause work for people like year tutors,
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> A

> Not major, I mean they do take a bit more time. If we were going down APL route and looking at portfolios of work and so on, that is expensive in terms of staff time. We haven't done that because of the TTA regulations and because we've taken people on our course that we know, so that hasn't been an issue. I know from the FE course that APL is very expensive. I mean the quotas are so tight now and they're diminishing each year, though that may possibly turn round now that we've had a better OFSTED grading. Because we are going to get the new numbers.

> And that actually does impact on what we're talking about because one of the focus's of the new numbers that we were given were for Early Years places.
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> D

This latter aspect, about having a specified number of places designated as Early Years or an Early Years strand to the course, has been seen as one way of dealing with the specific issue of Early Years 'non-standard entry' students

> Well, as you well know that may well come back into creating space, because my understanding is that the bidding that we're going to do, is going to be particularly for Early Years places. Although there'll be no differentiation I understand on the course. The extra numbers that we're going to bid for will be given over to recruiting people in Early Years and later in the course we'll actually run a discrete element for Early Years. So I think in those terms then it shouldn't be a problem in the future, assuming the DFEE give us the increase in numbers.
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> C

Q.4 What issues do you see arising from the new TTA requirements for these students?

Overall, it appeared there were issues for all students in trying to meet the new requirements. However it was acknowledged that by making some potentially risky changes for everyone, there was the possibility for making meeting the requirements less problematic for 'non-standard entry' students.

> Right, there are issues but I don't think they're particular to 'non-standard entry' students. But what we've decided for the BA is that students will be allowed to take their main subject independent of their A level entry into the course, so they can then choose any of the core subjects that they've studied as their main subject. And the definition that we're using is that we're looking at their performance on the course to make the decision for their main subject that they study in Year 4. But the TTA requirements say we have to get them to A level standard. Now if we don't get those students to A level standard, OFSTED are going to blast us and next year we will be inspected by OFSTED on our standards for main subject so we're taking a very big risk here.
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> *Particularly because a lot of the non-standard people won't have an A level to start with*
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> Yes. But, neither will lots of standard students in that subject area. It does give them a level playing field... as far as the non standard students are concerned. I guess a lot of students will pick their A levels. So, right, it gives Early Years students that chance so in that sense I think the only way we're ever going to get people to specialise in Maths., Science ,and Technology is to go down that track and the TTA have accepted that argument at the moment. But we do put ourselves at risk of OFSTED. It is a big risk.
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> A

At the time, much of the discussion amongst staff was of the possibility of bidding for more numbers for the course but designating them as Early Years places. This seemed to some providers to address the issue of reaching specific standards.

> That's true, Level 7 they're supposed to get to in the National Curriculum. Well given that they're coming from probably 'non-standard' backgrounds in terms of their route into education...perhaps got a BTEC ...or a general child care type of... but not National Curriculum subjects?
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> I mean if we're offered numbers for Early Years then I would imagine we would have to adapt the course to meet their specific requirements and whether or not that means some dispensation in terms of the levels they have to achieve in their subject area? I mean as the new BA degree is operating at the moment, their main subject is either a core area and their subsidiary is a foundation area. My understanding ... at the moment is that one of those 2 major areas is going to be related very specifically to Early Years. So they'll take that option and they will be required to achieve whatever level is appropriate to that main subject and I mean I don't know what that equates to across the board.
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> C

There was also the feeling that once again there was a conflict between different TTA requirements in the need for diversity of the teaching profession whilst at the same time demanding all teachers meet high grades in all subjects.

> I think it's more of the same really. They're obsessed with academic standards and they I think reflect that tension I talked about earlier even more starkly, than the way I was describing it. There are parts of the TTA, that are working on recruiting ethnic minorities, or 'non-standard' entry of various kinds who would *reiterate in* that they would support that, and I'm sure that section of the TTA is genuine, but the main driver of course runs totally counter to it. So, and they don't appear to talk to each other, I mean we have the same problem even in this small department. But even so they're dealing with national policy. No I think the overall effect of TTA policies is 'agin' not 'for' us.
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> D

The questions then focused on the contact that providers had had with 'non-standard entry' students, particularly Early Years practitioners in a teaching capacity. Only two of the providers fell into this category.

Q. 5 As a teaching tutor, were you aware that you may have taught Early Years practitioners in your teaching groups?

Where providers were aware of Early Years students within their groups it was either because they had taught on specific Early Years courses, or the students had offered the information or it became obvious in terms of the work done.

> Yes, because some of the time, I've known people through my own work on STA courses and I've known that they're Early Years specialists. Sometimes they've just piped up, um, chipped in, and sometimes I've asked when I've talked about when we've been doing something specifically early years the way that we do in the first year.

> So I've actually been asking 'Has anybody done anything of this kind?', when they've been working and quite often people will come and talk about that and you can sometimes see it in the work that they do as well. You can see the way that they're working, with some experience of thinking because one of the things that we do, is they have to do their own project work which they do at their own level but they do it in a way that they can provide teaching material for early years or whichever children. So whatever piece of work they're making, is their work but it's also useful, it's a teaching aid. Frequently you can see the way they're going about something or maybe some of the notes that they've written because they're required to write about the course work that they do. You can see that they're thinking.
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> A

But sometimes it was not immediately obvious. This was particularly true when the curriculum subject did not expressly focus on Early Years, so there was less opportunity for students to offer ideas and understandings gained from their experience.

> Really? No, is the answer. I think one of the problems I have is that I've only taught infants for one year in my teaching career, what would be equivalent to Key Stage 1. And I think much of the course, although this is intuitive rather than factual, is targeted at almost the bottom of Key Stage 2. There is much more of a junior emphasis in the way that subjects are taught with opportunities to look back to Key Stage 1 which we obviously all try to cover, but in terms of Reception then I would guess probably very little. What we expect of students is that the general principles that we say are good primary practice they will adapt and adopt and differentiate in the work that they do with younger children.
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> C
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> But no, no, not explicitly aware, I mean other than in general teaching I would say that we try to give them a full primary, approach. But in terms of looking at the way you might induct reception children, for instance in to a curriculum aspect then I wouldn't say personally I've targeted my teaching for that level for particular groups of people.
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> C

Q.6 What types of experience do you understand they might bring with them to the course?

This question attempted to explore the depths of understanding that providers had about the precise nature of what Early Years practitioners had experienced.

> They bring experience, well if they've been in an early years environment they bring an understanding of young... it's to do with the depth of understanding young children's lives and what children are capable of and the way that they see the world and they have a much better understanding of young children's experience. Frequently it's transferable to older children, because they understand kids...they understand how kids work and how their minds work and how you can work with them. I see that as a real strength that they're able to bring.
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> A

> Quite often they've a better understanding of schools systems. If they've worked in a school, they've a better understanding of the role of the teacher, knowing what the teacher's job actually is, they're very often strong in their whole teaching performance because of this depth of background. Generally speaking, the majority of them that I've become aware of, are very strong students, very good in a group, they're quite mature because their commitment to the course is... not that the younger ones aren't committed...but their commitment is of a different kind because they've made a life decision. So have the younger ones, but it's of a different order.
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> A

> What they tend to bring, I would guess, if they are who I've met in the past, then they are people who've spent time in school. These are the people who when you ask a question or raise an issue will be one of the ones who will respond, who bring a sense of knowledge and understanding to an issue. They've been in something similar in school and therefore use that as the basis on which they're able to transfer that knowledge into another particular situation.
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> I'm just trying to think do I remember anybody. Last year I had one girl come to me and say 'You're going to have make allowances for me because I've not got good subject knowledge, you know I'm a bit exposed when it comes to _____ because I haven't done much because I've you know come through the NNEB' or whatever it was. I think it's that element of subject knowledge.
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> And I think what I said to her was 'Clearly the more you know your subject area the more confident you'll be in being able to teach it. Now we can't provide all that subject knowledge you might need. What we'll do is try to provide you with opportunities to develop your own knowledge at your level, with your focus'. And we do because we set them tasks that allow, them to choose particular age phases, so they can look into aspects of the subject without necessarily having a huge knowledge base, but will be able to learn and develop their understanding perhaps to meet the needs of where they perceive themselves ultimately going.
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> C

Clearly there is understanding here about Early Years practitioners knowledge base, both of children and of schools. There is also acknowledgement of their commitment to studying and involvement in sessions in terms of contributions based on that knowledge. However, the subject specialist focus of most ITE courses created by the TTA and the National Curriculum, means there was concern expressed about students with 'non-standard entry' qualifications who did not have strong subject knowledge in certain subject areas.

Q.7 Can you identify how this expertise, in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding, might relate to their academic levels?

Having identified concerns about the strength of curriculum subject knowledge for 'non-standard entry' students in general, there was opportunity for providers to explore further the effect that students' expertise had on their academic work.

> There's a dilemma here, for them and for me I think because sometimes you read an assignment that is not particularly well written academically but the content is actually quite good if you see what I mean. But you have to fight your way through the poor English often, the poor style, the poor way of expression, to get to some really quite good content. But not always, sometimes they write very well and very explicitly from that experience.
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> I wouldn't want to classify these 'non-standard entry' students in any way you know, as a group that, 'they're all like that'. That's certainly not the case, no more than you can say all the 'standard entry' students are like that. There are problems with education and with English in the 'standard-entry' students just as much, I don't know because I haven't done any kind of work on it, I don't know if the problems of communication are poorer in 'non-standard entry' students than in 'standard-entry' students. I really don't know that.
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> That's not necessarily Early Years 'non-standard entry' but other 'non-standard entry' and 'standard entry' students as well. I think if you do get a poor response from 'non-standard entry' students sometimes it's very poor. I can think of specific cases of 'non-standard entry' students who have continued to struggle and their problems in school are not good. There's one particular case who's currently really struggling over a resit piece sitting on my desk at the moment and she has the lot...family difficulties impinging on the academic work, the academic work not being strong because she's not strong academically, but working in school effectively, she's a classic case of the difficulties, she's not early years but. It is a scenario that you can get.
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> A

Clearly there are issues for all students in achieving appropriate academic levels and the provider acknowledges this. But, in some cases the 'non-standard entry' student is precisely that type of student because there have been previous academic problems.

However, this may not be the case with Early Years 'non-standard entry' students as many have already completed academic courses at a level beyond A-level.

In addition, the maturity of many 'non-standard entry' students, whilst working for them in terms of experience and life skills, can also work against them in terms of family and financial commitments. This too, can have particular effects on academic work, as is demonstrated in the example given.

> It is a problem, I think any curriculum area with a lot of subject knowledge...there's a volume of knowledge you actual need to carry with you to be sound in every aspect of the subject. Sometimes it's phenomenal, absolutely huge, so what you have to do is identify the key elements and then it's up to the individual to try to work around those to develop their own knowledge of any one specific area that they may be looking at. So if you take, Key Stage 1 History, you've got Famous People or Important Events. Now clearly for a person without a huge History background they can learn about one or two or three people or events which they will be able to use probably for a lot of their teaching with young children and they will be very knowledgeable in those one or two areas and providing they're asking the right historical or geographical questions they'll be as confident and as able as probably anybody with an A level in History. As long as they can ask the right historical questions then that's their way in. But what we can't do is, we can't teach them, we haven't the time to teach them the knowledge. That's their responsibility.
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> C

The limited skills and knowledge of 'non-standard entry' students in particular curriculum subjects, is obviously a major issue for the providers. They have attempted to deal with it by identifying the key elements and teaching the process of asking questions of a nature pertinent to the subject, hence for Science, asking scientific questions, and in History, asking historical questions. But the overwhelming message here appears to be the individual student has a great deal of responsibility to ensure their knowledge and skills are developed in all areas.

Q.8 What particular contribution do you feel this type of student might make to a teaching group?

The overwhelming response to this question dealt with the value of having Early Years students offering verbal contributions in discussions based on their experience and knowledge of schools and children.

> Right. Well, their knowledge parts, that I've already talked about, because in a discussion situation they can make points for me, which is always very good. They quite often have something to say and consequently the group dynamic is good because they begin to get a conversation going.

So some people have things to say to kick it off and they have knowledge to say those things from, and then other students come in and question them about that knowledge, to support the learning that's going on at that time. So for a student, it's to do with their previous experience, how can I refocus down. What they contribute in a group situation is their previous experience which is generating knowledge...is facilitating learning across the group when we're discussing those things that they have knowledge about.

A

I think it's that element of practice, particularly early on in the course. I think there is no substitute for working in a school alongside children and even when you're not a qualified person...there's such a marginal difference in some very good nursery nurses or classroom support assistants, between them and the classroom teacher, that at times the distinction between the two is almost blurred...because their experience, their enthusiasm and willingness to want to know... and having in many cases worked in almost every classroom in the school, they've seen models of teaching across the whole school which most teachers don't get. So they're coming picking out the best of what they've seen probably and are saying to themselves 'Well yeah, I think I could do as good as that', or 'I can do better than that' and it's that, that I think I value, and I'm assuming that the people who've offered those views on school and have offered to share their opinions in discussion groups have been people who've come from that sort of background

C

One provider felt this helped to promote good group dynamics whilst the other felt the variety of models of teaching that Early Years practitioners in particular had observed, ensured a much more realistic view of teaching was available for discussion.

Q.9 How would you adapt your planning and teaching to utilise the expertise of these students in your group?

This question was asked to explore how providers might consciously focus in on Early Years issues and deliberately use their students skills and knowledge to benefit not only the Early Years students but the rest of the group and even their own thinking.

If we're talking about early years, I would certainly, if I knew there were some early years people in there, I might want to ask them a direct question. It might not be in my written planning anywhere... it's conscious, it's kind of in my intuitive planning, you know as part of my dynamic planning, as you're sussing out the group, you're thinking what I need to do is, it's the kind of planning you never write down. So there is that level of planning, it wouldn't be very specifically planned in any written form.

If I've broken my group up into sub groups I've sometimes engineered it You know 20 odd... 4 groups of 5, I've sometimes engineered it. So I've done that, but different things as well I've put different groups together other then friendship groups.

A

> I've found that if they are people who are not 18, in other words if they've had experience, they tend to cluster together, particularly if they feel that they are academically not as strong as other people in the room, you know there's 'survival together'. I've noticed quite frequently, that there's always a table of mature students, a group of people who tend to sit together for support. I suppose what I've been bad at doing and I guess we all fall in to this, is splitting them up and spreading them around. If we could get them to do that, now there are occasions where you can actually create that, but in the general run of things it often doesn't work that way and that's the unfortunate thing.
>
> Now the best groups are those obviously who are perhaps parents with children who are really interested or people who've worked with children and who have got some insight and knowledge into that and they add a totally different dimension to the18 year olds who perhaps have only had a week or two in school in their lower 6th and, and are still sort of very hazy about most of what's going on and, and adding that level of sophistication really does help to sharpen up a focus in discussions.
>
> C

The picture of similarly experienced students, predominately the 'non- standard entry' students, grouping together within any seminar group to form a sub-group of 'matures', to 'survive', resonates very clearly. As one provider suggests, it is not always easy to break up this little group and put individuals in other groups in order to spread their expertise, knowledge and understandings around. It is however, one way of promoting this dissemination as is the other tried and tested method mentioned... that of asking the students direct questions.

Summary

Identification of the national provision of degree courses available, and appropriate for Early Years practitioners wishing to teach, was achieved using the UCAS website and by sending letters to higher education institutions to acquire prospectuses. These were then used to identify Primary Education degree courses with a specific 'nursery and lower primary' focus as well as courses designated as Early Childhood Studies. The vast majority of courses on offer at the time, 78%, also included Qualified Teacher Status.

Early Childhood Studies degrees, without QTS, were beginning to grow in popularity. In 1998, nationally the figure had grown from 5 to 15. By January 2002 the UCAS website listed nearly 400 courses with this title, roughly 20 of which are clearly marked as 'with QTS'. Apart from the shorter HND courses on offer, numbering about 75, this would suggest that most of these courses are 'without QTS' and would therefore have entry requirements more appropriate for Early Years practitioners. So in five years, to grow from 5 to approximately 300 degree level courses being offered nationally suggests some interest and demand.

A lack of response from national providers shifted the focus more heavily onto local providers to provide evidence of how institutions saw the Early Years practitioners experiences of entering ITE. However, problems with some local providers, related to job moves, retirement and redundancy focused the data collection more narrowly onto the university involved in the project.

In terms of management issues, all four providers were very positive about having Early Years practitioners on the degree course. This was partly to do with equality of opportunity to gain access to higher education and to provide diversity within the teaching profession. For some however, this had been enhanced as a result of having had direct contact with students with Early Years backgrounds.

For these providers, the Early Years practitioners formed a part of a student group designated as 'non-standard entry' students. This in itself, was a hard definition to apply and there were different interpretations. Local difficulties with some Access students, who also fell into this category of students, and with whom some of the providers had had direct contact, had made the providers wary of this form of entry. However, it was perceived that the experience of schools and children that Early Years practitioners brought with them, marked them out as a more appropriate group of students for the course in general. Providers who had met or taught groups of Early Years practitioners had been further persuaded by that contact.

A problem particularly for 'non-standard entry' students, that all the providers discussed in some way, was that of firstly having a primary National Curriculum subject at A-level, and also having limited subject specialist knowledge. In terms of the A-level, various ways had been tried to address this issue, unsuccessfully until TTA guidelines were altered to account for early Years being seen as a specialism in its own right. The subject specialist issue was tackled by different curriculum teams on the course in different ways.

They also identified cost as a factor with 'non-standard entry' students. This did not specifically apply to Early Years practitioners more than to other students in this group. And in one sense, all student groups regardless of entry, create problems that required solving, thereby creating costs in terms of staff time required to help with the problem. It was just that 'non-standard entry' students, as mature students, often brought different problems. In addition, if APL of previous work via portfolios was included as an entry requirement, this would also be costly in terms of staff time

For all the providers there was a feeling of constant tension between trying to meet both national and institutional guidelines in terms of entry requirements with the TTA regulations, and meet the needs of potential students with vastly different qualification and experience profiles. In some cases they identified different TTA requirements and policies that seemed in opposition to one another, as in the case of creating diversity within the teaching profession but also making all teachers fulfil the same qualification requirements.

In terms of teaching, only two providers were actively involved with the student groups at the time with one having previously taught on the STA / CHE course. This extra contact and experience had clearly made a significant difference in terms of awareness and changes to practice.

The provider with less direct experience of Early Years practitioners as students, was certainly positive about them, their expertise and the contribution they might make to the degree course and specifically any seminar group. However, there was still an element of the students being seen in terms of what they lacked rather than what they offered. This was possibly to do with the heavy specialist knowledge required in the curriculum area taught by this provider. In terms of their own teaching, this gap in the students' knowledge was a significant issue that constantly needed addressing, although the requirements of the course did not allow for additional subject teaching. Instead, students were expected to take responsibility for addressing this issue themselves.

The provider who had had more direct teaching experience with Early Years practitioners as students, appeared to have a greater understanding of the nature of the experiences they brought to bear, and share on a degree course. In some ways their greater insight caused a dilemma in that whilst they acknowledged students' expertise in practice with children and in discussions in seminars, it became more problematic if the student was poor academically. This was true for all 'non-standard entry' students. Having more knowledge of what a student had to offer, put alongside a poor piece of academic work, created a greater contrast particularly when the content of the piece was good but the style and expression was poor.

Both providers felt Early Years students contributed to group dynamics and brought a wider perspective of teaching to their seminar groups. However both found it difficult to use the students' expertise other than by asking them direct questions where applicable, or sharing them out within sub-groups to promote dissemination via student discussion and working together.

CHAPTER 8

FORGING NEW PATHS

Another advantage of staying for some time in the same place, is that travellers have the opportunity to explore outwards from a central base whilst still having security and support from local providers. This allows for new paths to be followed and for individuals within the group to gain different experiences.

In terms of the inquiry, four students were able to forge new paths by entering a local Initial Teacher Education course.

This chapter uses interview data to examine in more depth the students' experiences whilst on the BA course and how they perceive their understandings have developed throughout that experience.

CHAPTER 8

Forging New Paths

Four Explorers

The four students, who successfully used the 'Link' project to access the ITE course, commenced the BA degree in September 1997. Two students had come through the internal university STA / CHE route. The remaining two had come via the BTEC HNC route but each had studied at a different further education college. All agreed to only their first names being used with a brief biography (Appendix 25)

Surprisingly in terms of the demographic data, the four students represented a spread of qualifications, INSET courses and job titles. Their ages ranged from 23 to 30. There was diversity of qualifications, with one student only having school qualifications whilst another had five different types. Also, only one had A levels and only one had college GCSE qualifications.

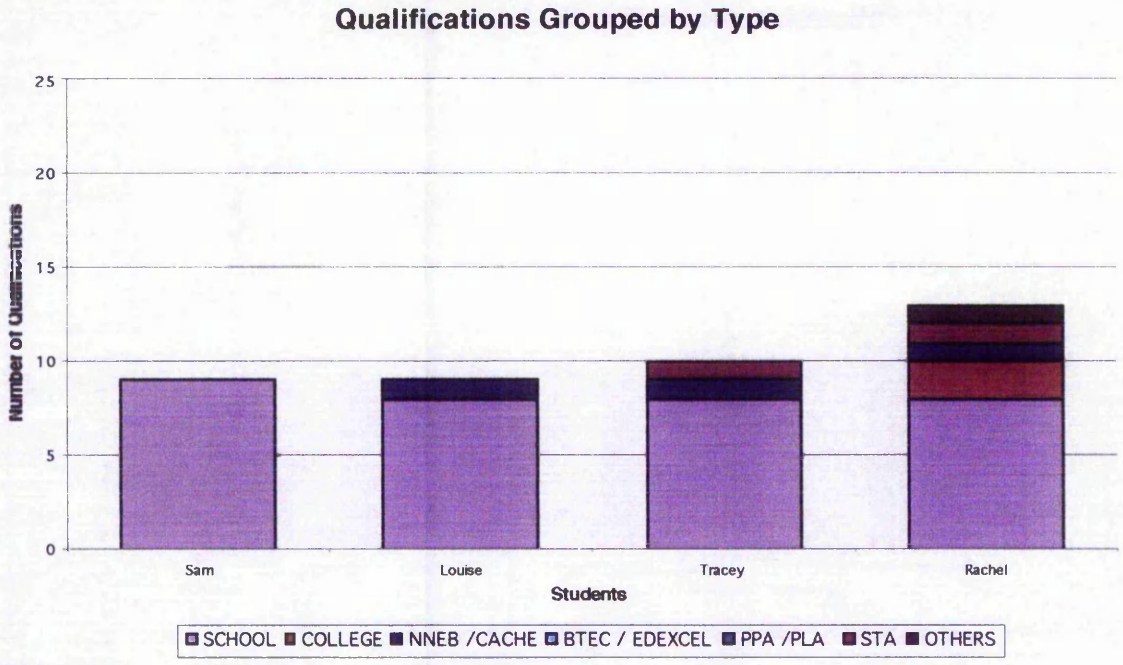


Figure 8.1

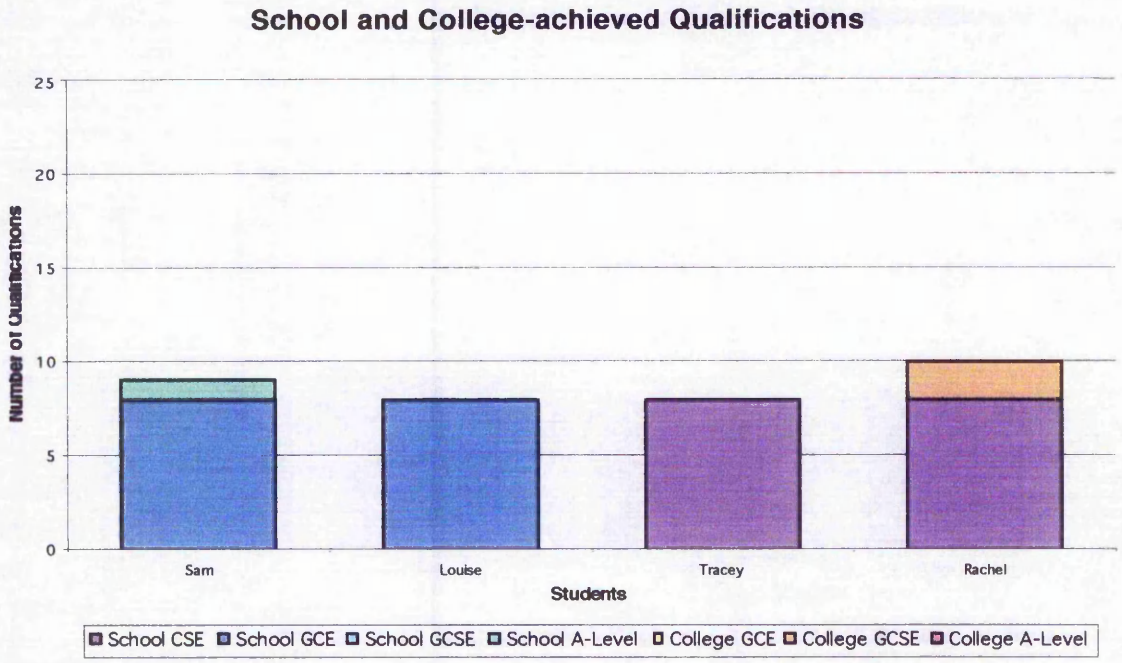


Figure 8.2

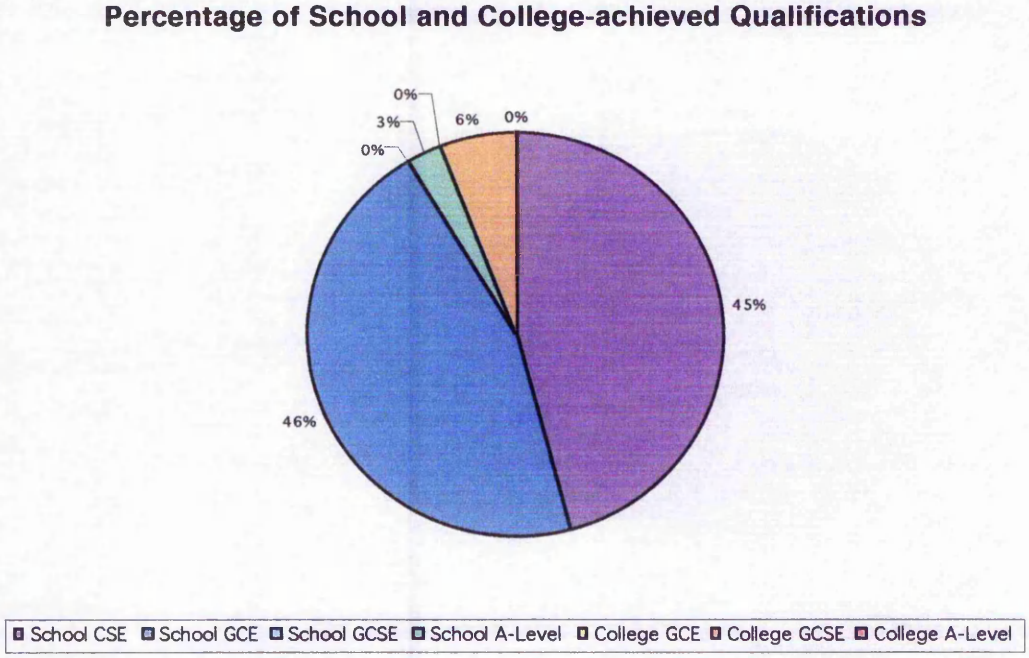


Figure 8.3

Within the area of jobs titles, the four students had very different profiles. One had worked in 4 out of 5 sectors whilst one had worked only in education. The 'Education' sector had provided the most jobs with 11, whilst the 'Social Services' and 'Health Services' the least with one each.

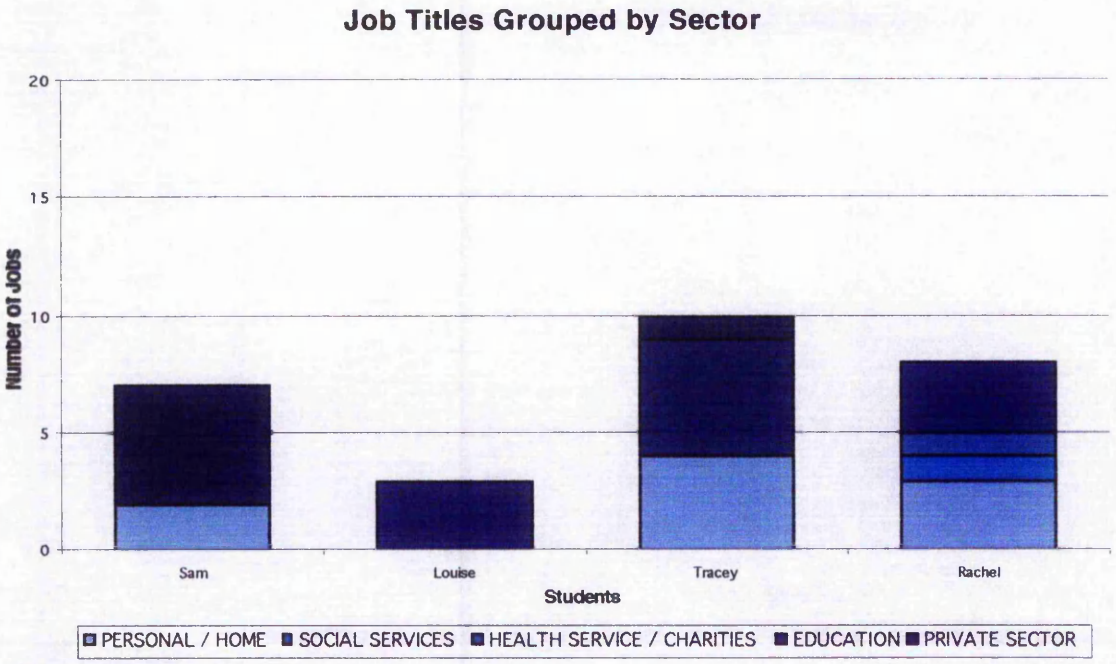


Figure 8.4

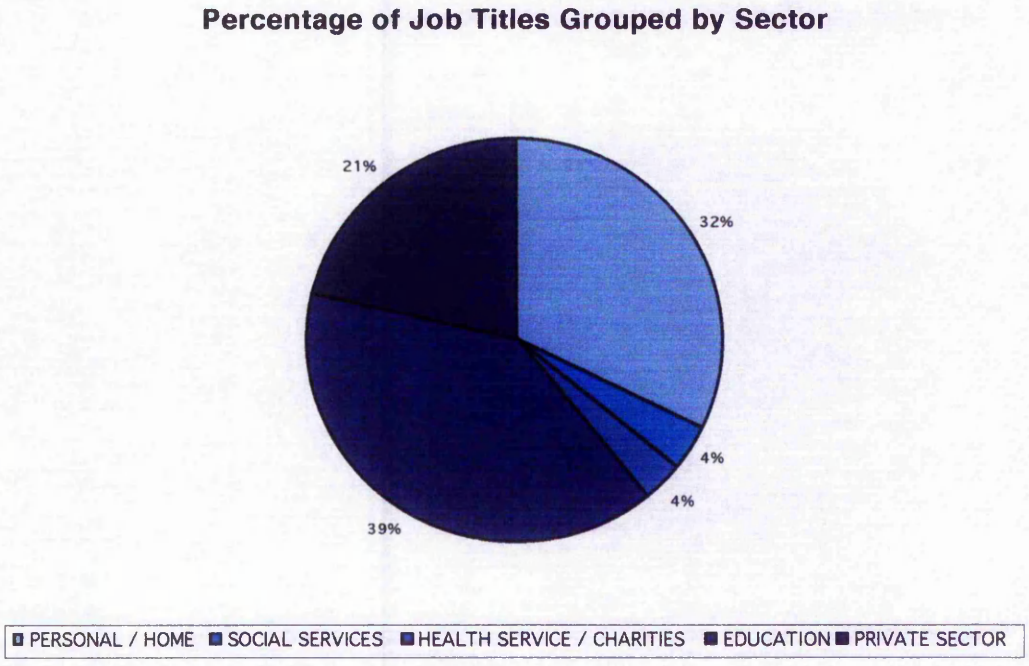
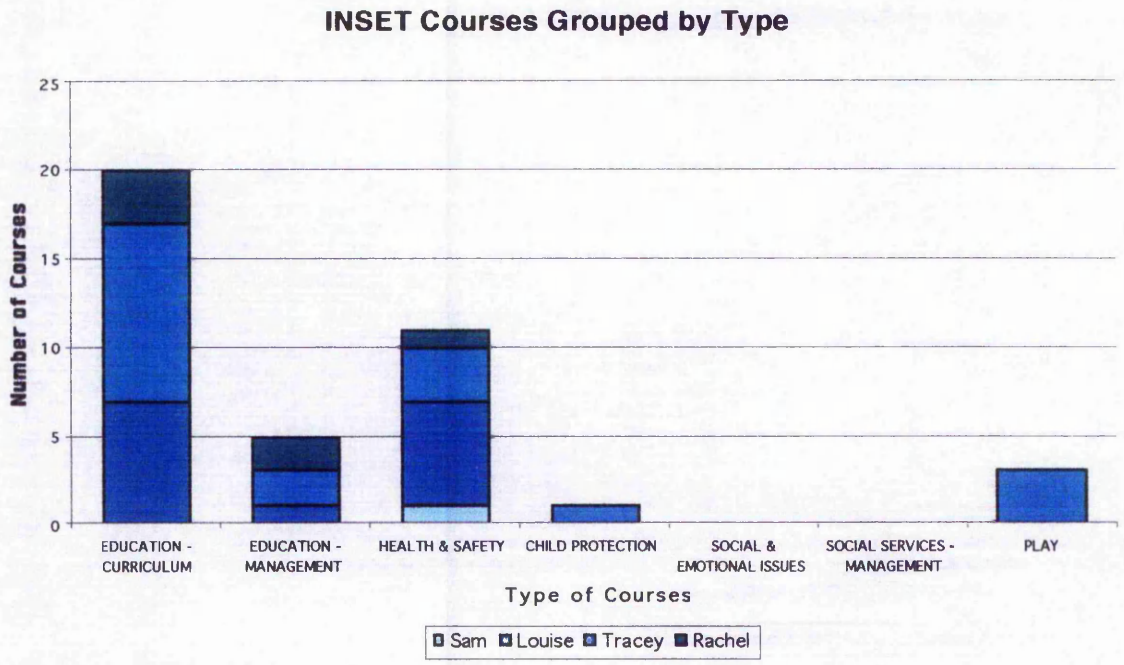


Figure 8.5

Similarly in terms of INSET courses there was a good spread, ranging from one student who had attended in 19 different courses in 5 different types of INSET to another who had only done one course in one type. Unsurprisingly given the students workplaces, 'Education-Curriculum' INSET courses were the most popular, closely followed by 'Health and Safety' courses, a trend seen across most of the cohorts and across the group as a whole.



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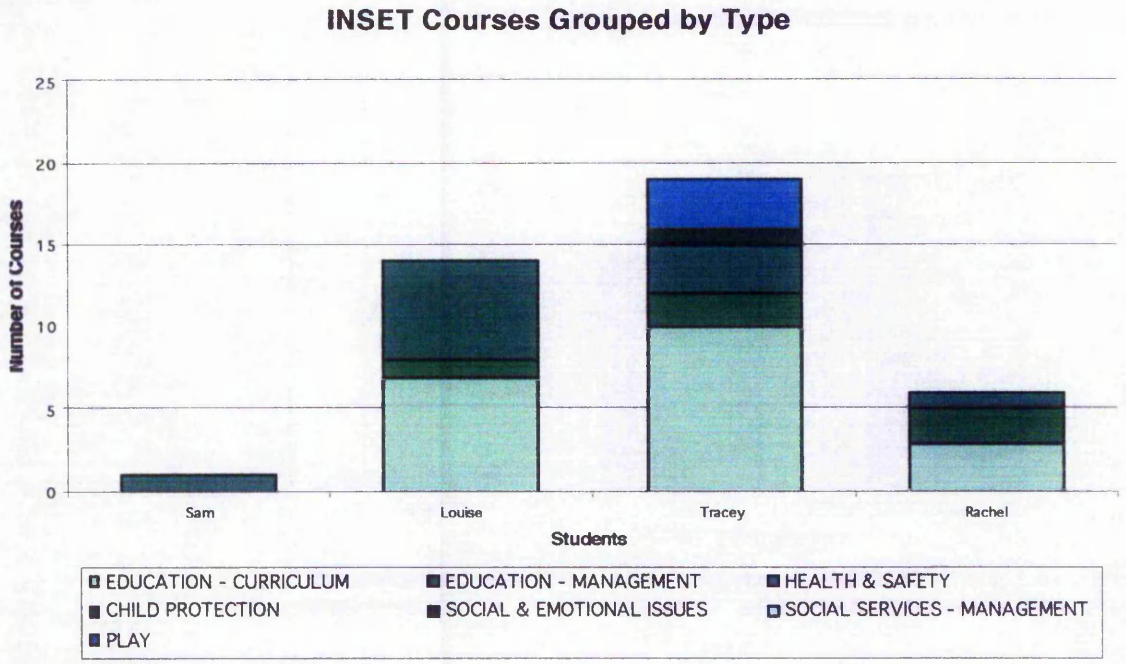

Figure 8.7

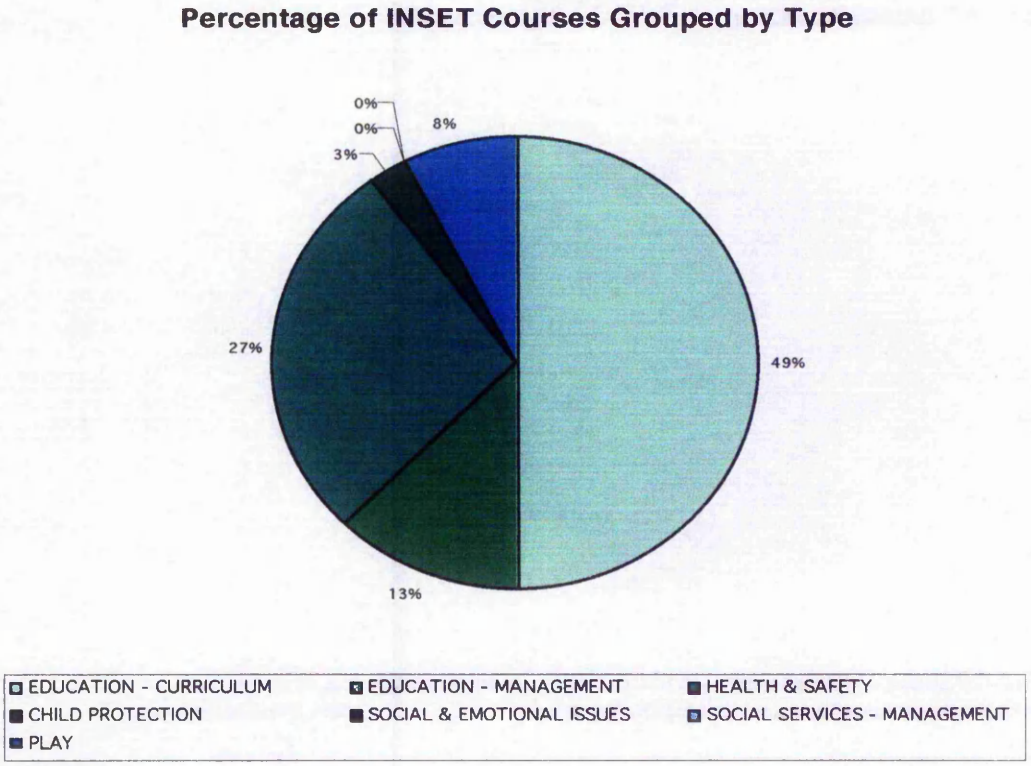

Figure 8.8

The intention within the 'Link' project had always been that the 'Link' students would be placed in the same Year 2 seminar group on entry to the course, to help provide support for each other and make a discernible group for ensuring Early Years issues were addressed. However, even with this small group, this was not what happened initially. Firstly, Samantha (Sam) the HNC student with the least experience of working in school, was offered the chance to start from Year 1 of the course. On reflection, she decided to take this option to increase her school-based experience, thereby being placed into a different group and different year from the other three students. In the end being a new student with lots of new students worked to her advantage and not being with other early Years practitioners did not prove to be a problem.

Then for reasons still unknown, when the seminar groups were divided up for the second year, Louise, the remaining HNC student was allocated to a different group to the two STA / CHE students, Tracey and Rachel. My absence at this crucial time did not help and although other tutors were aware of this issue, in the end the students had to take positive action to ensure they were placed together in one seminar group.

In these terms the four students really were 'explorers'...pioneers forging new paths for themselves, their fellow students and the tutors on the course. It had never been tried in this way before, although as the providers pointed out somewhat reluctantly, there had been attempts with other 'non-standard entry' students in the form of Access students. However as there appeared to be mixed feelings about how successful this previous attempt had been, there was a certain amount of apprehension on behalf of some providers about the pioneering spirit involved in this particular venture.

Another of the University staff who had been heavily involved with the 'Link' project provided a welcome haven for the students in terms of checking how they were going on, during my absence. On my return, the difficulty was to try to identify time when all the students could be interviewed either together or one after the other. In the end this was not practical. Firstly, with Sam in the first year and the other students in the second year, their time-tabled lectures and seminars did not allow for this, on any day in the week. In the end as Sam had integrated so well into her group with other mature students, it was decided that she would be interviewed on her own, at a different time to the other students.

The second problem arose in terms of trying to ensure the remaining three students had separate interviews to ensure they made individual responses to the interview questions. It was very quickly made obvious by the students in informal chats to try to organise interview times, that this was a futile gesture. They had entered a strange seminar group, were clearly marked out as different by their experiences, and so perceived they had needed to act as a support group for one another, almost from Day 1. They felt there was nothing they wanted to say to me about the course and their experiences, that they had not already discussed at great length with one another. They did have slightly different views, but by the time of the interviews had been together nearly three terms, so felt they had influenced one another's ideas significantly by this time. Indeed they felt that by being interviewed together they would be able to provide a more in-depth analysis both of their own, and of one another's experiences.

The first interview with Louise, Tracey and Rachel was concerned with why they wanted to teach and what they felt their previous experiences and courses had taught them. This was the same interview that Sam had completed during her HNC course. Time had not allowed for this interview to take place whilst the three students had been on their previous courses.

The second interview concerned the transition to the ITE course in terms of the place, the people and the workload. In particular it focussed on how the students perceived their prior experiences had contributed to their experiences on the course and on teaching practice.

Motivations

Interestingly, all of the students mentioned their main motivation for going into teaching being to do with looking for fresh challenges and feeling as though they had achieved the most they could do in their current post. Sam, with a very different background to the other three students, as a nanny, said

> When someone asks why you want to do something it's very difficult to explain why you do want to do it and it's all cliché stuff isn't it? But I suppose I want to do it because it's a natural progression from what I've been doing and I feel hopefully, I will have a lot to give. At the moment I'm dealing with 3 children and I feel sort of stifled, I feel I could give more to more children at the same time. So that's really why I want to do it, just a natural progression.

For Rachel, this progression was evident from the beginning of her employment.

> Well, when I first started my job as a Nursery Nurse, I was a 'general' Nursery Nurse and then as time went on, I took on more and more responsibility, until in the end I was actually running the pre-school…and I knew my own classroom and prepared for the children and ran it really as a teacher would have run it.

Tracey agreed her experience matched Rachel's,

> It's quite similar,…I'd developed so far as a Nursery Nurse, through which I was given more responsibility and more and more to do in terms of planning and involvement with children and sort of whole class stuff…quite a lot.! I just thought, Well I might as well go and do the job…and get the salary…go and do the training to do the job and get the salary for it. You're doing as many hours really.

For Louise too, there was a realisation of getting to a point when she could go no further in terms of Nursery Nursing.

> Yeah, basically I mean I think I can do it, because I was being like a mini-teacher before. I mean I've worked with special needs for the majority of my time so I was doing all the planning. I was doing the I.E.P.'s, following work through, making sure it shows progression, talking to parents. So you know, although I only say twelve children rather than thirty two, but for me personally I just feel it's the next step on from being a Nursery Nurse because we just can't get any higher. There's no ladder to climb, once you're a Nursery Nurse, you're a Nursery Nurse and that's it, and you just can't get any further.
>
> *Some are happy doing that aren't they?* (Tracey)
>
> Mmm, No it wasn't…towards the end it wasn't enough for me. I feel I needed to get my teeth into something.
>
> *I got really bored with it.* (Tracey)
>
> Yeah. It just, I know I wasn't getting…it was… I was getting bored, because you know when your alarm goes off in a morning and you like press it onto snooze for the fourth time… it's just like, it just wasn't getting me out of bed in a morning. Do you know what I mean? Like it did in the beginning. So I think if I didn't go on to do this [*the degree course*] I'd seriously have to consider doing something else, you know. Perhaps education based, but I couldn't stop as a Nursery Nurse.

So from this position, of feeling they had reached the 'end of the road' in terms of what they could achieve as Nursery Nurses or Nannies and that there were no new challenges left in the job, all four students opted to take action. When asked about whether there were events or individuals that had influenced this decision to take action, the resounding answer was yes.

Initially, for Sam, it involved applying for an NVQ course to test out her ideas about returning to studying. From this simple event, came firstly recognition of her potential by an Early Years professional within the college and then her own realisation it might be possible which was then confirmed by her husband.

> ...and I wrote off what my qualifications where and what I'd been doing and the tutor come back and asked, 'would you like to be interviewed for this course'. And that's when I realised I could probably do something a bit more with myself other than what I had been doing up to then.
>
> Then my husband...I was saying 'I don't know if I can do that' ... there was a slow realisation on my behalf. I said 'what do you think?', yeah I could do that, I feel myself that I can do that, with my assignments and things that I've been doing.

For all the other students it was individuals, rather than events that made the difference. These were often either family members or people that the students had worked with for a period of time, in short, people who had seen them working with children or who knew them well. For Rachel it was the first head teacher she worked with...

> Yes, for me, it was the first head teacher that I ever worked for, because when I first started running the pre-school the head did one session, they had a supply teacher in to do the second session and I did the third session, and then gradually I was weaned on to do more and more pre-school until in the end obviously the head didn't do any sessions, the supply teacher didn't do any sessions and I took it over.
>
> And it was my head then that said to me 'You know really, you ought to be seriously considering teacher training', and to be quite honest up until that point, I was quite, I think I'd only been qualified a couple of years so I was still extremely content in my job. Although I was taking on more and more responsibility, I hadn't really considered teacher training myself and it was then that I started looking into it... as to what it would actually entail and what qualifications I would need in order to be able to go and do it.
>
> And at that point I was willing to pack in full time and follow on. Obviously not immediately, but I kept thinking back to what she'd said then...that maybe I had got more to offer and I was wasted in what I was doing. The staff were extremely supportive as well, so at the time I was at school they said 'Yes, go for it.'

Tracey suggested that this additional support, from a number of staff members, who had all seen the work that she was capable of, also made a tremendous difference.

> Mine was with staff, just the confidence they had in me when I was in the classroom. Just the things I was expected to... not expected to do, but sort of involved in doing... they'd say 'You know, you really ought to think about going on...'

Louise had both a family member and a member of professional staff as 'significant others' influencing her.

> For me initially, it was my grandma, she was a previous Nursery Nurse and she's retired now and she said that I could. At the time I didn't believe her, but she said that I could be so much more than just a Nursery Nurse. Because although we know being Nursery Nurses there's a lot more to it, and my grandma does, but she obviously knows how we all get treated...how Nursery Nurses are regarded within the school structure.
>
> Luckily for me I worked at a brilliant school... that I was just one of the teachers as far as the kids were concerned and I was always referred to as you know Miss _____ in the Library, you know, the teacher in the library. There was never a difference really and the kid's eyes but I know you don't get that in a lot of schools. So I mean I was really lucky in that sense.
>
> But then it was my head teacher that actually gave me the final push. He said that he knew I'd got it in me. He said 'I know you can do it' and I think hearing that from him, being head teacher, I believed him, whereas I perhaps, I didn't disbelieve my grandma, but I thought, you know it's my grandma, she's being nice, you know what I mean. But yeah, it was Jim who did it in the end, he was the one who pushed me to go on the HNC course in the first place and gave me time off to do it and stuff.

All three students acknowledged the level of support, from people who believed in them and who they in turn, believed and trusted, when they were told to try for teaching. In some cases the support also extended to financial or practical support to help the students actually attend courses in preparation.

> Rachel And my school actually paid. The STA course was the introduction wasn't it, so that was already funded, but just us two had it funded by the school
>
> Louise I had to pay for my own
>
> *The HNC?*

Louise Yeah, but at the time, our school budget had been cut way below what Jim expected, and he says he'd love to give me time off but he just can't afford to pay me for the time I have off. So I said, well, if he's prepared to give me the time off, I'm prepared to take a bit of a salary cut and pay my own course. It's, you know, give and take.

So there's been a bit of sacrifice for all of you to actually get here? In a way, it's been quite hard?

Tracey Yeah, and more so now because we've given up work.

Rachel But this has been our one and only route, certainly from my experience, because going back in time like I said I'd only been in the job say a couple of years when my head teacher, the first head teacher I ever worked for, because I ended up working for three different heads in the time that I was there. But it's taken all this time to actually be able to get onto a course.

Much of the belief that they might be able to go onto teaching, was confirmed during their studies on the HNC and STA / CHE courses. It was during this two year period that they grew in confidence regarding their academic abilities, but it did still seem like a dream for some of that period.

Tracey It gave me confidence that I could tackle doing the degree...the work.

Rachel And you were less frustrated in your work because you felt that although you'd still got your job, you were progressing... it was a stepping stone forward that, you know

Louise I know when I started the HNC, I started it knowing that it would lead onto this degree course, but I don't think it was like until the final six months, you know, the last six months of the second year, that it actually hit me that I might actually have to follow this through, I might have to do it. Because you know, two years that's a long time, you know... 'I'll think about it nearer the time' and it just flew.

Rachel But certainly at school age I would have never of sort of dreamt that I could have possibly have achieved going to University.

Louise Going to University just seems like status.

For Sam, the HNC course opened up a range of possibilities from school experience through to actually getting on the BA degree course.

> Personally for me, I've learnt quite a lot on it from the fact that I was one of the few people on my course who'd never worked in a school. Never had any school experience, classroom experience anything like that...Well, professionally I suppose it's enabled me to go on to university because without this course there is no way I'd have been able to do that.

However, the other three students felt that in a way their professional experiences counted against them, as previously they had been encouraged to focus on particular issues in their jobs.

Tracey I'm doing exactly the same now even on teaching practice as I was doing as a Nursery Nurse. I'm approaching things in the same way, saying things in the same way. But looking at the wider picture.

Rachel Which in some respects can be a disadvantage because you look at things so widely and like so many factors, you can't get focused. It really is a hindrance.

Tracey Whereas a lot of students in our year are not at our level so they're only sort of, not everybody, but I'd say the majority of them, they're only able to focus on the one thing and only see that one as a small picture as opposed to that in the big context of everything else. Since I've ...worked in schools we feel like it's hindered us somewhat, haven't we, having experience coming here?

In addition to their previous experience sometimes being a disadvantage, there was also the issue of whether they had been able to build on what they already knew or whether their philosophy of a particular aspect of education had already been shaped by the years spent in schools. One particular example was the students' knowledge of Special Educational Needs

Louise Not necessarily find out more about, because I've done it for the last four years so, but I like special needs, I really enjoyed doing the type of work that I was doing. So I just see my special needs as always being with me and going into my teaching and, you know how you like, you visualise your role in a school, well mine could be as a special needs co-ordinator and I'm quite happy with that because I feel I've got the knowledge in all the different routes that I've taken.

Tracey I mean we've all had such a big background. You've done special needs as well, haven't you? [*to Rachel*] I've done special needs as well and part of that was implementing it into the school when the Code of Practice first came out, so you feel like you know it like the back of your hand.

There was also a feeling, particularly for Tracey and Rachel that they had had relatively few of their ideas challenged but instead they had adapted their existing experience to fit new situations.

Tracey I don't feel like I'm bringing anything to follow up. To me this is just a piece of red tape that I've got to get over, to get back into doing what I know I can do. I feel I'm doing it for myself and there's a real aim for me going to do it, but I haven't come away from many lectures thinking 'That was it.' Yeah I haven't, hand on heart there are not many lectures that I have found anything

...that's changed ...or challenged your ideas ?

Rachel No, nothing and when it refers to how it's influenced your philosophy, like at the end of an assignment or whatever,... rightly or wrongly it's not affected my philosophy. It's so established already. So it is difficult.

Rachel ...and this year more so, but certainly for me with it being Key Stage 2 as opposed to Key Stage 1, which is where all my experience has been, it's been a totally new field. So although it was KS2 children, I still felt that I took my background to that classroom and the way that I approached things was, alright the activity was at the level for the children and the way that you spoke to the children, but your underlying approach was still no different.

They also perceived that sometimes placements were unsure about how to use a student with their level of experience. For Louise however, the opposite was true

Louise In my last school, my last TP, they were just so glad that I'd got this extra bit, that they'd not got to keep an eye on me

Tracey Some see it as a threat and that's the experience that Rachel and I both had.

Louise No I didn't, mine was really good. They were just so glad that I could come in, that I could have the whole class and read a story and keep them all engrossed, while Mary went out to talk to a parent...and I knew that they trusted me as well, because I'd not got the head coming into me or just being in the room while I was there if my teacher had to go out. It was really nice to know that they trusted me at such an early stage. Because you're only there six weeks, which isn't long.

Even within this small group of four students, the differences between their prior experiences at work academic work in colleges and the university, reflect the evidence collected from all the cohorts. For the first time however, rather than being anecdotal, the evidence of how some students feel about their experience has been recorded and demonstrates how their prior experience can have both positive and negative effects on subsequent experiences.

Making transitions

The follow-on interviews were again conducted with Sam on her own and then with Tracey, Louise and Rachel together. Throughout the course, Sam and the other three students had very little opportunity to meet up and share their experiences of the course, yet this did not appear to be problematic for Sam. Perhaps the difference in her Early Years background, as a nanny being more isolated from other practitioners, made this easier. The other three students had all experienced their jobs within schools and nurseries and as part of a staff team. For them being the 'only' one in a group was difficult and had particular resonance for one of the three.

These later interviews concentrated on what the students' first impressions of the course, people and workload had been, and on how they had coped generally with the transition from the HNC and CHE courses to the BA degree. The focus here was on what impact their prior experiences of writing assignments, using resources and being in schools had had on subsequent experiences. They were also asked to express their feelings about what had been for them, the best and worst parts of that transition (Appendices 26 & 27). Within their comments, impressions and experiences are clear indications of where they felt the transition could be made smoother in the future. This began from the very first week.

First Impressions

For Rachel and Tracey the setting for the course, a Georgian mansion set in its own grounds approached through a small village, was a familiar place as it had been where they had completed the CHE course. For Sam however, her first impressions occurred at interview

> Well my first impressions of the place, when I initially came for the interview because that's when I first saw it, well I mean I thought it was lovely really you know with the church and the thatched cottages as you come in. Yes, so yes it was, impressive, you know the marble, the hexagonal room, things like that

But in terms of the people and workload, whilst initially positive, Sam was beginning to gain a more realistic picture of the course.

> The people I thought were very friendly but I did soon realise that you don't have tutorials. So it's quite difficult to pin anybody down on anything you know. I've been trying to find various people you know in their offices, you just can't... you're very, very lucky if you can find somebody when you want to speak to them.
>
> The workload up until Christmas I thought it was brilliant, and then after Christmas... this half term has been horrendous. Absolutely horrendous, yeah. Because there's not just the assignments which are bad enough, but then there's work in school and then you get things to do overnight or for the next lesson...in Science we do investigations every week and preparing for them, so it's really, really tough now.

In addition to the increased quantity of work, Sam had obvious concerns about the standard of work and in particular the marking scheme, in comparison to what she had been used to on her previous course. This was also a concern that the other students would make reference to.

> Well, I'm not incapable but it's the standard of work. I mean, I've just got an assignment back, I was a bit disappointed that I'd got a lower mark than I anticipated, but the other ones where I didn't think I'd done very well, I did really well. So it just goes to show that you can't really judge what sort of ... and I'm glad now that we've got some feedback back, because it's a bit like feeling your way in the dark.

However, the immediate impression for the other students was of difficulties with how they were allocated to and introduced into seminar groups and how they were then received by other students on the course. Rachel and Tracey felt their group did have problems accepting them and consequently they felt they had been bullied.

Rachel But it was quite hard with respect to joining the group

Tracey That was the hardest bit.

Rachel Yes, ...the group sort of accepting us because we were very much the outsiders going in. I know the groups have been juggled around, [*from Year 1 groupings*] but there were just 2 people really, that sat on a table away from the rest of the group, that sort of said 'Oh you can sit here', and we've sort of stayed within that group.

Tracey The others just tended to laugh at us, if we spoke about anything in lectures. Because we'd got a background from the classroom anyway, it was all 'Oh listen to them', you know and we were bullied weren't we? We were bullied in a sense and it did bother us at first, but then we suddenly decided right, we're not going to let it bother us any more.

I got to the point, probably wrongly, but whenever they said something in the classroom to us, I'd throw something back at them directly, not horribly, but just to justify the point or to say 'Well look we're here because we want to be here', kind of thing, but not say those kind of words, and they suddenly thought 'my God these people are', and since then. Well I think since then we're more approachable. After Easter it's been better.

Louise's biggest problem on entry to the course was she was not placed in the same group with the other students as she had expected from her involvement with the 'Link project'. Whilst not knowing one another prior to starting the course, a mutual friend helped the three students to meet up in the first few days.

Louise Initially my biggest gripe was that I was put in a different group to Tracy and Rachel....I stuck it for the first week but just hated it because I was in the same position but I was on my own and I asked _____ initially why I was in a different group and she just said well that's the way it's worked out, you know, obviously with registers and things I suppose.

Tracey I know you can share us out because we're a valuable resource because of the background, so it makes sense to put a few in one group and a few in another group but then you need to be together because you've got so much in common

Louise I mean the thing that did me throughout the first week, we'd meet up or we'd see each other at dinner times and you two were telling me things, "Oh I've got to go and do this, because we missed it in the first year' and it was something totally new to me. Either the lecturers or my peers in that particular group hadn't told me that I'd missed these things. So I was finding out new things all the time from you two that wasn't readily available to me on my own in the different group that I was in.

And I think I stuck it just a week and I'm not normally the sort of person to give in that quick ...I was just like chatting to Craig at home and I just said 'I either stick it say, for a month, but then if I changed groups to be with Tracy and Rachel, I've got a whole month's worth of different creative education lectures to catch up on.'

We'd got different time-tabling as well so, and I just thought, I've come this far, I don't want to muck my first year up and I thought I'm going to make a fuss about it and I did. I went to _____ and I just stated my case and she moved me straight away. I think when she realised just how unhappy I was being in a different group and there was nobody else. I mean I thought initially that there would be some other mature students in that group.

The three students' overwhelming impression was that even though the 'Link' project had been in operation, there were some tutors on the BA course who were not really aware of the background to their arrival on the course and this was also true of some of the other students. This had led to some misunderstandings that on the part of students and tutors alike.

Rachel attributed the start of the thaw in communications between themselves and the rest of their seminar group to teaching practice.

Rachel I think teaching practice had quite a bit to do with it as well because as teaching practice was approaching they started to ask us little bits with respect to experience, you know I think that broke the ice a little bit. But as well I think that they felt they'd had a raw deal because we'd skipped a year.

Tracey Yeah, they wouldn't like it.

Rachel And lecturers didn't know, well obviously those that we'd had contact with through our course, did.

Louise Yeah, but we had to tell them.

Tracey They didn't know why,

Louise They didn't have any prior knowledge of where we'd come from.

Tracey That made it very difficult for us because we'd got a lot of catching up to do from that first year. Apparently. there was stuff, particularly in English that the first years had done, that we had to do...because they'd done it, we'd got to do it. So we were doing extra stuff as well, which we feel could have been given to us in the summer and we could have been doing it before the course started.

This 'catching up' on essential aspects of a particular subject was something that had not been accounted for within the 'Link' project. Whilst large areas of curriculum knowledge between the courses had been compared and matched, it was smaller pieces of work, essential for assessment purposes that had been missed and not taken into account.

The students put their initial experiences down to tutors and the other students not being sufficiently prepared and their eventual acceptance into the group down to their own hard work.

Louise I mean as soon as I changed, I just felt a lot happier because if there were extra things we needed to do, we all toddled off to the library together or we'd meet ...we'd do something at dinnertime and you know we'd get stuff sorted.

Tracey So we don't think the staff were... they weren't prepared for us, which made it difficult.

Rachel I think as well the group needed to know...because until they got to know we'd done these two years they didn't know that. We had to say we've been doing it part time and working.

Louise I can't remember which one it was, but one of them actually said 'What, you've been working full time and night school for two years?' and I think this was about two to three months into the course.

Rachel But now we feel that we are accepted...

Tracey But we've worked hard; it's come from us hasn't it? Yeah but we appreciated that we were coming into their group so we have got to make the effort but I think if they were prepared for us, it would have been much easier for us

Rachel _____ has been supportive and been around, always said 'Hello' when we've seen her and had us in for coffee.

Tracey But then there's other people like _____...They could have thought, 'Right, do the rest of the lecturers know?' You know what I mean... you can take a bit of responsibility for it. Not that you want any special treatment because we didn't, it was just that it would be easier for everybody to know our route so that then you know.

Moving away from these first impressions, all the students were asked to identify how their prior experiences of writing assignments, using resources and working in schools had affected their current experience.

Surprisingly, they found it more difficult than they had imagined, as there were significant differences in all the areas, which made their transition more difficult.

With assignment writing for example, both the CHE and HNC courses had demanded lengthy assignments, however as Tracey pointed out...

> CHE was heavy in terms of the length, but the problem with those two courses, was that you only did one assignment per module and that was it, so you were focused. You did one and then move on and do the next, and the next, whereas here you're getting three or four thrown at you and it's juggling the balls together. It didn't prepare you for that.

For Sam, whilst she initially thought she had been prepared, the transition also meant having to begin to word process her assignments, which had not been necessary before.

> Well like I say, before Christmas I thought it had prepared me adequately, but now after doing a few assignments I don't think, apart from getting into the habit of researching and studying and actually physically writing... and also that you have to word process in the University whereas before there was no necessity to do that, although some people did. Personally I couldn't even switch a computer on. So I've had to struggle with that, as well as doing degree based work, so it's been quite...So I do think that probably in the courses that feed into this one they should ask for word processed assignments, just so you've got some idea what you're doing and you're not just trying to do two things like understand it and learn how to use a word processor.

Louise felt her school experience was making it more difficult as she related assignment briefs back to actual events and wrote assignments accordingly. This often meant she was going into more depth than was necessary for the assignment. Rachel and Tracey confirmed they too had found this aspect of assignment writing difficult.

Louise One of my pet hates is when you get your assignment brief back, that the comments say 'You could have put this, and you should have done this... this, that and the other.' I think 'I've only got a thousand words, you know.'
I've put three or four major points and done this, that and the other and yet they're still saying on my comments back that I should have gone into...self esteem in more ways...I knew this child, the reason he'd got low self esteem was because of these three factors...I knew that, I knew the child, I was able to like get in there and suss things out. Yet my comments back were saying 'There are so many causes of self esteem.' This is where my school experience isn't helping my assignments because they see me as perhaps having blinkers on, but I know that these were the right factors because of my experience I was able to sort it out. I was able to chat to the child and say it in such away as to get things out. So I knew I didn't need to tackle all the other factors.

Tracey You have to make a lot of it up, what you have to say, you have to state the bleeding obvious.

Rachel Yeah. And I find that very hard to do because I think well, surely they can't be after that, you know, that's common sense. So then you look for something deeper. So then it takes you so much longer and then when you get them back, you realise that that is what appeared on the surface.

In terms of using resources and attending lectures, there was a consensus that there was a need to get the balance right between filling in the gaps in their knowledge and making them repeat things they knew in great depth.

Tracey ...but certainly Art, we had one Art lecture - potato printing and sponging, I'm thinking for God's sake you know. That's another problem because we've done so much of it. For instance I was sat in a lecture the other week on Emergent Writing . I did my own lecture on Emergent Writing with Nursery Nurses. And I know you can't like, filter everybody but we've sat through a hell of a lot of lectures that 'Oh God we already know this.'

Rachel I mean some needs are very different, like with the planning and stuff which obviously they've covered quite a lot in the first year, so it was all repetitive for them but for us to sit and like fill out a medium term plan dealing with format

Louise It was a nightmare for me...I think also we know what our own weaknesses are as well don't we...and then we also know our strengths. I mean, we sat through a Desirable Outcomes lecture, two-hour lecture, the other day...

Tracey But being conscientious we daren't skip the lecture because of the mark. If we could have had those two hours to go and do something that we're not so hot on, it would have been so much more valuable. I mean we sat through a Special Needs one with I.E.P.'s, I mean we could have actually took the lecture. It's finding the right balance I suppose.

Sam, with little experience in school, had less repetition and felt differently

> Well I've just gone through all the word processing which is a practical task, so I definitely think that needs to be introduced because I was terrified, absolutely terrified. I thought 'Oh my God, you can't write And you have to learn how to do it so you might as well go and do it. So as for practical tasks on the whole it doesn't, really, because I wasn't in school you see, so it doesn't really apply.

Ironically, coping with being in school on teaching practice revealed the greatest contrast between the four students' current experiences and showed up some of the difficulties of having had particular types of prior experience. Sam's limited experience in school was countered by years of working with children,

> I know their little quirks and things like that, and things they get up to and things not to be too concerned about. Whereas other people that are in school who are 18, 19 seem to be more uptight about things whereas I'm, you know I'm quite laid back about talking to them. Some of them get really stressed and uptight and they *[the children]* sense it, whereas I'm used to being round children nearly every day so I'm not really too....
>
> It's the teaching part that's new to me rather than the talking and being with children, that's not new at all to me. So in that respect, yeah it's not been too much of a...but the difference between just looking after children and actually teaching them is great. Yes I admit that, but if you've got to teach them then you've got to get to know your own children a lot as well, so that's been a great help, it's been a great help.

She also felt her previous course had been beneficial

> And also the previous course did teach me a lot of things about play and the basic things that you need to know, so yeah it was helpful in that respect. Generally how children learn and the National Curriculum, so yeah, I think it helped a great deal. Some of them [*the others in her group*] struggled with things like the National Curriculum where I knew it quite well because we'd done a lot of work with it.

For Louise too, teaching practice had been a positive experience.

Louise I really enjoyed it. It just went so quick. A supportive school...I mean I was in a school in quite a bad area, and the kids were quite rough, bless 'em.

Tracey Kids that I've worked with for eight years...same estate.

Louise Yeah it was the same family of schools that Tracy used to work in.

But for Tracey and Rachel the whole situation was much more negative, which they put down partly to a non-supportive school and partly to their previous experience.

Rachel My previous experience was a definite hindrance and even asking for school policies and things, it was like 'What's she after?' sort of thing...it was just generally being interested about...the script of the writing that they used and all sorts of things that are just so sort of natural, just to want to do your best to carry on the working of the school.

Tracey But that's where University could have supported... because some schools go for it...'Yes we're having a student' and go for it whole hog and others don't. I think if they've opted to be in partnership with the University they should have to do this, this and this to make it fair. Because I mean, I was asking for records about the children so you could plan properly. 'You're not having the records, what are you after?' kind of thing, and we were asking as if we wanted the information to do that job....

Louise But then having said that, I asked for certain policies and records of the children and there was 'Yeah, they're behind the curtain' or 'We keep all the policies in this cupboard. Help yourself but make sure you put them back.'

One of the main bones of contention, was a letter they had been requested to send to schools detailing their backgrounds.

Rachel But we had to do an introductory letter to the school and in many respects if I hadn't have given that introductory letter I wouldn't necessarily have said about my background as such. Although I didn't claim to know anything of KS2, because it was hand-on- heart, it was a totally new area for me. So although I have got all this experience, I was quite sensitive on how I worded it as well.

You know, that I would welcome all the support and guidance possible for this KS2...but basically it was as if, 'Well you've got that experience, so get on and do it.' And if I was that sort of person I could fully accept that, but ...if I hadn't have had that letter, I wouldn't have let that them know. So therefore it would have been a different.

They agreed that they thought it was because their teachers felt threatened in some way by the knowledge and expertise they brought with them to the classroom.

Tracey That's what it is, that's what I felt like. I mean, my teacher took absolutely everything out of my file because she wanted ideas. To put forward at a staff meeting! different ideas and you think 'God, you know, If you think they're so good, why do you give me such a hard time?'

Rachel But I was fortunate in that I had a very supportive link tutor and I think that if I hadn't had the encouragement and such from her, saying, 'It's all right, what you're doing', it would have totally demoralised me. It really would.

Looking Back

The remainder of the interview questions asked the students to look back on the transition period and focus both on what had been most problematic and what had been most rewarding or fulfilling about achieving their ambitions and entering Initial Teacher Education. Whilst some aspects had already been voiced, there were a couple of new ones raised at this point.

Both Louise and Sam voiced their difficulties about having given up a job and with it any semblance of financial security, and how this was compounded with not fitting into the group on arrival.

Yeah, because I think it's hard enough being here. For me financially, it is a great problem just finding the mortgage each month... and petrol money...because literally, it's three times the distance to come here to what it was having to drive to work. So I'm having to up my petrol money each week. But then I think you can cope with all your things like that because you just think as long as I'm careful, as long as you know you can order your life, so it's sorted. But then when you come here and then not being able to fit into the group...and little comments...and not being spoken to.

> Things like giving up a job, were very traumatic and problematic for me and going back to having no money whatsoever when I'm used to having been paid a nice wage, thank you, and having none now. I haven't really got time to do an awful lot of work. I have done some Nanny jobs this year but I haven't really had time to do a regular. So if I do do regular, I want it to be relevant, I don't want to be working in McDonalds or something. But that was, you know, things like I'm trying to move over here at the minute, things that are more relevant to mature students than just starting a degree course.

Within the ever-present discussion about fitting into the group, that pervaded every answer, the students did offer a suggestion for a way some of their group problems could have been addressed. One remedy they felt might have helped, was to have a personal tutor who could have dealt with some of the issues fairly immediately. Whether this was just for 'non-standard entry' students or just mature students or just Early Years practitioners or indeed every student, was not made clear.

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Two other factors were raised as significant; both of which had been raised in the previous discussions. They concerned assignments in terms of the workload and the marking system. The pattern for assignment writing on both the CHE course and HNC course had been linear and modular. Each module had an assignment, but it followed on after the previous module. Hence one piece of work was worked on at any one time and another was not given out until a new module began. This meant students had longer to work on the assignments and that they could be quite lengthy as few had word limits attached. This was in complete contrast to the BA degree, where there were a number of modules or subject areas giving out assignments at the same time, with shorter periods before deadline dates and strict word limits.

Tracey suggested that a student's ability to cope with this contrast was down to their individual skills...

> But I think the workload's hard to cope with, because well for me...because the CHE was just one module, done it...start the next...whereas this has got lots going on together. And that all depends on obviously how you cope with it yourself as a person, and whether...how conscientious you are and to what depth you do stuff.

Coupled with this sudden increase in quantity, as well as nature of workload, was the problem of judging the quality of the work produced. There were issues relating to marking within the other courses, in terms of using other criteria for assessment (i.e. BTEC) and then relating them to standards on a degree course. For Sam in particular, the transition was a shock.

> But probably the biggest thing is the marking system on this course is obviously a hell of a lot tougher than it was on a HNC, where it was relatively easy to get a distinction and you knew that if everybody got one, you were really going to get one as well.
>
> Whereas this... people have failed!...and you know, 'Wow, people shouldn't be able to fail on your first assignment of your first year degree'. But obviously people have and that's been quite an eye opener, because you do think they're going to be nice and lenient on you because they're... but no!
>
> But the HNC marking was erratic sometimes...I mean people that didn't do any work and people that slogged their guts out, got the same mark...they used to say that people who slogged their guts out didn't write as much relevant stuff. Which I can accept, but I knew that it wasn't the case...I think they just wanted to boost peoples' confidence...But you do want to get a mark you know really you've earned or not earned, rather than just be pampered to.

For most of the students however, the best and most rewarding parts of the transition and the BA course in general, were to do with teaching practice. Louise felt this was the beginning of her believing she could actually do the job of teaching.

> Well TP. I just like got a really good report and I just knew that I was really valued by the teachers and I though yes I can do this, I can be a proper teacher. When I started TP all my little anxieties about... that I had when I started here...can I actually do it? It's all very well those two people saying to me that they know I can do it, but can I actually cope with having a whole class of kids and when I realised I could. It did my confidence a lot of good, actually.

For Sam, whilst it was the best part, it also took some getting used to...

> I would probably say going into the school...I'm sure most people say that. Although I did have a lot of experience of children... but not actually working in a school. I would say that it took me a long time, well about a month, to get used to them... how can I put this politely? The children I looked after were extremely wealthy children, which I probably mentioned before, and the children that I am helping with now are not. Let's just leave it like that.

> So that was particularly sort ...I wasn't particularly shocked; it just took a bit of getting used to. Where you can't say too much about, or be too shocked about what people got for Christmas and things like that, you just go 'Oh that was lovely' instead of 'Oh bloody hell', sort of thing. But yes that's been definitely the best bit for me because that's why we're here really isn't it? You know but, definitely not doing assignments!

Even Tracey, who had not had the best experience in school, was still able to see it positively,

> I'd say my TP, well because I knew when I went in, it was a bad one, I knew I weren't going to hit it off with this teacher, but I made it work and in the end I just came up with a solution and made it work.

For Rachel though, the rewarding part was gaining new knowledge though Louise acknowledged the broadening of what she already knew and the developing relationships within the group.

Rachel	The Art side has really influenced me and how I would tackle Art now in school, from a different slant and for me as a person looking at Art.
Louise	I've come away with some quite good ideas on how to tackle stuff and approach things, just in a different way to what I'd perhaps normally do. Just to give you a broader knowledge I suppose. I really like the group now though, don't you two? The way we've got the banter now though and its...you can have a laugh while you're here and a good giggle before you get down to the serious work.

This positive note about the group relationships demonstrates there are advantages to be gained from leaving a space of time between events and the interviews about those events. Clearly even at that distance, the problems the three students had faced on entry, rankled. But time had also allowed strategies to be used that remedied the situation. Whilst the delay between entry and interviews was not intended it had proved illuminating.

CHAPTER 9

JOURNEY'S END?

And so the journey ends. The travellers retrace their steps or complete a circular route, to return to their homes and starting points. But they return with more 'excess baggage' than can be charged for in an airport. They can return with new encounters, new relationships, new influences and new understandings shaped by their experiences on the journey. They can also return with renewed experiences of old familiar places and old friends that confirm and strengthen their understandings. In this way, although one physical journey has come to an end, there are mental, emotional and spiritual journeys that may result, which in turn may ultimately create the need for further physical journeys. So what may seem like the end, may really be a new beginning.

Similarly too, the students involved in the inquiry complete their courses and most return to their places of employment. For some however, who have forged new paths, it is time to move onto new places of employment, but for all it is time to put to use some of their new understandings.

This chapter uses the data to examine the extent to which changes at both local and national level have impacted on the inquiry.

CHAPTER 9

Journey's End ?

Introduction

Identifying the end of an event, any event, is sometimes problematic. Whilst there can be specified end points sometimes followed by closure ceremonies, there can also be staggered endings which gradually close down parts or elements of the event or situation. These staggered endings can sometimes seem to fade away quietly and be lost amongst a myriad of new beginnings. This chapter marks a set of endings, staggered across four years, from the end of the 'Link' project, through the end of the data collection and the end of the students' courses to finally, the end of the research. All these endings are addressed here in terms of their timing and of the specific findings of the data collection. The resulting implications are also discussed.

The 'End of the Road'

All four endings had a particular date either by which they needed to be completed, or when they became no longer viable. This latter aspect was the case with the 'Link 'Project which, as described in Chapter 4, effectively ceased to be worthwhile, following the introduction of new funding regulations for first year entrants to Initial Teacher Education by the Teacher Training Agency for the 1997 September entrants.

The regulations had an impact on the ITE courses on offer and the 3-year option was removed. Financially, most interested HNC and CHE students had seen the 'Link' project as a way of reducing the number of years in full-time education, thus helping to keep them solvent. Removing the 3-year option, even if the HNC / CHE courses allowed entry into the second year meant an additional year was spent away from the workplace.

These changes, coming as they did just as the first intakes of students had applied for university places, created doubt that any of the students who had applied, would want to continue with their application in the light of the extra year coming into play. As far as the students in the further education colleges were concerned, it was yet another hurdle to overcome and enthusiasm for continuing with the 'Link', from students and local providers alike dissipated rapidly.

No student from the second cohort applied to come through the 'Link' so its demise could be marked as September 1997 when the four, first-intake students joined the BA course. Also, by this date the first-intake of students had finished their HNC course and returned to their places of employment. The college that had been at the furthest distance to the university, drew its students from a wide area, such that some actually lived closer to other universities. So in addition to one or two students exploring new avenues with new jobs, others were looking into degree courses in other parts of the region.

For the second-intake of students the finish date was the following summer with new jobs and new courses being started in September 1998. However, the way recruitment was conducted in one college meant there were no students in this intake. The changes to BTEC were also taking effect and the National Training Organisation was beginning to accredit different courses for the national qualification framework at this time. Since that time the BTEC HNC has not been accredited and appears to no longer be on offer in colleges. So events at national level in Early Years would have forced the closure of the 'Link' project within a couple of years even without the TTA regulations.

In the case of the STA/CHE students, both cohorts completed their course in the 1997 /98 academic year as they had had staggered starts to the STA course. Again, because of the funding changes, this was the only occasion that the CHE ran. This too would have had an effect on the 'Link' project in the long-term.

The data collection itself ended with the last set of interviews with the four students on the BA, in the Summer Term of 1998. In some ways the findings were very surprising and in others, because of anecdotal evidence gained from my experience, could almost have been predicted. However, the resulting small sample makes generalisation difficult.

The four students who made up the final sample graduated from the BA degree at different times. Louise, Tracey and Rachel were able to slot into the second year of the 3-year degree as it was being withdrawn. Consequently they were able to do the two years and return to employment as had been planned originally with the 'Link' project. They all graduated in July 1999. Sam on the other hand, had opted to enter into the first year of the 4-year degree and hence did not graduate until July 2001.

The research itself can be seen to have stretched from 1995 up to the end of 1999, in terms of data collection and new initiatives at local and national level having an impact on the project. Other work commitments and Sam's graduation have meant that the final piece in the jigsaw, the thesis, is only now in 2002, being completed.

The Findings

The research initially had four aims, not all of which proved to be achievable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the small sample which resulted from the national changes detailed in Chapter 4, made it difficult for any sort of generalisation to take place. Secondly, the lack of response from national providers also made it difficult to place the findings within a national context. However, the impact that national changes had on the project meant the students themselves were well aware of the implications and firmly identified themselves as being both a part of the local as well as the national context.

One of the most significant sections of the findings was the demographic data collected from the questionnaires. This was surprising because it had not been seen as central to the discussion and was originally only to give some understanding of the context. Although not directly linked to the aims, it was felt that having some information about the students' backgrounds and experience profiles would enable a better understanding of their perceptions in relation to the first aim and the subsequent development of these perceptions. In the event, the sheer range of data that emerged created a much more three dimensional picture of the students as a group of Early Years practitioners and as individuals.

In terms of their age, the range was wider than had been anticipated. It had been assumed that only students wishing to use the HNC as a stepping stone onto a degree would enrol on the course.

It was also assumed that only students who were young enough and could afford to spend five or six years of studying before becoming teachers etc. would be interested. The age range clearly shows this was not the case and that older students were nevertheless enrolling on the course and using it for promotion and / or personal development purposes.

The qualification data reflected the age spread of the students, and encompassed a wide range from school-achieved CSE's right through to a university-achieved degree. Whilst the largest number of qualifications were achieved at school, few of these were of a sufficiently high level to ensure acceptance on a degree course, particularly with regard to A-levels and to the University and TTA requirements concerning mathematics at GCSE.

The overwhelming impression from the qualification data is that of a group of students who either struggled academically, or who the school system failed in terms of providing appropriate career advice. In spite of these difficulties, these students have persevered and have gained numerous, different additional qualifications in a range of subjects. This suggests they were either under-rated at school or needed longer to mature into studying.

Poor careers advice also had an influence in some cases, where students who clearly had sufficient qualifications to embark on a BTEC course, ultimately gaining 2 A-level equivalence, were directed onto NNEB courses, thereby gaining none. Within the overall group, the proportion of students who held the NNEB qualification in comparison to the BTEC qualification was extremely high, again suggesting either limited opportunity to access the BTEC qualification or being deliberately directed towards the NNEB qualification.

Coupled together, the students' ages and qualifications had a bearing on what jobs were available to students and in what sectors of employment. Unlike many qualifications, those in Child-care did allow for flexibility such that they were recognised by a variety of sectors.

Again, what proved surprising was the sheer range of job titles that students identified and could justify as being different from one another in terms of role and responsibilities.

What was also revealing was the extent to which many students ebbed and flowed with their employment between the sectors. Both of these factors were not readily available to admissions tutors but would be needed if they were to realistically make sense of students' application forms.

With the data relating to INSET courses, it was again necessary to refine the categories used in the graphs as the original lists were numerous and quite diverse. As was expected, most courses were sector specific apart from those in Health and Safety which every sector had to provide. However what was not expected was the level of discrepancy in take-up of these courses amongst the students.

When the original list was sub-divided into educational or social care focused courses, there were only six more educational courses on offer than those in social care. However the difference in number of courses taken, was quite striking, with 161 more education focused courses taken than social care courses. The evidence therefore suggests either opportunity for access to INSET courses differs between the educational and social care sectors or more courses are on offer in education. As both the Education service and the Social Services seem to struggle equally financially, it would then suggest that the increased number and range of INSET courses on offer in education may be because they are cheaper to run.

It would seem from the evidence of the questionnaires that each stage of the demographic data proved to have an effect on the next stage. What became obvious when the data was viewed as a whole, was the range and diversity of knowledge and expertise Early Years practitioners brought with them to any degree course. Sadly this information was not readily assessable to admissions tutors and 'gatekeepers' and even when it was known, it proved to have little worth in the admissions process. This expertise and knowledge was effectively 'inadmissible evidence' in the case for an individual gaining entry to a degree course.

Following on from the questionnaire, the next stage in the data collection was interviewing a sample of the students to begin to address the first aim -

- To explore the perceptions and attitudes towards teaching and teacher training held by students enrolled on 'BTEC HNC in Early Childhood Studies' courses.

Seven students from amongst the first two cohorts, were interviewed individually and asked to answer five questions covering their understanding of teaching and their motivations for either wanting or not wanting to become a teacher. They were asked to identify the people and events that had influenced their thinking and decision-making and also given the chance to discuss any deeply held feelings or thoughts about education and teaching.

What emerged was a developing sense of understanding that seemed to relate to students' maturity and their experience of children, schools and the world in general. Clearly some of the younger students were very frustrated with their course and the difficulties of gaining entry to ITE and this spilled over into the interviews. The older students were more resigned to the fact that with new courses and new initiatives there are always settling-in problems and that time and good communications would sort out many of the issues.

For most of the students there were significant events or people that triggered the desire to enter teaching., although for the student who had never wanted to teach, this was obviously not the case. Her original intention though, had always been to work with children, and as her job role changed she changed with it and adapted to her new responsibilities.

For the remaining students, the events most likely to trigger an interest or positive attitude towards schools and working in education, were experiences in the primary school. Ironically, even negative experiences of secondary school did not put these students off, it just confirmed their choice of primary as a teaching range. As a part of these experiences some students were able to say they had some good teachers but few could remember their names, suggesting at this stage and age, individuals had a limited influence on the students' perceptions.

However, in later years most students could refer to particular individuals who had helped influence their decisions about teaching. Arguably, this influence only proved significant, in terms of the students taking action, if they were already aware of their own potential for teaching or had a desire to teach. Even then, if the significant other was a family member, it often required a further professional colleague or friend, who had witnessed the student's skills and expertise in school, to add their weight to these intentions.

It was this final aspect, of people who had observed them in action, that often proved to be what tipped the balance if the student had already been thinking about teaching and then resulted in them applying for courses or starting to find out information.

Trying to identify what courses were available to interested Early Years practitioners, was addressed in the research by another aim,

- To investigate the provision nationally for Early Years practitioners seeking to gain qualified teacher status.

This was done using a survey approach and accessing information from UCAS both in handbook form and from the website. The findings showed a clear majority of the degree courses nationally, concerned with the nursery and lower primary age range, offered QTS with the courses.

However the entry requirements for teaching at this time, before Early Years had been given subject status by the TTA, mitigated against most Early Years practitioners. It was interesting to note at the time of the survey the developing demand for Early Childhood / Childhood Studies degrees without QTS. Significantly these courses have dramatically increased in number to date.

In terms of data collection, the next aim to be addressed was that involving national and local providers.

- To examine policy issues raised by the findings and to establish a dialogue with providers regarding their professional judgments for Qualified Teacher Status training for Early Years practitioners.

As was outlined in Chapter 7, there were problems in terms of national providers failing to respond. They had been approached to answer questions about how proposed recommendations for changes at national level in the education and care of young children, were taking account of the 'voice' of the Early Years practitioner. In other words, what was the influence that 'ordinary' Early Years practitioners had on the suggestions being made on their behalf. The timing of the approach and subsequent limited follow-up due to illness may have contributed to the lack of response.

An attempt was made at local level to examine the professional judgements of providers through interviews. Staffing changes in the further education colleges meant it was not possible to interview any providers with direct knowledge of the 'Link'. Ultimately only the local providers at the University were interviewed. The overwhelming impression local providers had of Early Years practitioners as 'non-standard entry' students was positive, though, unsurprisingly, their views were informed by how much direct contact they had had previously with Early Years practitioners.

In the cases of managers who had only dealt with them as a group of 'non-standard entry' students on paper, this meant an understanding based on the initial application form, detailing the student's qualifications, jobs and achievements, and their subsequent progress on the course. Issues with 'non-standard entry' students from other types of courses in the past, producing problems in terms of student's progress on the course, had made managers somewhat wary of 'non-standard entry' students. Hence, little contact between students and managers throughout the course was viewed favourably by the managers as it indicated Early Years students had few problems that needed 'managing'.

In spite of their positive view of Early Years practitioners, providers did identify a couple of issues that caused them concern. Firstly the lack of a subject specialism in a National Curriculum subject caused difficulties for some individual students in terms of meeting official level requirements needed for primary teaching. Secondly, cost was seen as an issue, though this was more for all 'non-standard entry' students than specifically for the Early Years students. All students have problems that require staff time to resolve. Mature students simply bring different problems. The issue of Accredited Prior Learning (APL) to take account of the experiences of 'non-standard entry' students is also very expensive in terms of staff time.

These concerns demonstrate the tensions providers felt between offering opportunities for 'non-standard entry' to degree courses and to teaching, and yet still managing to meet all entry requirements both in terms of the university's own guidelines and those at national level.

From the providers' interviews it became obvious that the more contact providers had with Early Years practitioners the more likely they were to have a heightened awareness of the skills and attributes such students brought with them into ITE.

This heightened awareness was then, in some cases, used to inform both expectations of such students on the course and practice within lectures and seminar groups.

Having identified some aspects of the students' experiences whilst on the degree course, through the eyes of the providers, the time came to turn this around and focus on the students' developing perceptions whilst doing the course., by exploring the final aim.

- To monitor and track the development of those first perceptions and attitudes as the students' progress onto the Initial Teacher Training course and examine changes and progression.

This aim was tackled using interviews with the four 'pioneer' students, the first and ultimately, only students, to use the 'Link' project to gain entry onto the BA degree. Even within this tiny sample there was a spread of ages, qualifications, jobs and INSET training. In addition, Sam's experience as a nanny with a limited experience of school, singled her out as a slightly different case from the remainder of the students. That she also chose to follow the 4-year course offered an opportunity to view her experiences in contrast to those of the other students.

For all four students the main motivation for wanting to teach was a feeling they had reached 'the end of the road' in terms of what they could do and offer as a nursery nurse or nanny. They all felt it marked a progression both personally and professionally.

For each of them, although events like applying for courses had spurred them on, it was specific people who had been the main influences in terms of them actually taking the first steps into teaching. Whilst these could be family members like husbands, partners and grannies, or headteachers or members of staff in the school the students worked in, generally it was a mixture of the two.
Indeed, it appeared that with a combination of both professional and personal 'significant others' there was no way the students could avoid the issue any longer. Where they had prevaricated with only their own hopes and those of one set of 'significant others', the support and belief in them from two sets of individuals became overwhelming and they had to take positive action. That this belief might also extend to practical support in terms of finance even on the part of a school was seen as highly significant.

For all the students, their previous courses had helped to build their confidence in their own academic abilities such that they began to believe they might actually be able to cope with the academic level of a degree. However this aspect was later elaborated on in the interviews and brought to light a number of concerns the students had about the writing of assignments and some mismatches between the courses.

Interestingly, there was a mixed reaction to how useful their prior experience had been. In Sam's case, she felt her experience of children and of studying the National Curriculum during the HNC course had only benefited her in school. For Rachel, Louise and Tracey it was a more negative reaction. They felt their prior experience had counted against them in terms of them having a broader view of the classroom and children, such that they then found it hard to focus on just one aspect.

They also felt, after some years in school, they had accrued a large body of knowledge and their philosophies were to some extent already shaped. This meant they found few new ideas which challenged them, or changed their practice. It also meant the balance of knowledge given in lectures and seminars was problematic. Sometimes they felt they were running to catch up on the things they had missed in Year 1, whilst at other times they felt they were having to re-study areas of knowledge they already knew well. This body of knowledge also proved problematic on teaching practice where they felt some placement schools were unsure how to react and respond to a student with these sorts of experiences.

Their first impressions of the course were mixed. For Sam it centred on the beautiful surroundings, the friendly people and the manageable workload. But this altered with the increased workload in the second term. For the other three the main bone of contention, as already mentioned, was firstly Louise being placed in a different seminar group to the others, and secondly how they were all received into that seminar group. That tutors and students alike were unaware of how or why the three students came to be in the group, or what their experiences were and this led to misunderstandings all round.

In terms of writing assignments, all the students mentioned the length of the assignments on the HNC and CHE courses and the fact that they were done one after the other as modules were worked on, rather than three or four at the same time. Doing more than one assignment at once and ensuring all assignments were word processed proved difficult, as did the fact that the marking criteria on the previous courses was very different to that on the degree.

Trying to find a balance between how students with Early Years backgrounds access the knowledge they need to fill in the gaps, as well as offering them new opportunities to broaden knowledge and skills they already knew in great depth were some of the students' main concerns.

Working in school also produced mixed reactions. Sam found it new, different and exciting but found her knowledge of children invaluable. For Rachel in particular, the experience foundered almost from day one when she wrote the 'ice-breaking' letter to the school that gave details of her experiences and expertise. All three students felt that teachers were sometimes threatened by their prior knowledge and skills and this had been borne out in the teaching practice experiences of Rachel and Tracey.
In summary, the students focussed on three main problematic areas of concern -

- Giving up jobs and thus giving up financial stability
- Fitting into a new group
- Assignment workload and marking schemes.

On the positive side they identified four rewarding areas -

- School experience & believing they could actually be a teacher
- School experience being a culture shock but really enjoying it
- New knowledge or new ways of looking at existing knowledge
- Finally fitting into a group

Ways Forward

It is clear some of the changes that occurred at local and national level which have impacted on the research, could not have been guessed at when the inquiry began. There were major initiatives from government agencies and departments. Examining boards merged and course were developed and then were withdrawn. Local providers faced staffing issues of movement, retirement and redundancy and students enrolled on HNC and CHE courses faced all the usual crises of life like health problems, marital problems, employment problems and bereavement, or new babies, new jobs or new partners.

The demographic data points to a highly qualified group of individuals whose experiences are not sufficiently well known to give them accreditation for admission or accounted for appropriately within the admissions process. The students' initial perceptions demonstrate a depth of understanding of teaching and of being learners that would profit any other course on which they might chose to study.

The local providers' perceptions highlight the importance of contact with the actual students. Whilst positive attitudes to this group of students might already exist, heightened awareness of the actual knowledge, skills and understanding real students bring to the BA course and to the classroom, cannot be overstated. And the four successful students' insights clearly demonstrate there is still a long way to go to provide a smooth transition for Early Years practitioners wishing to enter teaching

The findings provide evidence to back up recommendations for situations where similar initiatives are established between courses offered by further education colleges and universities. These are

- Assignment workload patterns should be streamlined so the two courses follow the same pattern.
- Marking schemes for particular exam boards are used alongside University based schemes to enable students to see comparisons and streamlined if possible.
- Communications between institutions are regular
- Sufficient demographic information about 'non-standard entry' students is collected and accredited appropriately
- Communications between providers both at managerial and teaching level concerning these students, are regular and detailed

- Information is also communicated to the student group to ensure acceptance of the new students.
- Additional advice should be given to schools on how best to develop these Early Years students further.

Therefore the major recommendation from the findings centres on gaining accurate information about particular groups, in this case Early Years practitioners as 'non-standard entry' students on a BA with QTS degree, and then communicating that information effectively and appropriately to those who manage admissions to such courses, teach on such courses, to their fellow students, and to the schools involved in school experience, such that this knowledge is to the benefit of all the parties involved.

CHAPTER 10

REVISTING?

Some time after the completion of a journey, the travellers may use photographs; journals, objects collected and reunions with other travellers, to revisit some of the experiences encountered and examine their understandings of those experiences again.

For the students this is achieved by re-examining course notes, by attending award ceremonies, meeting up with fellow course members or sharing with others, some of those new understandings.

This chapter examines how the experiences, aspirations, values and beliefs of the students and the providers have interacted with local and national contexts and initiatives.

CHAPTER 10

Revisiting?

Conclusions

So what can be said to have been learned from the research inquiry?

In terms of contributions to knowledge, this inquiry has provided a 'snapshot in time' of a complex field of education as it underwent massive changes. The changes to the qualifications framework in this country across the same time period, also means that the HNC course currently appears not to have been submitted for accreditation. If this marks its demise, it is extremely unlikely that any opportunity would arise that would allow the inquiry to be replicated.

Regarding the nature of the data collected, whilst a couple of recent research studies have addressed elements of Early Years practitioners' experiences, none have examined the transition period as practitioners study to become Early Years teachers. Similarly the spread of data collected from the students, beginning with the demographic data and building through their growing understandings as they develop as teachers, is unique.

So how do the findings from the research inform larger debates about 'education' and 'training' or about 'lifelong learning'? Are there new insights to be gained about Early Years Education and or Care? What can the findings tell us about access and progression?

Although the arguments discussed in Chapter 2 concerning the various definitions and understandings given to 'education' and 'training' still hold true for me, the findings have raised one particularly large concern. Initially, I offered the argument that the students' enrolment on the HNC could be seen as evidence

> ...that they see and feel a much fuller learning experience is available. It would seem that actually experiencing the processes and living through the changes in thinking patterns and understandings that occur, is what broadens the definition from 'training' into the larger context of 'education'
> Ch 2

However, when the students talked about being asked about how doing particular assignments or activities had affected their thinking, their reply was worrying.

They suggested that the length of time they had been in employment in schools and nurseries, meant they felt their philosophies were mostly already shaped. If this is the case, and further studying at a higher academic level is not changing or even challenging ideas and understandings for these students, then it suggests two things. Either the BA degree has not achieved a good match for these students in terms of providing them with appropriate developing experiences that extend what they bring to the course.

Or, alternatively, it could be that the students believe, for all their rhetoric about what they think teaching is about, that in fact if you do have a particular package of skills, knowledge and understandings, then you will be able to teach. This suggests a worrying carry-over from their initial childcare courses, where learning skills and facts well equated with becoming a good childcare worker.

The findings also revealed all the students had far greater knowledge and experience of both Early Years Education and Care than was expected. The massive changes in the field have in recent years resulted in a closer drawing together of these two areas of working with young children. Many of the students had worked in both areas and most recognised that for the young child, care and education go hand-in-hand. This could also go some way to explaining the very personal nature of the experience of working with young children, compounded by the demands of working in teams. It would also explain why, as the child progresses through the school system and the 'care' aspect becomes the responsibility of other specialists apart from the teacher, the relationship between child and teacher becomes more impersonal. This 'distancing' from the child, in terms of 'care' as opposed to encouraging the child's independence as a learner, was difficult for some of the 'pioneer' students. So too, was the lack of a team of other practitioners to work alongside in the same classroom.

On the subject of 'lifelong learning' two aspects of the findings proved illuminating. Firstly, there was a much wider age range to the students undertaking the HNC course. This was surprising because it had been seen by providers that this was a springboard to moving onto a degree course.

By this token, only students young enough to contemplate doing a two-year part-time course, followed by a four-year full-time course had been seen as potential candidates for the course. One look at the age ranges and employment profiles of the students in the inquiry show this simply was not the case. Students, who either had no intention or opportunity to continue onto a degree course, were nevertheless enrolling on the course. In terms of 'lifelong learning', they appeared to be using the course in terms of their employment, to either assist their chances of promotion or address gaps in their knowledge highlighted by new roles and responsibilities. In one or two cases, the motivation for enrolling on the HNC was for personal development purposes.

The second aspect relates to the findings about the qualifications that students held. These clearly demonstrate that for many of the students, their school-achieved qualifications were insufficient for progression onto degree level courses. In some cases, they were not even enough to enable students to study A-levels. In addition, studying a childcare course such as the NNEB National Diploma often occurred at the same time as studying for A-levels (i.e. between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.) such that students had to choose one or the other route.

And here is the dilemma. From the profiles in the data, it is clear some students received the wrong careers advice. Some students who had achieved sufficient number and high enough GCE / GCSE grades to study A-levels, were directed onto the NNEB. Quite whether this was to do with poor knowledge of the various routes or whether the school advisors heard 'I want to work with children' as 'child-minding' or 'nannying' rather than 'teaching' is debatable. The effects of these decisions though, have reverberated down the years for these students. The fact that these students are still involved in the education system at all, and that they have continued to push on and gain a wide variety of qualifications demonstrates their tenacity and determination.

So their initial experiences suggest that these students may well have been under-rated at school. If this is true, or even if they took longer to mature into studying than other individuals, then the case for 'lifelong learning' is secure. Without the possibility for studying further, at other ages and stages in their lives, these students would be stuck with the poor advice and the subsequent educational decisions they made in their teens. As is clearly demonstrable, for the vast majority of these students this would have been a tragedy, as they have proved to be highly successful academically later in their lives.

The wider issue of access and progression can also be addressed through the findings. The 'Link' project was a local initiative designed specifically to address this issue. It arose out of a real need perceived by local providers who had wide experience of Early Years practitioners that this type of access and progression was both necessary and achievable. Sadly, unless these types of initiatives are informed by potential national changes and can be adapted, they, like the 'Link' tend to flounder. This is particularly ironic when it is considered that some of the national changes were also purporting to encourage access and progression.

There is also a side issue here relating to other 'non-standard entry' students such as those from Access courses or other types of student groups involved in local initiatives. The success rate of previous cohorts in terms of completing the degree and / or having had problematic progression throughout the course, would appear to determine the attitude and perceptions of local providers such as university 'gatekeepers' or admissions tutors.

Clearly in trying to use the project's findings to illuminate the larger debates it has been possible to arrive at some points that need further development. For example, if further studying is not addressing students' needs and not encouraging them to engage with the experience to feel they have extended their expertise, skills, knowledge & understandings then action needs to be taken. These individuals have multi-disciplinary skills and a wide range of knowledge of Early Years and Care and of seeing the 'whole child' and that is not being reflected in the teacher population at present. Furthermore it will continue not to be reflected if students fail to either make the move into Initial Teacher Education or worse still are not excited, challenged and changed by the experience when they get there.

It could be argued that the thesis primarily presents the Early Years practitioners' view of gaining entry to Initial Teacher Education. I make no apology for this. It is precisely this view or set of views that has hitherto been missing. The debate for me has always been, how in my role as a researcher, I might best present these views.

What should be made clear at this point, is that it was never my intention to 'give' the students a 'voice'. This makes it sound as if I did not want them to have one, which is far from the truth. The view from the beginning of the 'Link' project and the research was that Early Years practitioners already have a 'voice'. The problem is, it had sunk to a whisper through shouting and not being heard. My role has been to amplify that 'voice' so it might once again be heard.

The experience, aspirations, values and beliefs of these students deserve to be heard. Their 'voice' needs to be taken into account in local initiatives like the 'Link' project and in national initiatives like the Foundation Stage and the National Framework for Qualifications. Their 'voice' needs to be heard in the relationships between Further and Higher Education courses at local and national level.

If this investigation into the experiences of Early Years practitioners who enter Initial Teacher Education has shown anything, it is that these individuals have a richness of experience which ITE simply has to take on board. Initial Teacher Education needs to hear what these students have been trying to tell us; that what they bring with them in terms of experience and expertise to any QTS degree course, is worth validating, and worth celebrating. If government through Initial Teacher Education is serious in wanting to create a diverse population of teachers, then the implications from the research are that the 'voice' of the Early Years practitioner needs not only to be heard, but to be acted upon positively and forcefully.

The research has shown there is a long way to go for Early Years practitioners to gain entry into Initial Teacher Education and that the individuals who have made it have not found it an easy experience. Clearly new courses, such as the Early Childhood Studies degrees and Foundation degrees coming on stream are proving helpful but there is still massive disadvantages based on where an individual lives and how they can access those courses.

Higher Education appears to be more interested in 'training' than 'education' and offers curious combinations so that individuals can access certain courses such as BAs in Early Childhood Studies but then find that the local institution will not accept that course as entry into a PCGE course so they cannot progress into teaching without going to another institution miles away. Clearly there needs to be changes at both National and local level to facilitate the progression and there also needs to be more streamlining of courses offered in Further Education to facilitate a simpler process.

Further research could follow two main paths, one quantitative and one qualitative. Firstly before change at local and national level can occur, there needs to be a mapping exercise done of who is offering what courses where, and whether the vast array of FE and HE courses can be streamlined in any way. This is a massive undertaking and would either need to be piloted at LEA level and then spread nationally or would require national involvement from the DfES or QCA from the start. There would then need to be some portal created that allowed interested Early Years practitioners access to this data.

The qualitative route for extending the work from this project would be to identify other students and similarly follow their experiences both through qualification programmes and in their workplaces. This would enable a wider range of student experiences to be examined and may also allow other forms of data collection involving more narrative forms to be used, such that students regain their voices and begin to shout and tell their stories.

All the students involved in the inquiry felt their status as Early Years practitioners keenly. They were well aware of the national context in which they operated and how this impacted on their local situation in terms of local Early Years partnerships, local training opportunities and employment. They were often among the first to have to deal with and implement new national initiatives for the education and care of young children. They felt the lack of career progression and poor wages demeaned them and their expertise. They objected to the valuable job they performed working with children being undermined and given such little worth in our society.

The implications at government level from this for Early Years focus on issues such as citizenship. The experiences gleaned from early years provision in Reggio Emillio in Italy where all children are seen as citizens of the state from the moment of their birth has resonated around the world. If we accept children have rights as citizens from the moment they are born, we have a duty to provide the best care and education from birth. Whilst the training of early years workers does not occur in the same way as in Britain, perhaps we need the best practice of both these two traditions to truly ensure the best of both worlds.

It is no longer acceptable in the 21st Century that our youngest children are put off as unimportant and hence left to be cared for by unqualified people, no matter how well meaning they are. We need to be sure that good parent helpers and other skilled adults are enabled to go for further training, that stumbling blocks are not put in their way and that they have the greatest chances to learn and understand how best to help all our children regardless of age, race, gender or ability achieve their potential. That will not happen if we treat the people who work with these tiny but important individuals as if their role was insignificant. We have to educate the best people, to the best of their potential in order for them to become the best educators for all our children including the very young ones.

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APPENDICES

LIST OF APPENDICES

No.	Caption
1.	National Framework of Qualifications -GNVQ Briefing
2.	National Framework of Qualifications -Dearing Report
3.	National Framework of Qualifications -QCA Website
4.	Surrey Advertiser Article
5.	Local Survey - Letter
6.	Local Survey - Responses
7.	Local Survey - Health and Social Care Courses
8.	Local Survey - Childcare Courses
9.	Questionnaire - Prior training and Qualifications
10.	Questionnaire - Work Experience
11.	Questionnaire responses - Work Roles and Job Titles
12.	Questionnaire responses - INSET courses
13.	Questionnaire responses - List of Qualifications
14.	Questionnaire responses - Job Titles divided by Sector
15.	Questionnaire responses - INSET courses divided by Types
16.	Early Years practitioners - First Interview Questions
17.	Early Years practitioners - Indicative raw transcript - one individual
18.	Early Years practitioners - indicative - all responses to one question
19.	National Provision - Letter
20.	National Provision - Breakdown of course
21.	National Provision - Recent UCAS website information
22.	National Providers - Letter
23.	Local Providers - Email communication
24.	Local Providers - Interview questions
25.	Early Years practitioners - Brief Biographies
26.	Early Years practitioners - Follow-up Interview questions
27.	Early Years practitioners - Indicative raw transcript.

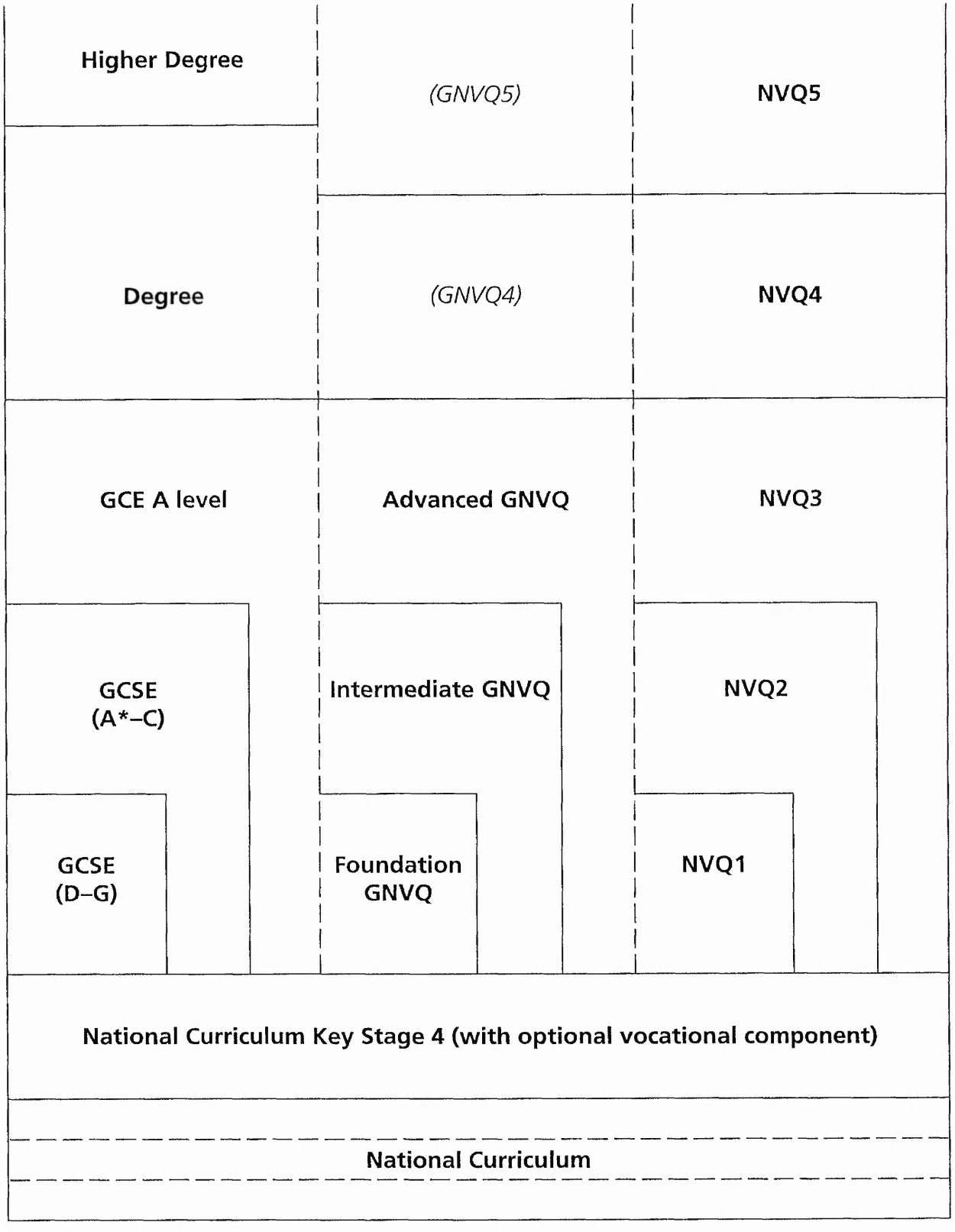
Higher Degree
(GNVQ5)
NVQ5
Degree
(GNVQ4)
NVQ4
GCE A level
Advanced GNVQ
NVQ3
GCSE
(A*–C)
Intermediate GNVQ
NVQ2
GCSE
(D–G)
Foundation
GNVQ
NVQ1
16
National Curriculum Key Stage 4 (with optional vocational component)
age 14
National Curriculum
5

figure 6

3.7 The inclusion of an Entry level in this national framework of qualifications gives an opportunity to encourage and recognise achievement by a wider range of learners than at present. Proposals are contained in Section 7 for a new National Award at Entry level.

3.8 Section 6 of this Report also has a direct bearing on the framework: it contains recommendations on the size and structure of the Advanced GNVQ (Section 6.1-6.6) and on a reformulated AS qualification (Section 6.33-6.34).

Table 4 Proposed framework of national awards

National Award: Advanced Level		
AS and A Level	GNVQ Advanced Level	NVQ Level 3†
National Award: Intermediate Level		
GCSE Grades A*-C	GNVQ Intermediate Level	NVQ Level 2‡
National Award: Foundation Level		
GCSE Grades D-G	GNVQ Foundation Level	NVQ Level 1‡
National Award: Entry Level*		
Common to all pathways: Three grades A/B/C		

DEARING, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 year olds (Summary Report)* SCAA

† NVQ level 3 obtained by young people primarily through a Modern Apprenticeship/Employment.

‡ NVQ levels 1 and 2 obtained by young people primarily through Youth Training/Employment.

* Entry Level at grades A, B, C equivalent in demand to Levels 3, 2 and 1 of the National Curriculum, but contextualised for the post-16 age group.

APPENDIX 2

Printed from the Qualifications Curriculum Authority website
Thursday 03rd of January 2002 01:50 GMT Standard Time
http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/framework/

Guarding standards

Introduction to qualifications

This section contains information on General qualifications(GCSEs, A/AS, Advanced Extension Awards), vocationally-related qualifications (GNVQs, vocational A levels) and occupational qualifications (NVQs).

Level of qualification	General		Vocationally-related	Occupational
5	Higher-level qualifications			Level 5 NVQ
4				Level 4 NVQ
3 advanced level	A level	Free-standing mathematics units level 3	Vocational A level (Advanced GNVQ)	Level 3 NVQ
2 intermediate level	GCSE grade A*-C	Free-standing mathematics units level 2	Intermediate GNVQ	Level 2 NVQ
1 foundation level	GCSE grade D-G	Free-standing mathematics units level 1	Foundation GNVQ	Level 1 NVQ
Entry level	Certificate of (educational) achievement			

QCA provides a European and International dimension to England's curriculum and qualifications systems.

- Also available in this section are the following:

Advanced Extension Awards	Advanced Extension Awards for summer 2002 Advanced Extension Awards overview of summer 2000 trial
A/AS levels	Subject criteria for A and AS levels Regulations for A/AS Entry, Aggregation and Certification unitisation and credit A and AS level examinations Qualifying for Success Outcomes of the five yearly reviews of GCSE and A level examination standards Summary of new GCE advanced and advanced subsidiary specifications for courses starting in September 2000

APPENDIX 3

GCSE and Vocational GCSE	GCSE subject criteria GCSE Specifications for teaching from September 2001 Outcomes of the five yearly reviews of GCSE and A level examination standards A consultation on the development of vocational GCSE Vocational GCSE information
GNVQ and Vocational A levels	GNVQs and Vocational A levels: your questions answered Qualifying for Success Part One GNVQs Fair assessment in vocationally-related qualifications and NVQs Curriculum 2000 Part one GNVQ regional support networks
NVQ	Take up of NVQs Fair assessment in vocationally-related qualifications and NVQs Technical certificates Improving NVQs user forums Implementing National Standards: The Assessment and Verification Units D32, D33, D34 and D35 NVQ portfolios - key messages NVQ system: who does what? Brief guides to qualifications, supporting the work of careers and personal advisers
General	Managing Curriculum 2000 for 16-19 students Review of Curriculum 2000 - QCA's report on phase one Childcare Strategy and Accreditation Update Regulations for Entry, Aggregation and Certification Unitisation and credit The unified GCSE, GCE, VCE and GNVQ code of practice 2000/01

Last Updated: Wednesday 05th of December 2001 12:00 GMT Standard Time
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Back

Nursery schools threatened as classes tumble

NURSERIES and pre-school groups in Surrey are facing extinction as primary schools take more and more four-year-olds into their reception classes.

Classes in Guildford and Godalming are under threat, and West Horsley almost lost its pre-school provision altogether when the villageís First Class Nursery came close to folding in January.

The problems have arisen because instead of taking children in smaller groups throughout the year at Easter, September, and new year, schools are now having just one large intake in September, and as a result are taking in both four and five-year- olds.

Early entry to school was accelerated by the introduction of nursery vouchers as the availability of funding for four- year-olds boosted competition between schools to recruit the most pupils.

The subsequent abolition of the voucher scheme does not seem to have affected the practice, which has had a devastating effect on the countyís pre-schools (formerly playgroups) as their children are poached in large numbers. Even those with full waiting lists are finding it hard to fill all their vacant spaces.

Most see an upturn in January only to have another mass exodus come September, and things are becoming more difficult with each passing year.

At First Class in West Horsley, group leader, Helen Woods, lost 22 of her 27 children in September. In the event they struggled through the term at a loss and it looks like numbers will pick up again in January.

The future remains uncertain though and Mrs Woods was waiting nervously for next September. She said: We Do you try to build up enough reserves during the year to get through that term on less than half numbers or do you think its not worth it?íí

In Guildford borough alone there are nearly 50 groups, all of which are losing up to half their pupils at the start of every school year.

The Pre-school Learning Alliance, which represents 19,000 pre-schools in England, said that since last year as many as 800 have closed already or will close imminently.

The charity cited a survey which revealed a further 1,400 believed they were in danger of closing next year, and the organisationís chief executive, Margaret Lochrie, said: ëëThese closures mean that the scant stock of early years provision has been further depleted, and the result is personal catastrophe for volunteers and staff who have lost their jobs, and for those younger children who now have nowhere to go.

At Worplesdon, pre- school group leader Sharon Newman explained the drought of youngsters was threatening the groupís unique extended hours scheme which allows older children to stay longer, bringing in packed lunches and PE kits.

This helps prepare them for the transition to school and has been much praised in the eight years since it started. Now though, there are barely enough children of the right age to keep it going.

166, Carlton Hill
off Celia Drive
Carlton
Nottingham
NG4 1FN

Tel. 0115 961 2365

27th March 1996

Dear Sir or Madam

I would like to request a copy of the current prospectus for your institution. I am also interested in any additional information relating to training to work with children.

Yours faithfully

K. Wood (Mrs.)

APPENDIX 5

KEY

P date of postmark
FP full-time prospectus
PP part-time prospectus
CL Course Leaflets
O Other- e.g. Letter
A Separate Application Form
C Complements slip / with hand-written information

No.	NAME	P	FP	PP	CL	O	A	C
	DERBYSHIRE							
1	Chesterfield C of Tech. & Arts	2.4	x		x	x	x	
2	Derby Tertiary C - Wilmorton	1.4		x	x			x
3	High Peak College	1.4	x				x	x
4	Mackworth College Derby	1.4	x		x			
5	North Derbyshire Tertiary C	2.4		x	x	x	x	x
6	South East Derbyshire College	3.4			x	x	x	
	LEICESTERSHIRE							
7	Charles Keen C of FE	1.4	x		x	x		
8	Hinckley College	1.4	x		x	x	x	
9	Leicester South Fields	3.4			x	x	x	
10	Melton Mowbray C of FE	1.4	x		x		x	
11	Wigston C of FE	1.4		x	x	x		x
	LINCOLNSHIRE							
12	Boston College	17.4	x	x	x		x	x
13	Grantham College	4.4	x		x			
14	North Lincolnshire College	3.4			x		x	x
15	Stamford College	1.4	x		x			
	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE							
16	Arnold & Carlton C of FE	28.3	x					
17	Basford Hall College	1.4	x	x	x	x	x	
18	Broxtowe College	4.4	x	x				
19	Clarendon C of FE	2.4	x	x	x			
20	Newark & Sherwood College	1.4	x		x	x	x	
21	North Nottinghamshire C of FE	2.4	x		x	x		
22	People's C of Tertiary Educn	2.4	x		x			
23	South Nottingham C of FE	1.4	x					
24	West Nottinghamshire College							

APPENDIX 6

1996-97 PROSPECTUSES (* 95-96)
CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION COURSES

COLLEGES	PLA N2/3	BNC CSNN	BND CSNN	BHNC ECS	CACHE NNEB CCE	CACHE NNEB DNN	CACHE ADCE	NVQ CE2	NVQ CE3	NAM CNM S	NAM CCD
Chesterfield*					F	F					
Wilmorton		P	F			F	P		P	P	P
High Peak					F/P	F/P	F/P				
Mackworth		P	F			F		P	P		
North Derbys*		P	F/P			F/P		P	P		
SE Derbys		P	F		F/P	F				P	F
Charles Keen			F								
Hinckley					(F)	(FP)		(P)	(P)		
Leics Sth. Fields*											
Melton Mowbray			F								
Wigston			F/P								
Boston		P	F		F	F					
Grantham					F	F/P		P	P		
North Lincs		P	F	P	F/P	F/P		P	P		
Stamford			F			F		P	P		
Arnold & Carlton	P		F	P				P	P		
Basford Hall*	P		F	P	P	F/P		F/P	F/P		
Broxtowe *	P		F	(P)				P	P		
Clarendon			F/P		F	F					
N. & Sherwood	P	P	F		F	F		(P)	(P)		
North Notts *		P	F								
People's		P	F								
South Nottm			F		F						
West Notts	P						P	P	P		

APPENDIX 7

1996-97 PROSPECTUSES (* 95-96)
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE COURSES

COLLEGES	EMFE CFP	GNVQ FOU	GNVQ INT	GNVQ ADV	BNC SC	BND SC	NVQ HSC1	NVQ HSC2	NVQ HSC3
Chesterfield		F	F	F					
Wilmorton	P				P	F	P	P	P
High Peak		F/P	F/P		F				
Mackworth		F	F	F				P	P
North Derbys		F	F/P	F/P					P
SE Derbys		F	F	F	P				
Charles Keen		F	F	F					
Hinckley / Warks		F/P	F/P	F/P	P			(P)	(P)
Leics Sth. Fields									
Melton Mowbray			F	F					
Wigston	P	F	F	F					
Boston			F		P	F			
Grantham		F	F	F					
North Lincs									
Stamford			F/P	F					
Arnold & Carlton	P	F	F	F				P	P
Basford Hall		F	F	F				P	
Broxtowe	P	F	F/P	F	P			P	P
Clarendon		F/P	F/P	F/P				P	
N. & Sherwood			F	F				(P)	(P)
North Notts		F	F	F					
People's			F	F					
South Nottm			F	F		F			
West Notts								P	P

APPENDIX 8

COURSE ABBREVIATIONS:

Childcare and Education courses :

PLA N2/3	Pre school Learning Alliance, numerous part-time courses for workers in playgroups with NVQ underpinning knowledge included (was Pre school Playgroups Association)
BNCCSNN	BTEC National Certificate in Childhood Studies (Nursery Nursing) two year part-time course. (was ...in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing))
BNDCSNN	BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies (Nursery Nursing) two year full-time course. (was ...in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing))
CACHENNEBCCE	CACHE Certificate in Child Care & Education
CACHENNEBDNN	CACHE Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB) two year full-time course (was NNEB Diploma)
CACHEADCE	CACHE Advanced Diploma in Child Care & Education Replaced Diploma in Post Qualifying Studies (DPQS) offered by NNEB
NVQCE2	National Vocational Qualification in Child Care & Education , Level 2
NVQCE3	National Vocational Qualification in Child Care & Education , Level 3
NAMCWCNMS	NAMCW(National Association of Maternal and Child Welfare) Certificate in Nursery Management Skills
NAMCWCCD	NAMCW(National Association of Maternal and Child Welfare) Child Care & Development course

Health & Social Care Courses

EMFECCFP	East Midlands Further education Council (EMFEC) Certificate Caring for People
GNVQFOU	BTEC General National Vocational Qualification at Foundation Level in Health & Social Care
GNVQINT	BTEC GNVQ at Intermediate Level in Health & Social Care
GNVQADV	BTEC GNVQ at Advanced Level in Health & Social Care
BNCSC	BTEC National Certificate in Social Care (being replaced by GNVQs)
BNDSC	BTEC National Diploma in Sicuial Care (being replaced by GNVQs)
NVQHSC1	National Vocational Qualification in Health & Social Care Level 1
NVQHSC2	National Vocational Qualification in Health & Social Care Level 2
NVQHSC3	National Vocational Qualification in Health & Social Care Level 3

DETAILS OF PRIOR TRAINING

NAME : .....

DATE OF BIRTH : .....

QUALIFICATIONS HELD ON LEAVING SCHOOL:

1 CSEs ( )
(please list .....)
2 GCE O-levels ( )
(please list .....)
3 GCSE's (post 1985) ( )
(please list .....)
4 A-levels ( )
(please list .....)
5 Others ( )
(please list .....)

QUALIFICATIONS GAINED IN FURTHER EDUCATION:

6 CSEs ( )
(please list .....)
7 GCE O-levels ( )
(please list .....)
8 GCSE's (post 1985) ( )
(please list .....)
9 A-levels ( )
(please list .....)
10 Others ( )
(please list .....)

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS HELD :

11 NNEB Diploma ( )
12 Advanced Diploma in ChildCare & Education(formerly DPQS) ( )
13 BTEC National Certificate in Caring Services (H&SC) ( )
14 BTEC National Certificate in Caring Services (NN) ( )
15 BTEC National Diploma in Caring Services (H&SC) ( )
16 BTEC National Diploma in Caring Services (NN) ( )
17 PPA ( )
18 Other . ( )
(please name .....)
.....
.....

FOR EACH QUALIFICATION HELD, LIST-

- the relevant number &
- the methods of study - full-time/part-time
- the start & finish dates
- your age at the beginning & end of the course

No.	F/T P/T	START	FINISH	B. AGE	E. AGE
e.g 1	F/T	09.72	07.74	14	16

ANY STUDY INCOMPLETE? (If so - why?)

.....

.....

ANY OTHER INFORMATION (OR EXPLANATION)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

KGW 28.10.96

APPENDIX 9

DETAILS OF WORK EXPERIENCE WITH CHILDREN

NAME : .....

JOBS HELD SINCE QUALIFICATION :
(Include summer, part-time and full-time jobs)

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

Job Title .....
Responsibilities .....
Start Date .....
Finish Date .....
Place of Work .....
Age of Children .....
Times Worked .....

IN-SERVICE TRAINING UNDERTAKEN :

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

IF IN SAME PLACE SINCE QUALIFICATION, LIST ANY CHANGES TO JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OR PROMOTION :

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

INTENDING TO TRAIN TO TEACH?

Yes ( )
No ( )
Not sure ( )

KGW 28.10.96

APPENDIX 10

WORK EXPERIENCE : JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SERVICE / SITUATION	JOB TITLE	DONE
PERSONAL	Work Experience School	
	Work Experience College	
	Babysitter	
	Childminder Assistant	
	Childminder	
	Mother	
	Mums & Toddlers Organiser	
	Mums & Toddlers Assistant	
	Mums & Toddlers Helper /Volunteer	
	Year Out	
SOC. SERVICES	Childminder Registered	
	Playgroup Leader	
	Playgroup Assistant	
	Playgroup Helper / Volunteer	
	Nursery Nurse Supply	
	Family Worker (NN) SS Day Nursery	
	Nursery Nurse Residential	
	Nursery Officer (pre 1990)(own room)	
	Nursery Officer Assistant	
	Nursery Officer Relief	
	Day Care Worker (post 1990)	
	Day Care Worker Senior	
	Day Centre Helper /Volunteer	
	Officer in C. Deputy	
	Officer in Charge	
	Unit Manager Acting	
	Unit Manager	
	Housemother Junior Assistant	
	Housemother Assistant	
	Housemother Deputy	
	Housemother Relief	
HEALTH	Health Care Assistant	
	Nursing Auxillary	
	State Enrolled Nurse	
	Midwife	
CHARITIES	Mobility Officer for the Blind	
	Technical Officer for the Blind	
	Rehabilitation Worker for the Vis Impd	

APPENDIX 11

WORK EXPERIENCE : JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SERVICE / SITUATION	JOB TITLE	
EDUCATION	Midday Supervisor	
	Ancillary Assistant	
	Ancillary Assistant SEN	
	Classroom Assistant	
	Classroom Asst. Helper / Volunteer	
	Nursery Helper / Volunteer	
	Infant Helper / Volunteer	
	Junior Helper / Volunteer	
	Nursery Nurse Supply	
	Nursery Nurse Nursery School	
	Nursery Nurse Nursery Unit /Dept.	
	Nursery Nurse Infant Sch/Dept. KS1	
	Nursery Nurse Junior Sch/Dept. KS2	
	Nursery Nurse Primary School	
	Nursery Nurse SENeeds / General	
	Nursery Nurse SENeeds / 1:1	
	Nursery Nurse SENeeds Special Sch	
	Teachers Aide SEN (Vis. Impair)	
	Trainee	
	Head of Nursery School	
	Schools Representative	
	TEFL Teacher	
PRIVATE	Nanny	
	Nanny Residential	
	Nursery Nurse P. Day Nursery	
	Nursery Nurse P. Nursery School	
	Ancillary Asst. P. Nursery School	
	Montessori Nursery Teacher	
	Day Nursery Assistant	
	Nursery Officer	
	Nursery Officer Relief	
	Day Care Worker	
	Day Care Worker Senior	
	Officer in C. Deputy	
	Officer in Charge	
	Unit Manager Acting	
	Unit Manager	

APPENDIX 11

WORK EXPERIENCE : INSET COURSES

TITLE - *EDUCATION BASED*	**DONE**
Art	
Art and the Early Years	
Block play	
Computer course(working with MY WORLD) (school based)	
Developing an approach to Baseline Assessment	
Dyslexia	
Early Years	
Early Years Curriculum planning	
Extending stories and songs	
IT and the Early Years	
Language- speaking and listening	
Language and speech difficulties	
Looking at Desirable Outcomes and enhancing learning opportunities for U5's	
Management planning	
Maths AT1	
Maths and the Early Years	
Music	
Outdoor play	
PE	
Planning for the Early Years Curriculum (M. Lally NTU)	
Quality in Schools	
Science and the Early Years	
Special Needs and the Early Years	
Speech and Language (Derbyshire Language Scheme) led by speech therapists	
Staff Appraisal	
DIPSI Drugs in Primary School Initiative	
Fire training	
First Aid - Basic Emergency Aid (9hrs)	
First Aid - First Aid at Work (30hrs)	
First Aid - Internal to school /personal	
Lifting	
Medical issues in school	
Portage training	
Specialist (Visual & Hearing Impairment)	

APPENDIX 12

WORK EXPERIENCE : INSET COURSES

TITLE - *SOCIAL SERVICE BASED*	**DONE**
Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC) Foundation course	
AIDS/HIV awareness	
Anti-oppressive practice	
Anti oppressive practice and Equal opportunities in practice	
Assertiveness	
Assessment skills	
Child Abuse	
Child protection courses	
Coping with grief / Helping children cope with grief	
Court Skills	
Drugs Awareness	
Effective presentation	
Equal Opportunities	
In touch with children (1 week)	
Integrated Learning services	
Managing Change	
Meeting the identity & cultural needs of children	
Quality care for pre-school children	
Recruitment and selection	
Reporting and recording	
Risk management	
Sexual Abuse	
Self esteem	
Supervision skills	
Time management	
Training the trainers (R.McC)	
Working with families	
Basic Playgroup -"How children play"	
Coping with special needs in the playgroup	
Learning through play	
Play	
OTHER SERVICES ETC	
Public one day courses at Nottingham Trent	

APPENDIX 12

QUALIFICATIONS

SCHOOL
School CSE
School GCE
School GCSE
School A-Level

COLLEGE
College GCE
College GCSE
College A-Level

CACHE / NNEB
NNEB Nat Certificate in Playskills
NNEB Nat Diploma
ADCE

BTEC / EDEXCEL
BTEC Nat Cert. HSC
BTEC Nat Cert. NN
BTEC Nat Dip HSC
BTEC Nat Dip NN

PPA /PLA
Pre-School Playgroups Association.

STA
Specialist Teacher Assistant

OTHERS

C&G Cert. in Learning. Support
Adult Teacher Training (Pt.1)
BA (Pakistan)
British Sign Language Level 1
RSA Typing (Variety)
RSA Banking/Accounting
Law (ILE Pt.1) A-Level =
Diploma In Midwifery
Hons degree History & Greek
Cert. Care & Ed of Deaf/Blind child
CACDP Level 1
BTEC Nat Cert. Science
OND Business Studies
C&G Cert. in Basic Skills
NVQ II Business Administration
State Enrolled Nurse
Mobility Officer (for the Blind)
Technical Officer (for the Blind)
NVQ I Business Administration
Cert. In Residential Care of Children.
NVQ IV Management of Care
NAMCW Cert.
Montessori Foundation Diploma
Access to Social Sciences & Humanities

APPENDIX 13

JOB TITLES DIVIDED BY SECTOR

PERSONAL / HOME

Work Experience School
Work Experience College
Babysitter
Childminder
Mother
Mums & Toddlers Organiser
Mums & Toddlers Assistant
Mums & Toddlers Helper /Vol
Year Out
Other (Brown Owl etc)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Childminder Registered
Playgroup Leader
Playgroup Assistant
Playgroup Helper /Vol
Nursery Nurse Supply
Family Worker SS Day Nury
Nursery Nurse Residential
Nursery Officer (room -1990)
Nursery Officer Assistant
Nursery Officer Relief
Day Care Worker (room+1990)
Day Care Worker Senior
Day Centre Helper /Vol
Officer in C.Deputy
Unit Manager
Chn HomeJunior Assistant
Chn HomeAssistant
Chn Home Deputy
Chn HomeRelief
Training Advisor NVQs

HEALTH SERVICE / CHARITIES

Health Care Assistant
Nursing Auxillary
State Enrolled Nurse
Midwife
Mobility Officer for the Blind
Technical Officer for the Blind
Rehabilitation Worker Vis Impd

EDUCATION

Midday Supervisor
Ancillary Assistant
Ancillary Assistant SEN
Classroom Assistant
Classroom Asst.Helper / Vol
Nursery Helper / Vol
InfantHelper / Vol
JuniorHelper / Vol
Nursery Nurse Supply
Nursery Nurse Nursery School
Nursery Nurse Nursy Unit /Dept.
Nursery Nurse Inf Sch/Dept.KS1
Nursery Nurse Jun Sch/Dept.KS2
Nursery Nurse Primary School
Nursery Nurse SENeeds / Gen
Nursery Nurse SENeeds / 1:1
Nursery Nurse SENeeds SpecSch
Teachers Aide SEN (Vis. Impair)
Trainee
Head of Nursery School
Schools Representative
TEFL Teacher

PRIVATE SECTOR

Nanny
Nanny Residential
Nursery Nurse P. Day Nursery
Nursery Nurse P. Nursery School
Ancillary Asst.P. Nursery School
Montessori Nursery Teacher
Day Nursery Assistant

INSET COURSES BY TYPE

EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Art
Art and the Early Years
Block play
Computer MY WORLD course
Dyslexia
Early Years
Extending stories and songs
IT and the Early Years
Language- speaking and listening
Language and speech difficulties
Makaton
Maths AT1
Maths and the Early Years
Music
Outdoor play
PE
Science and the Early Years
Special Needs and the Early Years
Speech and Language (Derbys.)

EDUCATION - MANAGEMENT

Devg approach to Baseline Asst
Early Years Curriculum planning
Looking at Desirable Outcomes
Management planning
Planning for the E Y Curriculum
Public 1 day courses at NTU
Quality in Schools
Staff Appraisal

HEALTH & SAFETY

AIDS/HIV awareness
DIPSI Drugs in Prim Sch Initiative
Drugs Awareness
Fire training
First Aid - B E Aid (9hrs)
First Aid - at Work (30hrs)
First Aid - school /personal
Lifting
Medical issues in school
Portage training
Specialist (Vis & Hear Impairt.)

CHILD PROTECTION

Child Abuse
Child protection courses
Court Skills
In touch with children (1 week)
Lincs Area Child Protectn course
NSPCC/NAI course
Risk assesst. & management
Sexual Abuse

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Anti-oppressive practice
Anti oppress prac & EO in prac
Coping/Helping childrenwith grief
Equal Opportunities
Fostering black chn
Meeting ident. & cult. nds of chn
Self esteem
Working with families

SOCIAL SERVICES - MANAGEMENT

Assertiveness
Assessment skills
Effective presentation
Integrated Learning services
Managing Change
Quality care for pre-school chn
Recruitment and selection
Reporting and recording
Supervision skills
Time management
Training the trainers (R.McC)

PLAY

Basic Playgroup -"How chn play"
Coping with SEN in playgroup
How Children learn
Learning through play
Play
Play therapy

INTERVIEW 1

1. What do you understand teaching to be about?

2. Why do you want to teach?

3. Are there any events or individuals you feel have influenced your decision to enter teaching

4. What do you feel you have gained from the CHE / HNC Course
   a) personally b) professionally

5. Are there any key issues in education and teaching about which you feel strongly?

INDICATIVE RAW TRANSCRIPT (ONE INDIVIDUAL)

1. I suppose really it's to transfer your knowledge to somebody else. I think as a teacher, especially nowadays you've got to have a lot of knowledge because of the national curriculum. You've got to be able to transfer that knowledge to the children, taking into account their age, ability and putting it over to them in the most fun way possible, to learn. I mean being in special needs I find that you've got to go over the same thing a lot of the time just to get through a basic concept. You've just got to make it, do it different ways, make it fun for them.

   (Do you think it's different in special needs and main stream?)

   Yes definitely, I've worked in both. There's a lot of pressure in special needs but there's certainly a lot more in main stream. I think the fact you've got larger classes and you've also got more mixed ability in main stream, I think you've still got to cover the national curriculum in both main stream and special.

2. I still feel tempted (to teach), I was a definite No to start with, but I've heard about this B.A. Hons. that Catherine is going on. There are a few of us that are interested in it and one of the students has come in today talking about a course at Leeds and apparently it's starting up this year. Personally I would prefer to wait until I'd done my year off for lots of reasons but knowing that it is a first year, from my experience with first years I would like to wait. But from what Claire has said you can actually, they seem very enthusiastic and they have actually said to go over once a term to get to know the place, to listen to a lecture. It does sound very interesting and yes I would be interested to do that and would like to then do a PCGE. Whether I am able of doing it? I'd have to find out, but yes I am still tempted.

   (So this is a part time one?)

   I think there's part time and full time places. I need to ring but unfortunately I haven't but I will get in touch and find out. I think it's part time, it's probably one day a week (Very quiet missed some) school to allow me the time
   But at the moment I just want to finish this course and spend next year looking. Apparently with this course, the HNC you could go onto the second year but with it just starting there isn't a second year, it would be worth waiting another year.

3. The head at my school who died unfortunately, a couple of days before, he'd put this idea into my head and obviously he thought I had the confidence to do it, or he had the confidence in me to do it I should say. I feel I want to do it for him as much as for me, he had a great influence on my whole life not just this last few months not just this particular decision but on a lot of things personal and career.

   (So you valued his judgement?)

   Oh definitely valued that, yes. There's also they've also just appointed in the school a new head and she was the deputy until last July and she's now returning and she is so, she wont replace him, nobody could but she's the nearest thing they'll get. She also encouraged me, she's a great one for doing extra training, I know she would be 100% behind me. And the other person is my sister, she thinks her little sister is capable of a lot more, she's always been there, with lots of problems I've had she's listened to me and encourages me. Those 3 people.

4. I suppose I feel that the fact that I've got nearly to the end, I'm sure I will get to the end now, it is an achievement that it's something that I didn't think I would do, I didn't think I was capable of doing, to get the grades I've got as well, it's boosted my confidence, in fact I think some of the assignments I've been able to do. I suppose a lot of the work I've done, because I've worked in mainstream and special for a long time I know a lot of the work that we've covered. It's been like a great confidence boost for me. Professionally I suppose the same thing really. I'd like to think that we're all going to gain ? within our placement within our schools, because a lot of work has gone into it, we deserve a little reward. OK the monies wonderful but as long as it's in my particular school I've been asked to take on a speech and language group because I've done this course. It's like OK I've done this so it's given me more responsibility so I think that's nice as well. Yes it's an achievement and I'm sure that one of the things I know is that I've become quite nasty tempered, I'm quite looking forward to becoming myself again in a few weeks time, my children are looking forward to that as well. Even the children in the class keep asking me 'when do you finish'? The 30th June you'll see a new Mrs.....; I shall have a smile on my face. You appreciate other things in life when you put yourself through two years like this, I think at the end of it you've got to give yourself something to look forward to which I have done with my children. I'm so looking forward to having that time with my children and that I think is something you learn through doing these courses, appreciating other things.

5. I do think the education system is working really well. I know a lot of nursery nurses do feel the same that we are undervalued a lot of the time. There are teachers out there who haven't really got the experience. In some cases, now that the cert. Ed. is no longer being taught it's B.Ed, there are a lot of us that have so much experience and this qualification that really I do feel strongly that sometimes we should be given the credit we deserve. I think the National

Curriculum is good, I think there should be a lot of parental involvement. I find the special needs schools don't have much parental involvement. Parents that come in, we have children in school who have various backgrounds it's usually children from middle class backgrounds whose parents that do come in to respond to things, the others unfortunately don't. I don't know what you can do to encourage that, at all. They won't even come in to discuss their children; they're coming in wanting to complain.

(Integration policy in Nottinghamshire?)

yes there's this Code of Practice that's probably going to start, I know there's one particular unit that may be closing down in Lincoln. A special unit, because of the Code of Practice. It's all right having this code of practice and keeping children in main stream, but you're putting more burden onto teachers and are they actually qualified and experienced enough to actually to cope with these?. It's such a shame because the children in our school, the fun they have they're taken out on so many trips. They have hands on, it's not all writing. I mean it's what they need where as unfortunately children left in main stream, I suppose there are advantages I'm sure what they are, but the main disadvantage is that they are they feel isolated whereas in our school they are all the same. They may be bottom of the class in main stream but top of the class in our school. They're so caring in our school we've got one particular class I love him dearly, he's been involved in many of my assignments. He came from one main school had a terrible reputation and he just has learning problems. He's a slow learner I suppose and he's in the same class as a boy with reading problems. He helps him, he doesn't ridiculing him, he's a really caring lad and it's really brought him out, he's really blossomed, whereas left in main stream he'd be not going to school or kicking and abusing. I feel strongly about special needs, I think special schools are important. Those that I don't agree with, on the subject of OFSTED, that's a farce and I think that those schools that were inspected at the beginning of all this were disadvantaged and those that are inspected now should come out with a brilliant OFSTED report because of all the people's advice. There's just no need for it. I mean I think there should be some form of inspection, but to be given months and months of notice. There used to be these inspectors and advisers that kept a check and schools and helped them and advised them rather than putting teachers through hell really. I don't agree with that there's a lot of money spent on that, I think it's unnecessary. My own children's school came top within .....shire, the poor head doesn't want it because he wants he actually wants the children to come to the school because its a lovely family orientated, well disciplined, happy little school. A village school and unfortunately people are ringing up saying can we come because you're top of the league table. It's not right, he doesn't like that. If it were at the bottom, you'd worry, yet when it's at the top; you can't win can you. So things like that I just think children should be disciplined have respect for their teachers everybody else around them and learn in a happy environment. That's the ideal world but unfortunately it doesn't exist.

ALL RESPONSES TO QUESTION TWO

Why do you want to teach?

1. Why do I want to teach? I didn't actually to start off with. I wanted to be a nurse and as I went to look at the hospital and realised that I just couldn't cope with it. Um and with working voluntary at the school I decided that um, I liked going in there and I liked what they were doing and I thought that, I prefer the younger children and I thought that I could perhaps make quite a good teacher because I've got the gift of the gab, I can talk to anybody. And I can relate to how they feel because I remember being at school and sitting there thinking I don't understand this and being too scared to ask and I want to be the type of teacher where they put their hands up and ask straight away and not really be too bothered. Um, I think it's experiences you have I mean I always had a nice time at school. I never, primary school especially I loved it. I loved it, I really enjoyed it and I think that's what it is. That's it really.

2. I've always wanted to teach, that, because I didn't do particularly well with the o levels well I like wanted to leave school basically. And I wanted to be a teacher for the deaf but I went into Nursery Nursing because it was 2 years and it was like you know what you're like at 16, it was like I want to do this. So I've always wanted to work with children and specifically deaf children. Or children with a hearing or visual impairment but as I've got older I've realised that I should have stayed on and done my O levels and A levels. Although it's not stopped me doing the jobs that I've wanted to do. It's just that you're not given the responsibilities that you would be as a teacher. So looking back on it I would have stayed on and done O levels or A levels, but it's always in hind sight you can say oh I wished I'd done this. So from the teaching aspect it's not stopped me doing what I wanted to do but obviously you've not been able to go any further in your career and obviously the financial rewards are not the same. And the reason why I'm not going onto University now is because I haven't got the o level Maths. and I don't particularly want to sit and do that one again and it's the taking the time out from not working. So they are the 2 main things, the Maths. and the financial

side of it really. But no, I've always wanted to teach, so. (Do you think it might change in the future?) Um, I think if I could overcome the O level Maths. then I would consider it um, but also it's the not having a guarantee of a job at the end of it. I mean I like the job that I'm doing at the moment and it's a safe job and it fits in with my son and things like that. So there's a lot of other things that come into it. But no I've always wanted to do it, work with children and teach, so.

3. Do you know I change my mind every single day. I really do. Part of me says just go for it, and like we've had teacher training students in and they've said you're good at your job why don't you do it, you should do it. And then part of me sort of, well I struggle over the assignments here, well I don't always struggle but I find it difficult to fit the time in and like recently married and it's sort of you know you want to sort of be spending time with your husband. And so like when he comes home, before, well before I was doing this I'd get home at half past 4 and I'd you know do a bit of tidying up and have to on the table and although that's not what he expects, he's now doing more of that than I am. And I think it's almost unf, I mean if I was coming home at 6 o clock when he comes home then we would share it automatically but when he's coming home, I'm getting home at 4 o clock or half past 4 and he's getting home at 6 o clock and I'm sitting there with books all over my head you know and pen and paper and scribbling away and than he has to come in and cook it just seems a bit unfair really. Because I'm doing something that I'm enjoying doing but it's sort of something that I know I've got to get done because this assignments got to be on whenever and so it's, that's difficult. So part of me sort of says well if I do this, if I finish this I'll have at least another 3 years and well OK you're doing it during the day so I know there would be work in the evening but it's sort of it's more like your job then isn't it really, if you're studying solidly for 3 years then I think well what if I give it up, give up the job and I start doing it and then I think well I can't cope with this, I can't cope with doing work every day then what happens, then what do I do. So part of me thinks you should quit now while you're ahead. You know you've done your HNC it'll be on your CV, it looks good for any jobs you apply for, you know you've done what you set out to do, quit while you're ahead and the other half of me says well I could earn that extra money and you could do this and, it's ever so difficult. And plus, yesterday my husband pointed out to me that if I decide to do teacher training then he's 32 now, so if I decide to do teacher training next year he'll be 33. So if I did 3 years he'll be, no, 37. 36/37 by the time I've finished, I think we will have children so if we have children we wont be having children til he's 37 and that's the first child and then it's sort of like. I mean I don't want to be old when I have children and I'm already 28 and it's like all that sort of thing, I hadn't thought about that til yesterday, so now I'm thinking about that and it's, it's very difficult. I'm really, I think, I think I feel, I mean I haven't got a Maths so that's another big issue as well. So I'm

thinking maybe I ought to wait and see how I feel at the end of next year. And then if I haven't got a Maths./, if I have to do my Maths. that's putting it off another year isn't it? So he'll be about 50 by the time we have children so um. So that's, so there's lots of issues there really. (Yes it sounds as if there are). But then it would be nice, I mean he's on quite good money at the minute so if he stopped, if he and he gets really stressed out about his job he's a salesman and like he works very hard at his job and he does come home really stressed out, so I suppose if I had a job that paid more money then we could afford to say well you know get a job that you're not going to get so stressed out about, you know. Do what you want to do. Whereas at the minute he could that but we might struggle a bit having had that money previously. So there's you know, loads of different issues. I mean I would think, I would like to do teaching and I think it would be a shame not to do teaching, but I can only see myself teaching nursery. I can't see myself, possibly reception, but I can't see myself doing like year 1, it's too structured for me really. Too set and too you know, you've got to do this and you know it's very much like that. I don't like that. I feel I really know the children, because we're part time we've got 52 children but I feel like I know them all. You know you get chance to talk to them and you know ask them about what they did at the week end and they get chance to tell you about, they got a new tape or a spice girls tee shirt. They've got chance to tell you that whereas in the class it's very much right assembly, right PE, break time off you go, lunchtime, going home, Bye. And you don't get chance to get sort of to get know them they're just sort of, this is the way I feel, they're more not numbers so much, but they're more that's the child and they can do this, this, and this. I'm sure if I worked in a, not reception but year 1, I'm sure I'd find you know, that it wasn't quite like that. I have worked in a year 2 class, with a one to one but that was very different because I was in and out the class room with her, she had behaviour problems so it was different and I felt the teaching was very strict and very, she was a good teacher but I don't feel as though she knew the children really. It was more like the yellow group, the red group, the blue group and the green group. You know. They seem to be very critical, teachers seem to be very critical of children, you know. We do a lot of work with self esteem and boosting their self esteem and sort of you know teaching them to stand up for themselves and if you don't like somebody playing with your hair in story time to say to them, you know and No I don't like that, to actually, whereas there it sort of, at schools it seems to be so much more of I don't know. No, No, No, don't do this, don't do that, rather than can you put the pencil away rather than don't throw the pencil. It's very much, you know, I don't know. Whether that's the nursery nurse side of me or whether it's just, I've been very lucky because I've worked with lots of different people and like especially when I worked at St Giles, I worked with a male teacher there who was just marvellous I learnt so much from him and I think, I mean I haven't had loads of different jobs but every single job I've learnt different things, (so you've built up a broad profile) yes so I think in that way, but I mean I learned so much from him and the way he was with the children and his attitude and his sort of, the way he

was with the parents, he was just wonderful really so kind and so calm and you know um. And I think that's, I suppose a lot of teachers go into one job and never work with any other people, do they? They work in, they, you know (they close the class room door and that's it). They don't see different ways of doing things to think oh I want to do that or I might try that with so and so you know. I don't know, but anyway.

4. Well I'm not going to say 'Cause I've always wanted to', cause that's a lie. It's only over the last sort of 3 or 4 years, wanting to work with children since I was about 7, but it's been sort of a gradual thing and now I really can't wait to get cracking on with it and make a success of it. When someone asks why you want to do something it's very difficult to explain why you want to do something and it's all cliché stuff isn't it? But I suppose I want to do it because it's a natural progression from what I've been doing and I feel hopefully, I will have a lot to give. At the moment I'm dealing with 3 children and I feel sort of stifled, I feel I could give more to more children at the same time. So that's really why I want to do it, just a natural progression. I know about the care side and now I want to know about the teaching side. I know it's going to be very, very hard work especially doing 4 years at University for a start of without even teaching. Yeah but I know I want to do it, it's been my ambition for a few years not since I was a kid. If I'd have done this when I was 18, thinking how I was when I was 18, I was a kid myself, no way I could have been a teacher then. I also feel better because you've been through life when you get to 31? And you've got your life experience to add to what you're trained to do which I think help as well. Primed and ready.

5. Well its hard cause I've changed my, well not changed my mind but I'm going to do something else next year. I don't know really, see how it goes. I went into school as a helper, sort of like placement from school. I've always enjoyed it. I've seen the nursery nurses at school and what the teachers do and basically we doing the same for less money. Some of the stuff they do I don't agree with so to be the teacher you do what you think, don't you? Well following the curriculum whatever, when someone starts telling you what to do you say what you think when you're that.. I can't sort of swap what I'm doing and as a nursery nurse you can't either. She has to do as she's told. It's very annoying sometimes?

6. I still feel tempted (to teach), I was a definite No to start with, but I've heard about this B.A. Hons. that Catherine is going on. There are a few of us that are interested in it and one of the students has come in today talking about a course at Leeds and apparently it's starting up this year. Personally I would prefer to wait until I'd done my year off for lots of reasons but knowing that it is a first year, from my experience with first years I would like to wait. But from what Claire has said you can actually, they seem very enthusiastic and they have actually said to go over once a term to get to know the place, to listen to a lecture. It does sound very interesting and yes I would be interested to do that and would like to then do a PCGE. Whether I am able of doing it? I'd have to find out, but yes I am still tempted.
(So this is a part time one?) I think there's part time and full time places. I need to ring but unfortunately I haven't but I will get in touch and find out. I think it's part time, it's probably one day a week (Very quiet missed some) school to allow me the time But at the moment I just want to finish this course and spend next year looking. Apparently with this course, the HNC you could go onto the second year but with it just starting there isn't a second year, it would be worth waiting another year.

7. *(Why your job and not teaching, you obviously wanted to work with children).* Yes that was the basic starting point for me, yes going back 30 years, the job I than took on 30 years ago was working with children, caring for children and then that job changed. I mean everything about it changed as well as the position I held changed. So then I mean if you look at me in the later stages then you have a staff team so that was training people constantly as well, so going back to the teaching so you've sort of got the staff team plus also the people you were working with. At that time it wasn't just children but it was children and their families and just adults as well. So I suppose teaching for me never really came into it at that point. It just became working with families, which was then involved with teaching the families how to cope and how to have life skills. *(You've actually got quite a lot of similarities with someone whose teaching, in the sense of the techniques that people use, but you're just doing it for a slightly different purpose.)* That's right and I think on this course as well, I've heard the girls talking who are actually assisting the teachers and they have the children that's probably got their problems and they find it really difficult then because they've got a real line, or they feel they have, because they can't interfere with home life. Whereas I suppose really for me it's easier really because... *(that's part of the job?)* Yeah.

166, Carlton Hill
off Celia Drive
Carlton
Nottingham
NG4 1FN
Tel 0115 911 9124

20th January 1997

Dear Sir or Madam

I would like to request a copy of your current prospectus (or '97-'98?) and any additional information relating to training to be a Primary Teacher.

I am particularly interested in the admissions policy relating to students holding NNEB diplomas; BTEC National and BTEC Higher National Diplomas in Childhood Studies as I am currently involved advising these type of students.

Yours faithfully

K. Wood (Mrs.)

6th March 1997

Dear Mrs. Dewart

I am currently researching new routes into Initial Teacher Education for a Ph.D, and am particularly concerned with the new BTEC HNC route for qualified Nursery Nurses.

I have received some general information which suggests the Scottish Office designates very different equivalencies to Nursery Nurse qualifications, to that in England and Wales.

I am particularly interested in the weighting given to the following four qualifications -

- CACHE Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB)
- CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education (ADCE)
- BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies
- BTEC Higher National Diploma in Early Childhood Studies

I would be interested in any information the Scottish Office issues to Initial Teacher Education establishments that informs their admissions policy for students with this type of qualification.

Yours sincerely

K. Wood (Mrs.)
Research Student

APPENDIX 19

	INSTITUTION	COURSES ON OFFER	OPTIONS
B38	Bishop Grosseteste C	BA/BSc HONOURS QTS (4 yrs)	Nursery & lower primary (nlp) A,Drama, E, G, H, M+Technology, Mu, RS, S, Upper primary (upr) A,D, E, G, H, M+Tech, Mu, RS, S,
B40	Blackburn C	BA HONOURS QTS (progression to relevant degree at St. Martin's UC)	Primary (3-7years)
B60	Bradford & Ilkley Comty C	BEd HONOURS (3/4 Year courses and nlp/upr)	Primary/Early Years Six subject route- L,M,S,A,Mu,D or L,M,S,H,G,RS Single subject route L & Literature, M,S
B66	Bretton Hall	BA HONOURS QTS (4 years)	Subject & Age range A+EYE, A+PriEd, E+ EYE, E+PriEd, Environmental Science+EYE, ES+PriEd, Mu+EYE
B72	U of Brighton	BA/BA HONOURS QTS	Primary PriEd-EY (3-8), PriEd-LY (7-12)
B78	U of Bristol	BSc HONOURS	Early Childhood Studies

B80	UWE Bristol	BA/BSc HONOURS QTS (4 years)	Primary Early Years P+A, P+BS,P+E, P+G, P+H, P+M Primary Later Years P+A, P+BS,P+E, P+G, P+H, P+M
C05	Homerton C	BEd HONOURS (4 yrs) (4-8 lpr/	BS+Ed, D+Ed, E+Ed, G+Ed, H+Ed, M+Ed, Mu+Ed, RS+Ed
C10	Canterbury Christ Church C of HE	BA/BSc COMBINED HONOURS (major / minor)	Early Childhood Studies with-Applied Social Sciences, A, BusS, E, EnvS, Fre,G, H, IT, M, Mu, Psychology, Radio, Film & Television Studies, RS,SpS, Statistics
		BA HONOURS QTS & specialism (4 yrs)	EYE (nlp), Special Educational Needs, Lower primary A, E, G, H, M, Mu, RS, S, SPS Upper primary A, E, G, H, M, Mu, RS, S, SPS
		BA/BSc JOINT HONOURS	Early Childhood Studies with - E, EnvS, Fre, G, H, IT, M, Mu,Psy, RFTS, RS, SPS, Stat
C50	Cheltm & Glous C of HE	BEd/Bed HONOURS (3yrs)	Primary Education EY,
		(2yrs)	Primary Education EY,

C55	Chester C	BEd HONOURS (4yrs)	Lower Primary Age A, B, D&TheatreS, ELit, G, H, MS, M, PE, T&RS
C58	Chichester Inst of HE	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Lower primary (5-8) S
D86	The U of Durham	BA/BA HONOURS	Childhood & Society
		BA & BSC HONOURS IN EDUCATION	Primary Teaching S
E42	Edge Hill U C	BA/BSc HONOURS QTS	Nursery/lower primary (nlp) A, DT, E, G, H, M, Mu, NaturalS, PE, RS
G56	Goldsmiths C (U of Lon)	BA HONOURS IN EDUCATION QTS	Primary *Early Years* Education + A, DT+Comp, E, Hum, M+Comp, PE, Sc, NurseryEd
K48	King Alfred's C of HE Winchester,	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Primary lpr A+Des, DT, D, E, G, H, HumMovSt, Mu, RS, SocialB
K84	Kingston U	BEd HONOURS	3-8 E/D, Mu, Sc, H+G, M+IT

L14	Lancaster U	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	PriEd (3-12) + E, G+OutdoorSt, H+RS, M+CombSt, PE, Sc+Tech, A
L24	Leeds, Trinity & All Saints U C	BA HONOURS ITT (4yrs)	Primary Education (3-8)+ E, H, PE, Theo
		BSc HONOURS ITT (4yrs)	Primary Ed (3-8)+ M, Sc+Tech
L27	Leeds Metropolitan U	BA HONOURS	Childhood Studies
		BEd HONOURS (3yrs)	Primary Education one from each list List A E, M List B DT, H, PE
L46	Liverpool Hope U C	BEd Honours (4yrs)	Nursery &lower primary A, E, EnvSt,G, H, HumAppB, IT, M, Mu, SpRecPE, Theo+RS
L51	Liverpool John Moores U	BA/BA HONOURS	Childhood Studies
L86	LSU C of HE	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Lpr A+Des, E, H, RS
		BSc HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Lpr BSc, G, M

M40	The Manchester Metropolitan U	BA/BA HONOURS	Early Childhood Studies
		BA/BA HONOURS QTS	Primary Nur/Inf E, G, H, M, PE, Sc, VisualA
N14	Nene C of HE	BA HONOURS QTS	Primary two from year list (4-7yrs) A, E, G, H, M, PE, Sc
N36	Newman C	BEd HONOURS	Primary (4-12yrs) one from list A+Des, BSc, ExpressiveE, G, H, M, PE+SpSt, Theo
		BA/BSc HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Primary (4-12yrs) one from list A+Des, BSc, ExpressiveE, G, H, M, PE+SpSt, Theo
N56	The NE Wales Inst of HE	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Education(Primary)+specialist yr E, G, H, M, Sc, VisA, W
N77	U of Northumbria at Newcastle	BA HONOURS QTS (2yrs) Post HNC/D	General Primary,
		BSc HONOURS	Health Sciences and Childhood Studies
N91	The Nottingham Trent U	BA/BA HONOURS QTS (3yrs) (4yrs)	Primary (5-11) PriEd PriEd

P60	U of Plymouth	BEd HONOURS	General Primary 3-8+ A+Des, ECS, E, G, H, M, Mu, PE, Sc, The+PerfSt
R24	U C of Ripon & York St. John	BA/BSc HONOURS ITT	Primary Ed (nlp)- DT+IT, ESt, Env+BSc, M, Mu, Theo+RS
		BA/BSc HONOURS ITT Prog (3-8)	EnvSc/Ed, DT/Ed, Theo/Ed
R48	Roehampton Inst London	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Early years of schooling 3-6 Teaching Studies + A,for Comm, DanSt, E, ELang&Ling, D&TheaSt, EnvSt, G, H, Mu, Sc+MSt, Scs, Tech, Theo+RS Lower primary 5-8 Teaching Studies + A,for Comm, DanSt, E, ELang&Ling, D&TheaSt, EnvSt, G, H, Mu, Sc+MSt, Scs, Tech, Theo+RS
S10	U C Scarborough	BA/BSc HONOURS Modular (3yrs)	Primary Education 3-11+ A+Des, BSt, M,Mu

S24	U C of St. Martin, Lanc	BA/BSc HONOURS QTS (Primary) (4yrs)	Nursery/lower primary (nlp) Education + A+Des, BSc, E, G, H, M, Mu, RS
		BA/Bsc HONOURS QTS (Pri/Sec) (4yrs)	Professional Studies + E, M, RS, ScEd
		BA HONOURS QTS Prof Studies for Primary Teaching (3yrs)	Lower primary teaching
S33	South Bank U	BEd/BEd HONOURS (2yr)	Teaching Studies Shortened Primary(Teaching Qual from own country or APL)
		(4yrs)	Primary
		(5yrs)	Primary -Mixed Mode
S76	Stockport C of F & HE	BA HONOURS	Professional Studies Early Childhood Studies
S81	Suffolk C	BA HONOURS (Modular)	Early Childhood Studies + ECE, CultSt, EnvSt, Ed, IT, LitSt, MedSt,Man, A+Des,BehavSt,BSc, BusSt, HumSc, SocPol (Check prospectus)
S84	U of Sunderland	BA/BA HONOURS QTS	Primary Education 2yrs, 3yrs

S96	Swansea Inst of HE	BA HONOURS EDUCATION	Primary Education 3-11
W20	The U of Warwick,	BA HONOURS QTS (4yrs)	Lower Primary A, E, M, Sc
W55	Westminster C Oxford	BEd HONOURS QTS (4yrs) (Ipr)	E, Fre, M, RS, SclnEnv
W80	Worcester C of HE	BA HONOURS QTS (3yrs)	Primary Early years,

Key to subject options on Nursery & Lower Primary training courses

+	and
Amer	American Studies
AppM	Applicable Maths,
AppSocSc	Applied Social Sciences
A	Art
A&Des	Art & Design
B	Biology
BSc	Biological science
Bus	Business
BusEd	Business Education
BusSt	Business Studies
Chem	Chemistry
ChildSt	Childhood Studies
CompSt/Sc	Computer Studies /Science
CStE	Creative Studies in English
DesSt	Design Studies
D&T	Design & Technology
Dan	Dance
D	Drama
ECS	Early Childhood Studies
EY	Early Years
EYE	Early Years Education
Econ	Economics
Ed	Education
Elect	Electronic(s)
E	English
ELit	English Literature
ESt	English Studies
Env	Environment
EnvB	Environmental Biology
EnvMan	Environmental Management,
EnvS or EnvSc	Environmental Science
Euro	European Studies
Fre	French
G	Geography
Geo	Geology
Ger	German
HP	Health Promotion
H	History,
HI	History of Ideas
Hum	Humanities
HumResMan	Human Resource Management
I	Irish
ILS	Information & Library Studies
IT	Information Technology
IntPol	International politics
Ita	Italian
L	Language
L&Lit	Language & Literature
LY	Later Years
Law	Law
Ling	Linguistics
M	Maths

APPENDIX 20

Man	Management
Med	Media Studies
ModLang (Fre)	Modern Languages (French)
ModLang (Ger)	Modern Languages (German)
ModLang (Spa)	Modern Languages (Spanish)
Mu	Music
nlp	Nursery & Lower Primary
Out	Outdoor Education
P	Philosophy
PE	Physical Education
Phy	Physics
Pol	Politics
Por	Portugeuse
Pri	Primary
Psy	Psychology,
RFTSt	Radio, Film & Television Studies
RS	Religious Studies
Rus	Russian
S or Sc	Science
SP	Social Policy
Soc	Sociology,
Spa	Spanish
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SpS or SpSc	Sports Science
Stat	Statistics
Tech	Technology
Tex	Textile Design Studies
TheaSt	Theatre Studies
Theo	Theology
Tra	Training
upr	Upper Primary
VisA	Visual Arts
W	Welsh
WH	Welsh History
Wom	Womens Studies

Medieval **E**, **P**ure **M**, **S**ocial **P**hil &**A**pplied □**E**thics, D&TheatreS, ELit, Modern H, **d & Society Community Studies F**itness & **H**ealth, HSt, M/Stat, **T**hird **W**orldSt, SocHProcesses, NaturalS, **Technical Education** European Langs, NurseryEd ovementST, ELit & Lang, Supporting Special Learning Needs **Mar**keting, Soc+Soc Anthropology. HumMovSt, SocialB AppSocSc, **Org**anisationSt, M+CombSt, FoodSt, HumAppB, SpRecPE, Industrial DT+EdRecMan, conversion), **Ear**thSc, HumBSt, HRDev, I**Sys**tems, ExpressiveE, General Primary, (HE/Tex) **Health Sciences** The+PerfSt AH, ContH, Cultural St, for Comm, ELang&Ling, AppConsSt, Afor Comm, HeaSt, NatResSt, Psy, SocPol&Ad, AppCommSt, ScTechSoc E&CWIthLit, FinancialSt, BioChem, CommEd, CultSt, LitSt, , BehavSt, HumSc, +C, Sc+Env, IslamicSt, RacCulEth, ScInEnv, E+LitSt, HeaSt, EconSocHPol

APPENDIX 20

	Course code	Qualification
Anglia Polytechnic University (A60)		
Tel: 0845 2713333		
Education Studies and Early Childhood Education	X300	3FT deg BA
University of Wales, Bangor (B06)		
Tel: 01248 382017		
Medieval and Early Modern History	V130	3FT deg BA
Barnsley College (B13)		
Tel: 01226 216171/216172		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
University of Bath (B16)		
Tel: 01225 323019		
Early Childhood Studies	013X	2FT HND
Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies (B35)		
Tel: 0121 604 1000		
Early Childhood Studies	013X	2FT HND
Blackpool and The Fylde College (An Associate College of Lancaster University) (B41)		
Tel: 01253 352352		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
Bradford College (An Associate College of The University of Bradford) (B60)		
Tel: 01274 753333		
Early Childhood Studies	X310	1FT deg BA
Primary Education with QTS - Adv St of Early Yrs	X100	4FT deg BA
Bridgwater College (B70)		
Tel: 01278 441234		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
University of Brighton (B72)		
Tel: 01273 600900		
Primary Education-Early Years (3-8) with QTS	X100	4FT deg BA
University of Bristol (B78)		
Tel: 0117 928 9000		
Early Childhood Studies	L5X3	3FT deg BSc
University of the West of England, Bristol (B80)		
Tel: 0117 9656261/3443333		
Accounting and Early Childhood Studies	NX43	3FT deg BA
Business Decision Mathematics and Early Childhoo	GX32	3FT deg BSc
Drama and Early Childhood Studies	WX4H	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Environment	FX83	3FT deg BSc
Early Childhood Studies and History	VX19	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Information Systems	GX53	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Languages	RX93	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Linguistics	QX13	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Sociology	LX33	3FT deg BA
Early Years (QTS 3-8 years)	X100	4FT deg BA
Economics and Early Childhood Studies	LX1H	3FT deg BA
Education and Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Health Science and Early Childhood Studies	BX9H	3FT deg BSc
Law and Early Childhood Studies	MX13	3FT deg BA
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (B94)		

Tel: 01494 522141

Early Years Studies with Management	2N3X	2FT HND

Canterbury Christ Church University College (C10)

Tel: 01227 782490/423/420

American Studies and Early Childhood Studies	QX33	3FT deg Mix
American Studies with Early Childhood Studies	T7X3	3FT deg Mod
Art and Early Childhood Studies	XW31	3FT deg Mix
Art with Early Childhood Studies	W1X3	3FT deg Mod
Business Studies and Early Childhood Studies	XN31	3FT deg Mix
Business Studies with Early Childhood Studies	N1X3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood St and Heritage Conservation	XW39	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St and Sport & Exercise Science	CX63	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood St with Heritage Conservation	X3W9	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St with Sport and Exercise Sci	X3C6	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies and English	XQ33	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and English in Intl Comm	XP39	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and French	RX13	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Geography	LX73	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and History	XV31	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Information Tech	XG35	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Music	XW33	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Psychology	XC38	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Radio, Film & TV St	XW36	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Religious Studies	XV36	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Science (Environ)	XF39	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies and Social Science	LX33	3FT deg Mix
Early Childhood Studies with American Studies	X3T7	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Art	X3W1	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Business Studies	X3N1	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with English	X3Q3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with English in Intl Com	X3P9	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies with French	X3R1	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Geography	X3L7	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Health Studies	X3B9	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with History	X3V1	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Info Technology	X3G5	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Music	X3W3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Psychology	X3C8	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Radio, Film & TV St	X3W6	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Religious Studies	X3V6	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Science (Environ)	X3F9	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies with Social Sciences	X3L3	3FT deg Mod
Early Years Education (nursery/lower primary)	X100	4FT deg BA
English in Intern Commun with Early Childhood St	P9X3	3FT deg Mod
English with Early Childhood Studies	Q3X3	3FT deg Mod
Geography with Early Childhood Studies	L7X3	3FT deg Mod
Health Studies and Early Childhood Studies	BX93	3FT deg BA
Health Studies with Early Childhood Studies	B9X3	3FT deg BA
Heritage Conservation with Early Childhood St	W9X3	3FT deg Mod
History with Early Childhood Studies	V1X3	3FT deg Mod
Information Technology with Early Childhood St	G5X3	3FT deg Mod
Music with Early Childhood Studies	W3X3	3FT deg Mod
Psychology with Early Childhood Studies	C8X3	3FT deg Mod
Radio, Film & TV Studies with Early Childhood St	W6X3	3FT deg Mod
Religious Studies with Early Childhood Studies	V6X3	3FT deg Mod
Science (Env) with Early Childhood Studies	F9X3	3FT deg Mod
Science of the Environment and Early Childhood S	FX83	3FT deg Mod
Science of the Environment with Early Childhood	F8X3	3FT deg Mod
Social Science with Early Childhood Studies	L3X3	3FT deg Mod
Sport and Exercise Sci with Early Childhood St	C6X3	3FT deg Mod

University of Central England in Birmingham (C25)

Tel: 0121 331 5000

Early Childhood Education Studies	X310	1FT deg BA

University of Gloucestershire (Formerly Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education) (C50)

Tel: 01242 532825

Primary Education: Early Years (2 years)	X121	2FT deg BEd
Primary Education: Early Years (3 years)	X103	3FT deg BEd

Chester (A College of The University of Liverpool) (C55)
Tel: 01244 375444

Early Years (General Primary)	X100	4FT deg BEd

University College Chichester (C58)
Tel: 01243 816002

Primary Education (Adv Study of Early Yrs)	X121	3FT deg BA

City of Bristol College (C63)
Tel: 0117 904 5000

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Colchester Institute (C75)
Tel: 01206 518000

Early Years Childcare and Education	X310	2FT Fdg FD

Coventry Technical College (C84)
Tel: 024 7652 6700

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Croydon College (C92)
Tel: 020 8686 5700

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Dearne Valley College (D22)
Tel: 01709 513101

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

University of Derby (D39)
Tel: 08701 202330

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA

Doncaster College (D52)
Tel: 01302 553610

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

University of East London (E28)
Tel: 020 8223 2835

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA

Edge Hill College of Higher Education (A higher education institution accredited by Lancaster Univ.) (E42)
Tel: 01695 584274

Early Childhood Studies and Critical Criminology	XM39	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and English	QX33	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Social Psychology	CX83	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Sociology	XLH3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Women's Studies	XL39	3FT deg BA
Social Work Studies and Early Childhood Studies	L501	3FT deg BA

University of Exeter (E84)
Tel: 01392 263035

Early Childhood Studies (Truro College)	543X	2FT HND

Goldsmiths College (University of London) (G56)
Tel: 020 7919 7282

Education (Primary-Early Years)	X123	3FT deg BA

University of Greenwich (G70)
Tel: 020 8331 8590

Care: (Early Years)	115L	2FT HND
Primary Teaching St (Early Childhood) with QTS	XX13	4FT deg BA

Grimsby College (G80)
Tel: 01472 311222

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education (G90)
Tel: 01483 448500

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Halesowen College (H04)
Tel: 0121 550 1451

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Henley College Coventry (H21)
Tel: 024 76 626300

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Hertford Regional College (H37)
Tel: 01992 411400

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Hopwood Hall College, Middleton/rochdale, Lancs (H54)
Tel: 01706 345346

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Hull College (H73)
Tel: 01482 598744

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

King Alfred's Winchester (K48)
Tel: 01962 841515

Early Years (1pr) (4 years QTS)	X1X3	4FT deg BA
Educ St (Early Childhood) & Tour & Heritage Mgt	XNH8	3FT deg BA
Educ St(Early Childhood) & Tour & Heritage Mgt	XN38	2FT Dip DipHE
Education St (Early Childhood) & Social Care St	XLJ5	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and American St	XTH7	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and Archaeology	XFH4	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and Business St	XNH1	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and Leisure Mgt	XN32	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and Psychology	XCJ8	3FT deg BA
Education St (Early Childhood) and Sports St	XLH3	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood)	X310	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood)	X346	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) & Am Studies	XT37	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) & Psychology	XCH8	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) & Sports St	XLJ3	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) & Theol & RS	XV36	3FT deg BApHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) & Theol & RS	XVHP	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Dance St	XWH5	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Dance St	XWJ5	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Drama St	XW34	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Drama St	XWH4	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and English	XQ33	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and English	XQH3	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and History	XV31	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and History	XVH1	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Sports D	XN3F	3FT deg BA
Education Studies (Early Childhood) and Sports D	XNJ2	3FT deg DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood)& Archaeology	XF34	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood)& Business St	XN31	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood)& Leisure Mgt	XNH2	2FT Dip DipHE
Education Studies (Early Childhood)& Soc Care St	XL33	2FT Dip DipHE

Leeds Metropolitan University (L27)
Tel: 0113 283 3113

Early Childhood Education (2 years)	X111	2FT deg BAQ
Early Childhood Education (4 years)	X110	4FT deg BAQ
Early Years Practice	X310	2FT Fdg FD

University of Lincoln (L39)
Tel: 01482 440550

Early Childhood Studies	X900	3FT deg BA

Liverpool Community College (L43)
Tel: 0151 252 3000

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Liverpool Hope (L46)
Tel: 0151 291 3295

Advanced Early Years/Bus & Community Enterprise	NX1H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Bus & Community Enterprise	NXC3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Drama & Theatre Studies	WX4H	1FT Cer BA
Advanced Early Years/Drama & Theatre Studies	WXK3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Education Studies	X300	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Education Studies	X301	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Eng Lang St (Int Students)	QX93	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Eng Lang St (Int Students)	QX9H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/English	QX33	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/English	QX3H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/English Language	XQ33	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/English Language	XQ3H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/European Studies	RX93	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/European Studies	RX9H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Family Studies	XL35	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Family Studies	XL3M	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Geography	XF3V	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Geography	XFH8	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Health	BX9J	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Health	BXX3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/History	VX1H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/History	VXC3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Human & Biological Sciences	CX13	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Identity Studies	XLH5	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Identity Studies	XLJ5	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Music	WX3J	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Music	WXH3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Psychology	CX8H	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Psychology	CXV3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Religion & the Professions	XV36	3FT deg BA
Advanced Early Years/Religion & the Professions	XV3P	1FT Cer CerHE
Advanced Early Years/Sociology	LXH3	1FT Cer BA
Advanced Early Years/Sociology	LXJ3	3FT deg BA
Advanced Study of Early Years (3-8)	X121	4FT deg BA
Information Technology/Advanced Early Years	XG35	3FT deg BA
Information Technology/Advanced Early Years	XG3M	1FT deg CerHE

Llandrillo College, North Wales (L53)
Tel: 01492 542338

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

The Manchester Metropolitan University (M40)
Tel: 0161 247 2000

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Medieval and Early Modern History	V130	3FT deg BA
Primary	X120	4FT deg BA

Newcastle College (N23)
Tel: 0191 200 4000

Early Years	543X	2FT HND

Newcastle-under-Lyme College (N24)
Tel: 01782 715111

Early Childhood Studies	013X	2FT HND
Early Childhood Studies	113X	2FT HND

Newman College of Higher Education (N36)
Tel: 0121 476 1181

Early Years Education Studies	X310	3FT deg BA

University College Northampton (N38)
Tel: 0800 3582232

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (3-8 yrs)	X101	3FT deg BA

Northbrook College Sussex (N41)
Tel: 01903 606060

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

The North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (N56)
Tel: 01978 290666

Early Childhood Studies	X162	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Education	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Health Studies	XB39	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Psychology	XC38	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Education	X311	3FT deg BA
Education (Primary) with QTS	X103	3FT deg BA

University of North London (N63)
Tel: 020 7753 3355

Early Childhood Studies	X945	2FT deg FD
Education (Primary and Early Years)	X120	4FT deg BEd

North Tyneside College (N72)
Tel: 0191 229 5000

Early Childhood Years	543X	2FT HND

Norwich: City College A Regional College of Anglia Polytechnic University (N82)
Tel: 01603 773136

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

The Nottingham Trent University (N91)
Tel: 0115 941 8418

Advanced Early Years	X100	4FT deg BA

The Oldham College (O10)
Tel: 0800 269 480/0161 785 4053

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Oxford Brookes University (O66)
Tel: 01865 483040

Anthropology/Early Childhood Studies	LXP3	3FT deg Mod
Biological Chemistry/Early Childhood Studies	CXR3	3FT deg Mod
Biology/Early Childhood Studies	CXD3	3FT deg Mod
Business Administration & Mgt/Early Childhood St	NXG3	3FT deg Mod
Business Statistics/Early Childhood Studies	GXJ3	3FT deg Mod
Cell Biology/Early Childhood Studies	CXCJ	3FT deg Mod
Cities and Society/Early Childhood Studies	LXJ3	3FT deg Mod
Combined Studies/Early Childhood Studies	XYH0	3FT deg Mod
Communications/Early Childhood Studies	PX93	3FT deg Mod
Complementary Therapies-Aromath/Early Child St	BXH3	3FT deg Mod
Computer Systems/Early Childhood Studies	GX4Y	3FT deg Mod
Computing Science/Early Childhood Studies	GXL3	3FT deg Mod
Computing/Early Childhood Studies	GXK3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood St/Envt Des & Conservation	FXX3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood St/European Culture and Soc	RXX3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Ecology	CXX3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Economics	LXC3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Educational Studies	XX33	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Electronics	HXQ3	3FT deg Mod

Early Childhood Studies/English Studies	QXH3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Environmental Chemistry	FX13	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Environmental Policy	KXH3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Environmental Sciences	FXY3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Exercise and Health	CX63	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Food Sci & Nutrition	DXP3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/French Studies	RXD3	4SW deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Geographic Info Systems	FX8J	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Geography	LXR3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Geotechnics	HXG3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Geratology	BXR3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/German Studies	RXG3	4SW deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/History	VXC3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/History of Art	VXH3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Hospitality Mgt Studies	NX2J	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Human Biology	BXC3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Information Systems	GXNJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Intelligent Systems	GXR3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Japanese Studies	TXF3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Law	MXC3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Mapping and Cartography	FXWJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Marketing Management	NXNJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Multimedia Systems	GXKJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Music	WXH3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Palliative Care	BXRJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Performing Arts	WXK3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Philosophy	VXM3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Physical Geography	FXW3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Planning Studies	KXK3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Politics	LXF3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Psychology	CXV3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Publishing	PXK3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Rehabilitation	BX73	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Religious Studies	VXQ3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Retail Management	NXN3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Sociology	LX3J	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Software Engineering	GXP3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Spanish Studies	RXK3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Sports and Coaching St	CXQ3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Statistics	GXH3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Telecommunications	HXPJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Theology	VXPJ	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Tourism	NXV3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Transport and Travel	NXX3	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies/Water Resources	HXFJ	3FT deg Mod

University of Plymouth (P60)
Tel: 01752 232137

Early Childhood Studies	X302	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies 3-8 yrs	X121	4FT deg BEd

Roehampton University of Surrey (R48)
Tel: 020 8392 3232

Art for Public Space and Early Childhood Studies	XW31	3FT deg BA/BSc
Biogeographical Studies and Early Childhood Stud	FX8H	3FT deg Mod
Biological Anthropology and Early Childhood St	CX93	3FT deg BA/BSc
Biology and Early Childhood Studies	XC31	3FT deg BA/BSc
Business Studies and Early Childhood Studies	XN31	3FT deg BA/BSc
Childhood & Society and Early Childhood Studies	X346	3FT deg BA/BSc
Classical Civilisation and Early Childhood St	QX3H	3FT deg Mod
Cultural Studies and Early Childhood Studies	VX93	3FT deg BA/BSc
Dance Studies and Early Childhood Studies	XW35	3FT deg BA/BSc
Drama & Theatre Studies and Early Childhood Stud	XW34	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St & English Language and Ling	QXJ3	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St and English as a Foreign Lang	QX33	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St and Social Policy & Admin	LX43	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood St and Theology & Religious St	VX63	3FT deg BA/BSc

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Education	X347	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and English Literature	QXHH	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Environmental St	FX93	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Film & Television St	XP33	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and French	RX13	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and French Studies	RXC3	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Geography	LX73	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Health Studies	XBH9	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and History	VX13	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Human & Social Biol	CXD3	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Leisure Management	XN32	3FT deg BA/BSc

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Key to qualifications: FT = full time, SW = sandwich, EXT = extended, ACC = accelerated

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	Course code	Qualification
Roehampton University of Surrey (R48)		
Tel: 020 8392 3232		
Early Childhood Studies and Music	XWJ3	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Natural Resource St	XD34	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Philosophy	XVJ5	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Psychology	CX8H	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Social Anthropology	LX63	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Sociology	LX33	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Spanish	XR34	3FT deg BA/BSc
Early Childhood Studies and Sport & Exercise Sci	CX63	3FT deg BA/BSc
Human Geography and Early Childhood Studies	LXT3	3FT deg BA/BSc
Primary Education (Early Childhood St) (3-8)	X1X3	3FT deg BA
Sheffield Hallam University (S21)		
Tel: 0114 2255555		
Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Years Educ with QTS (Info & Comm Tech)	XG15	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (Advanced Option)	X121	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (Design & Tech)	XJ19	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (English)	XQ13	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (Geography)	XF18	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (Mathematics)	XG1D	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education with QTS (Science)	XF10	3FT deg BA
Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology (S23)		
Tel: 01743 342342		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
St Martin's College, Lancaster: Ambleside: Carlisle (an Accredited College of the Univ of Lancaster) (S24)		
Tel: 01524 384444		
Advanced Study of Early Years Ed (lpr) (3-8 yrs)	X121	3FT deg BA
Advanced Study of Early Yrs Education (3-11 yrs)	X101	3FT deg BA
Advanced Study of Early Yrs Education (3-11 yrs)	X102	3FT deg BA
Somerset College of Arts and Technology (S28)		
Tel: 01823 366366		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
South Birmingham College (S29)		
Tel: 0121 694 5002		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
South Devon College (S32)		
Tel: 01803 406406		
Early Years Care and Education	BX71	3FT deg FD
South East Essex College (S43)		
Tel: 01702 220400		
Early Years	013X	2FT HND
St Helens College (An Associate College of Liverpool John Moores University) (S51)		
Tel: 01744 733766		
Early Childhood Studies	013X	2FT HND
Stockport College of Further & Higher Education (S76)		
Tel: 0161 958 3100		
Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND
Professional Studies (Early Childhood Studies)	X310	3FT/4FT deg BA

Stranmillis University College: A College of Queen's University, Belfast (S79)
Tel: 028 90 381271

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA

Suffolk College An Accredited College of The University of East Anglia (S81)
Tel: 01473 296369/296500

Applied Biology and Early Childhood Studies	CX13	3FT deg BSc
Applied Biology with Early Childhood Studies	C1X3	3FT deg BSc
Business Management with Early Childhood Studies	N2X3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies	X310	2FT Dip DipHE
Early Childhood Studies	X346	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Business Management	NX23	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Environmental St	XF39	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Hist & Theory of Art	VX33	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and History	VX13	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Human Biology	XB31	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Information Tech	XG35	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Literary Studies	XQ32	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Management	XN32	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Media Studies	XP33	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Psychology	XC38	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Applied Biology	X3C1	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Business Management	X3N2	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Environmental St	X3F9	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Fine Art	X3W1	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Garden Design	X3K3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Hist & Theo of Art	X3V3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with History	X3V1	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Human Biology	X3B1	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Information Tech	X3G5	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Literary Studies	X3Q2	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Management	X3NF	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Media Studies	X3P3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Psychology	X3CW	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Social Policy	X3L4	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies with Sociology	X3L3	3FT deg BA
Environmental Studies with Early Childhood St	F9X3	3FT deg BSc
Fine Art and Early Childhood Studies	EX13	3FT deg BA
Fine Art and Early Childhood Studies	WX13	3FT deg BA
Fine Art with Early Childhood Studies	E1X3	3FT deg BA
Fine Art with Early Childhood Studies	W1X3	3FT deg BA
Human Biology with Early Childhood Studies	B1X3	3FT deg BSc
Information Technology with Early Childhood St	G5X3	3FT deg BSc
Media Studies with Early Childhood Studies	P3X3	3FT deg BA
Psychology & Sociology with Early Childhood St	C8XH	3FT deg BSc
Psychology and Early Childhood Studies	CX8H	3FT deg BSc
Social Policy and Early Childhood Studies	LX43	3FT deg BA
Sociology and Early Childhood Studies	LX33	3FT deg BSc
Sports Studies with Early Childhood Studies	C6X3	3FT deg BSc

University of Sunderland (S84)
Tel: 0191 515 3000

Early Childhood Studies (Non QTS)	X310	3FT deg BA
Primary-Early Years Education (3-8 years)	X121	4FT deg BA

University of Wales Swansea (S93)
Tel: 01792 295111

Early Childhood Studies	L5X3	3FT deg BSc

Tameside College (T10)
Tel: 0161 908 6789

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

Trinity College Carmarthen (T80)
Tel: 01267 676767

Early Years Education	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Years Education and Education	X312	3FT deg BA

Walsall College of Arts and Technology (W12)
Tel: 01922 657000

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

The University of Warwick (W20)
Tel: 02476 523723

Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA

Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa and Moreton Morrell (W25)
Tel: 01926 318000

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

West Herts College, Watford (Associate College of University of Hertfordshire) (W40)
Tel: 01923 812565

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

University of Wolverhampton (W75)
Tel: 01902 321000

Combined Degrees -(Early Childhood Studies)	BCF0	3FT deg Mod
Early Childhood Studies	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Education Studies	XXH3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and English	XQH3	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Psychology	XCH8	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies and Special Needs	XL35	3FT deg BA
Health Sciences and Early Childhood Studies	BXX3	3FT deg Mod
History and Early Childhood Studies	VXC3	3FT deg BA
Religious Studies and Early Childhood Studies	VXP3	3FT deg BA
Sociology and Early Childhood Studies	LX33	3FT deg BA

University College Worcester (W80)
Tel: 01905 855111

Early Childhood	X310	3FT deg BA
Early Childhood Studies	005L	2FT HND
Early Childhood Studies	L500	1FT deg BA
Primary - Early Years	X121	3FT deg BA

Worcester College of Technology (W81)
Tel: 01905 725555

Early Childhood Studies	005L	2FT HND

Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education (Y80)
Tel: 01723 372105

Early Childhood Studies	543X	2FT HND

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Key to qualifications: FT = full time, SW = sandwich, EXT = extended, ACC = accelerated

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19th November 1998

Dear Colleague

Having recently attended the "Training to Work in the Early Years, Developing the Climbing Frame" conference in London (14.10.98), I would very much welcome your input on how you feel the suggested recommendations relate to two aspects that have emerged as part of my research.

In the last two years I have been engaged in research concerning the route that Early Years workers take in order to enter teaching. The practitioners involved have all been qualified nursery nurses or classroom assistants, engaged in further study at FE level whilst still employed. I have tracked a small group of these practitioners throughout their period of study, and through entry onto a BA degree course, focusing on an understanding of their point of view. The next stage is to examine the issues raised from the 'providers and policy makers' point of view.

Two particular aspects have emerged as significant. The first is the idea of 'voice' in terms of Early Years workers having a story to tell that is uniquely theirs and a strong desire to share that story with others. The other aspect concerns the different status attached to 'knowledge of children' and 'academic knowledge' and the way this issue is reflected in the creation of training routes.

I would be grateful if you could find time to answer the following two questions, either by letter or email, relating to the recommendations offered in Abbot & Pugh's recent book - "Training to Work in the Early Years, developing a climbing frame"

1. To what extent do you consider that -
   a) the framing of the recommendations has been influenced by the 'voice' of the Early Years worker?
   b) future policy decisions possibly based on these recommendations, should take account of the 'voice' of the Early Years worker?

2. How do you see the recommendations addressing the status of different types of knowledge -
   a) in terms of qualification for Initial Teacher Education?
   b) in terms of relevance to practice in schools and nurseries?

With many thanks in anticipation

Karen Wood
Research Student
tel: 0115 941 8418 ex 6766
email karen.wood2@ntu.ac.uk

APPENDIX 22

Dear Colleague

I would like to make an appointment to talk with you in September about your role as a 'provider' of Initial Teacher Education.

In the last two years I have been engaged in research concerning the route that Early Years practitioners take in order to enter teaching.
The practitioners involved have all been qualified nursery nurses or classroom assistants, engaged in further study at FE or HE level whilst still employed. I have tracked a small group of these practitioners throughout this period of study and since their entry onto the BA degree course here, in September 1997. I have collected questionnaire and interview data from them, examining their understandings and feelings about teaching and the study route they have undertaken. Obviously this data is focused on understanding the 'receiver's' point of view. The next stage is to examine the issue from the 'providers' point of view.

To this end I am approaching colleagues who may, as a result of their roles within the Faculty have come into contact with the individual students in either a management or teaching capacity.

I am anxious to book appointments for early to mid September before I leave for my summer break at the end of July. I have included a draft list of questions that could form the basis for the discussion. The discussion / talk should take about half an hour and at present the
9th-11th, 14th and 16-18th of September are available.

I am aware how difficult it is to arrange times to meet like this, so if you would prefer instead to give detailed answers by email rather than in an interview situation, then that too would be perfectly acceptable.

Thanks in anticipation
Karen

Questions for 'providers' of Initial Teacher Education

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the research. Please focus on the group of questions most pertinent to your role within the Faculty. Although it is intended that the interview / talk be taped, obviously all data collected (including the email responses) will be confidential.

Karen Wood
July 1998

As a manager

- What are your views on the recruitment of non-standard entry students whose background is in the Early Years context?.
- Have you had any management involvement in the recruitment process? In what ways has this affected your views?
- What do you think are the financial implications for providing opportunities for this group of students in ITE?
- What issues do you see arising from the new TTA requirements for these students?

As a teaching tutor

- Were you aware that you may have taught Early Years practitioners in your teaching groups?
- What types of experience do you understand they might bring with them to the course?
- Can you identify how this expertise, in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding, might relate to their academic levels?
- What particular contribution do you feel this type of student might make to a teaching group?
- How would you adapt your planning and teaching to utilise the expertise of these students in your group?

INTERVIEW 2

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a follow-up interview. It is intended that the interview will be taped and last for about half an hour.

1. What were your first impressions of the course in terms of -
   - the place?
   - the people (staff & students)?
   - the workload (amount and level of work)?

2. How has your previous experience prepared you for the University based part of the course concerning written tasks?

3. How has your previous experience influenced the practical tasks required in teaching sessions?

4. How has your previous experience influenced you during the "school experience"

5. What aspects of your transition from HNC/CHE student to ITE student have been problematic?

6. What aspects have you found particularly rewarding and fulfilling?

7. Are there any parts of the experience of entering NTU as an ITE student that you would like to be able to change?

EARLY YEARS' PRACTITIONERS - A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

In order to protect confidentiality the four explorers details are expressed in general terms below.

The youngest student had worked for four years in three jobs mostly with an SEN focus within the Education sector. She had both school and college qualifications and had taken some INSET courses relating to SEN.

Another student, the oldest, had only school based qualifications and had worked as both an au-pair and nanny for over five years in six different jobs, all with families in the private sector. As a consequence she had only been able to access first aid training as an additional course which she had organised for herself.

The student with the most qualifications, both from school and college, also had been able to undertake a large number of INSET courses. She had worked in a range of sectors but had remained in one school for the seven years prior to coming to do the university course where she had been given increasing levels of responsibility.

The remaining student had both school and college based qualifications and had attended the most number of INSET courses. She was the most senior of all the students in her position in school, having worked in two jobs over ten years. She also had a specialist interest in SEN.

EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS - INDICATIVE RAW TRANSCRIPT

Group Interview

Why do you want to teach?

a) Well when I first started my job as a Nursery Nurse I was a general Nursery Nurse and then as time went on I took on more and more responsibility until in the end I was actually running the pre-school and I knew my own classroom and prepared for the children and run it really as a teacher would have run it. Um.

b) Quite similarly, developed so far as a Nursery Nurse, through which was given more responsibility and more and more to do in terms of planning and involvement with children and sort of whole class stuff, quite a lot. I just thought well I might as well go and do the job that and get the salary, go and do the training to do the job and get the salary for it. You're doing as many hours really.

c) Yeah, basically I mean I've just, I've put here that I think I can do it because I was being like a mini-teacher before. I mean I've worked with special needs for the majority of my time so I was doing all the planning, I was doing the I.E.P.'s, following work through making sure it shows progression, talking to parents. So you know although I only say twelve children rather than thirty two but I just, for me personally I just feel it's the next step on from being a Nursery Nurse cause we just can't get any higher. There's no ladder to climb, once you're a Nursery Nurse, you're a Nursery Nurse and that's it and you just can't get any further. (some are happy doing that aren't they?) No it wasn't, I wasn't, towards the end it wasn't enough for me. It was, I feel I needed to get my teeth into something. (I got really bored with it.) Yeah. It just, I know I wasn't getting, it was, I was getting bored because you know when your alarm goes off in a morning and you like press it onto snooze for the fourth time it's just like, it just wasn't getting me out of bed in a morning. Do you know what I mean? Like it did in the beginning. So I think if I didn't go on to do this I'd seriously have to consider doing something else, you know. Perhaps education based but I couldn't stop as a Nursery Nurse.

Are there any events or individuals that influenced your decision to enter teaching?

a) Yes for me it was the first head teacher that I ever worked for because when I first started running the pre-school the head did one session, they had a supply teacher in to do the second session and I did the third session and then gradually I was weaned on to do more and more pre-school until in the end obviously the head didn't do any sessions, the supply teacher didn't do any sessions and I took it over. And it was my head then that said to me you know really you ought to be seriously considering teacher training and to be quite honest up until that point I was quite, I think I'd only been qualified a couple of years so I was still extremely content in my job, although I was taking on more and more responsibility um, that I hadn't really considered teacher training myself and it was then that I started looking into it as to what it would actually entail and what qualifications I would need in order to be able to go and do it. And at that point I was willing to pack in full time and follow on. Obviously not immediately but I kept thinking back to what she'd said then. That well maybe I had got more to offer and I was wasted in what I was doing and the staff were extremely supportive as well so at the time I was at school to say yes go for it, so.

b) Mine was with staff, just the confidence they had in me when I was in the classroom. Just the things I was expected to, not expected to do but sort of involved in doing, they'd say you know you really ought to think about going on, so.

a) Because you don't just turn in to do your job either when you want that little bit more, do you. You know you stay on, you're involved in fund raising events after school events. You're there before time in a morning (It's 110% commitment really isn't it?) parents evenings you're there, one of the later ones to leave.

c) For me initially it was my grandma she um, my grandma she was a previous Nursery Nurse and she's retired now and she said, she says that I could. At the time I didn't believe her but she said that I could be so much more than just a Nursery Nurse because although we know being Nursery Nurses there's a lot more and my grandma does but she obviously knows how we all get treated how Nursery Nurses are regarded within the school structure and luckily for me I worked at a brilliant school that just, I was one of the teachers as far as the kids were concerned and I was always referred to as you know Miss Holmes in the Library, you know, um the teacher in the library. There was never a difference really and the kid's eyes but I know you don't get that in a lot of school. So I mean I was really lucky in that sense, but then it was my head teacher that actually gave me the final. But he said, he said that he knew I'd got it in me.

He said I know you can do it and I think hearing that from him, being head teacher, I believed him whereas I perhaps, I didn't disbelieve my grandma but I thought you know it's my grandma she's being nice, you know what I mean. But yeah it was Jim who did it in the end, he was the one who pushed me to go on the HNC course in the first place and gave me time off to do it and stuff. (So you've all had supporting people in positions of authority as well. They knew the job, they knew you) Yeah (So you believed them, you trusted them, sort of thing) And my school, actually paid the star course was the introduction wasn't it, so that was already funded but a lot of the people, just us two that had it funded by the school. I had to pay for my own (The HNC) Yeah but at the time (But they gave you time off) Yeah at the time um, our school budget had been cut way below what Jim expected and he says Um the only way, he'd love to give me time off but he just can't afford he can't afford to pay me for the time I have off. So I said well if he's prepared to give me the time off I'm prepared to take a bit of a salary cut and pay my own course. It's you know, give and take. (So there's been a bit of sacrifice for all of you to actually get here in a way, it's been quite hard?) Yeah, and also now (Yeah because you've given up work). But this has been our one and only route, certainly from my experience because going back in time like I said I'd only been in the job say a couple of years when my head teacher, the first head teacher I ever worked for cause I ended up working for three different heads in the time that I was there. But it's taken all this time to actually be able to get onto a course and I actually went to Bishop Gropt? College and they, with portfolio and examples of work and such that I'd done with children and they just didn't want to know. But that's so,

b) But Nursery Nurses are so, we believe there's never such a thing that you're only just a Nursery Nurse, well you're a Nursery Nurse, you know that that can't be true but across the board it's so low thought of and I, here, lecturer's here I think they have got really bad opinions about Nursery Nurses. And I cringe in a lot of lectures when they say um, assistant or I know you are an assistant but you've got a title and that means so much more than 'auxiliary' and one of them blurted out the salary just a mere eight thousand a year and I felt like saying 'Excuse me, you know its not just eight thousand pounds', but just that you feel so low, so low there's such a lot of stigma (Status yeah)

a) We're valued by the school but I know that doesn't always happen?

(I wonder how much that the fact that you three managed to get through is partly down to you've all said you were in good schools, where there was lots of support and how many people like you there are out there who happen to be in a bad school or a school that can't physically support?)

a) But then that's also a problem with the system because Universities will not take on with an NNEB and I think as an NNEB you've got far more background to go into teaching than if you've got an o level in Biology or what have you and I think they should start making allowances if you're already in the profession already and you've had all that years experience you should be, it should be taken into consideration.

(*So from that you're all saying that you gained something from doing that extra bit after your NNEB originally. Your STA, NNEB, HNC) Yeah, but it knocked a year off your degree didn't it?* Yeah *but I mean how did that help you personally?) Did you begin to believe these people?*

a) It gave me confidence that I could tackle doing the degree, the work. And you were less frustrated in your work because you felt that although you'd still got your job you were progressing, it was a stepping stone forward that yes, you know (You'd taken action it was positive) Yes.

c) I know when I started the HNC, I started it in mind that knowing that it would lead onto this degree course, but I don't think it was like until the final six months you know the last six months of the second year that it actually hit me that I might actually have to follow this through, I might have to do it. Because you know two years that's a long time you know I'll think about it nearer the time and it just flew.

a) But certainly as at school age I would have never of sort of dreamt that I could have possibly have achieved going to University. Going to University just seems like status.

b) And even know don't tend to refer, well I don't refer to it as University. Well you're one in five percent of the population now aren't you? It's college. Weird isn't it? Yeah (I did as well, I still say I'm going to college, even when I'm coming here, 'cause it was a Poly. when I trained).

So professionally what did those courses do for you along the way? (Because personally they've obviously done something for you academically because you started to believe that it was going to be possible).

a) I don't think, me personally it hasn't developed I'm doing exactly the same now even on teaching practice as I was doing as a Nursery Nurse. I'm approaching things in the same way, saying things in the same way. Looking at the wider picture.

b) Which in some respects that can be a disadvantage because you look at things so widely and like so many factors, you can't get focused, yeah. It really is a hindrance (because you're used to being able to juggle all those things aren't you, you've had to watch that one and you've got to do this and

yeah) and sort of evaluating as you go along as well that little bit so therefore that child needs that.

c) You do it all the time don't you?

a) So like when you're writing an essay it's not necessarily, well it has got a beginning and a middle and an end, but like probably like your middle chunk you're evaluating as you're going along so therefore when you come to your evaluation/conclusion to a certain extend quite a bit of it is already evaluated.

(Because you're used to doing it, on your feet almost?) Yeah.

b) Whereas a lot of students at the same, in our year are at level, are at a level, not at our level so they're only sort of, not everybody but I'd say the majority of them they're only able to focus on the one thing and only see that one as a small picture as opposed to that in the big context of everything else. Since I've come across in schools, worked in schools we feel likes it's hindered us some what haven't we? having experience coming here.

Where there key things issues in education that you actually brought with you, things that you, I mean you'd mentioned that you'd done special needs you'd been involved with special needs were those things that you brought with you that you wanted to explore further or you wanted to find out more about or?

c) Not necessarily find out more about because I've done it for the last four years so, but I like special needs, I really enjoyed doing the type of work that I was doing. So I just see my special needs as always being with me and going into my teaching and you know how you like (it's your roots isn't it) you visualise you role in a school, well mine could be as a special needs co-ordinator and I'm quite happy with that cause I feel I've got the knowledge in all the different routes that you take.

b) You've already done three years so you can't.

a) But that's not offered in the fourth anyway so.

b) I mean we've all had such a big background. I've, you've done special needs as well haven't you? I've done special needs as well and part of that implementing it into the school when the Code of practice first came out so you feel like you know it like the back of your hand.

a) Whereas mine was a different slant to that, it was general Nursery Nursing then a focus in pre-school and then.

c) I don't know I feel that, I don't feel like I'm bringing anything to follow up. All I'm, to me this is just a piece of red tape that I've got to get over to get

back into doing what I know I can do. And it's just something (You don't feel you're doing it deeper?) I feel I'm doing it for myself and there's a real aim for me going to do it but I haven't come away from many lectures thinking that was it. Yeah I haven't, hand on heart there are not many lectures that I have found anything (*that's changed your ideas?) (Or challenged your ideas that's said hang on a minute you might actually have...)*

b) No nothing and when it refers to your how it's influenced your philosophy, like at the end of an assignment or whatever, rightly or wrongly it's not affected my philosophy. It's very established already. So it is difficult. (*So that must be really hard?*) Yes and as well this year more so, but certainly for me with it being key Stage 2 as opposed to Key Stage 1, which is where all my experience has been it's been a totally new field. So although it was KS2 children I still felt that I took my background to that classroom and the way that I approached things was, alright the activity was at the level for the children and the way that you spoke to the children but your underlying approach was still no different for me of dealing with infants, dealing with juniors and that was still as effective with those junior children although I know that it was quite a niggle with, for my placement. That I'd got that sort of background and it wasn't always appropriate for juniors because their approach was different. (*I'm surprised they found that it was, because I mean I trained with Infants and I've taught mostly sixteen to forty year olds)*

b) It's the placements isn't it?

c) In my last school, my last TP they were just so glad that I'd got this extra bit that they'd not got to keep an eye on me, I'd not got anybody *(they'd not got to wean you almost into it?,* Yeah. Some see it as a threat and that's the experience that Rachel and I both had.

a) No I didn't, mine was really good. They were just so glad that I could come in

b) dead right, Yeah. That I could have the whole class and read a story and keep them all engrossed, while Mary went out to talk to a parent or you know just little things and you know and I knew that they trusted me as well because I'd not got you know, the head coming into me or just be in the room while I was there if my teacher had to go out or. It was really nice to know that they trusted me at such an early stage. Because you're only there six weeks, which isn't long. Not long at all for them to get to know you and for them to get to feel that you can be trusted with their children, who are their responsible for.

Libraries &
Learning
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