

**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION STUDIES AS AN EMERGING  
SUBJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**The construction and definition of university knowledge**

**STEPHEN WARD**

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**School of Education, Bath Spa University**

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The construction and definition of university knowledge**

**Abstract**

Until recently Education Studies formed the theoretical grounding for teacher training. Its subject content and methods were derived during the 1960s from the foundation disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, History and Philosophy of Education in Bachelor of Education Degrees. Recent years have seen the rapid expansion of non-teacher-training undergraduate Education Studies as a free-standing degree subject with some 7,500 students in about fifty institutions in England and Wales. The thesis explores the ways in which undergraduate Education Studies has been defined and is viewed as emerging university knowledge in the context of the postmodern university in the higher education market. As a study in the sociology of knowledge, it examines the development of Education Studies through interviews with subject leaders and senior managers in nine higher education institutions in England and Wales. The implications for the future of the subject and its academic community are discussed.

The research data indicate that a range of Education Studies curricula have developed idiosyncratically in different institutions. Content is frequently defined as being in contrast to antecedent or concurrent undergraduate teacher-training courses and the academic rationale is often subordinate to managerial priorities and market forces. Theoretical frameworks are rarely well articulated and are often derived *post hoc*, rather than as academic principles to guide the selection of content. The role of the foundation disciplines is sometimes inexplicit and ambiguous and the focus is frequently drawn from the contingent expertise and career interests of individual staff. There is a perception that Education Studies prepares students for careers other than teaching, although examples are rarely articulated.

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- 1 Towards a theoretical framework for undergraduate Education Studies
- 2 Transcripts of interviews
- 3 Analysis of each interview set

## Chapter 1

### Aims, rationale and background

#### Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the aims, methods and structure of the thesis. The academic background for the study at the end of the chapter includes an account of the author's experiences as a subject leader for Education Studies.

Undergraduate Education Studies originated in the 1960s and 70s as the theoretical basis for teacher training in Bachelor of Education Degree courses (Richardson, 2002). During the last ten years it has grown remarkably rapidly as an undergraduate university subject in its own right, independent of teacher training. While there is a long tradition of Masters-level study of Education, only a handful of UK institutions ran undergraduate Education Studies until the expansion beginning in the late 1990s. The number of students registered for the subject in the UK rose from 4,285 in 2001/2 to 7,725 in 2003/4 (HESA, 2003, 2005). With growth on this scale it is argued that it is appropriate to regard undergraduate Education Studies as a new, non-professional university subject.

While the numerical growth can be easily quantified, the qualitative question of how the subject has developed as a type of university knowledge is less visible. The motivation to carry out an investigation was derived from the author's perception that there is a variety of curricular forms for Education Studies. At the time of beginning the study in 2004 there was no national network for those developing undergraduate Education Studies and the subject appeared to be developing independently and exclusively in different institutions. To uncover the nature of the subject and the grounds for its different formulations appeared to be both interesting and important to the academic health of Education Studies.

## **Aim of the thesis**

The thesis examines the question as to how undergraduate Education Studies has emerged in its current form as a university subject, exploring the ways in which it has been shaped by an interaction of influences which are historical, ideological, political and economic. The investigation is framed by the following:

- the role of Education Studies in the context of the modern/post-modern university
- university knowledge and the role of the state
- the relationship of Education Studies to its parent subject, teacher training
- theoretical frameworks for the subject
- vocational aims for the subject

The scope of the thesis is limited to knowledge in the subject as it is conceived by university academics.

## **Rationale**

As Education Studies continues to develop in universities, there is a continuing need for reflective discussion of its nature, aims and content. The thesis is intended to offer a theoretical means for analysing and understanding the curriculum for the subject. It does this by providing an analysis of the factors which have shaped its development to date by locating it within the overall context of higher education knowledge in the modern/postmodern university and by an analysis of its relationship to teacher training.

In the 1960s teacher training was based upon a theoretical framework drawn from the contributory disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and the History of Education. How the new Education Studies employs these methods is problematical and the study is intended to inform those constructing and developing a curriculum for the subject by helping them to reflect upon the theoretical framework for the subject.

The vocational aims of university knowledge are currently a matter of political and academic debate. In the definition of Education Studies as an academic or non-professional subject distinct from teacher training, its vocational outcomes become problematic. The study offers an analysis of the ways in which the vocational dimensions of the subject are perceived and it is intended that these should assist subject leaders in considering the aims of the subject.

The study is intended to support the development of a common language between academics for the discussion of Education Studies and to assist course leaders in planning the vocational aims for the subject.

Barnett (2005) argues that the university curriculum is currently under-investigated and under-theorised. The thesis is intended to make a contribution to the overall knowledge of higher education by providing an example of the ways in which a new subject has developed.

### **Theoretical perspectives**

There are three main theoretical elements which are required to inform the development of Education Studies: the context of the postmodern university and mass higher education; the sociology of knowledge; the historical context of the subject in teacher training and theoretical frameworks for Education Studies. These are discussed through an analysis of the literature on each of the topics in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The conclusion to each summarises the ways in which the contents of the chapter inform the analysis in the dissertation.

First it is recognised that the subject is developing within the context of the recent expansion of higher education in the UK and the dramatic changes in the nature of universities which this has entailed. A particular feature of Education Studies is the issue of academic freedom in relation to the state definition of teacher training. The context is also a time of upheaval in assumptions about the nature of higher education knowledge itself and this is relevant to a subject which is newly defining its parameters. In order to illuminate this discussion, Chapter 2 provides a historical analysis of the development of the university and university knowledge in relation to

the state and the economy and discusses the concept of ‘academic freedom’. Section 1 traces the formation of the nineteenth century European modern university on which much higher education in the UK has been based. Section 2 reviews the so-called ‘postmodern’ context and changes to university education at the end of the twentieth century. The chapter examines the ways in which knowledge is defined through the political and institutional context in which it is located.

The second theoretical perspective in the study is the social and cultural influences on the development of university knowledge. Education Studies is currently being defined by academics and a selection from the literature on the sociology of knowledge informs the ways in which the subject might be defined according to the individual interests of academics or the academic community. In its retreat from the vocational outcomes of teacher training Education Studies might be defined as an academic subject free from vocational constraints. This raises the question of the place of the subject in the perceived hierarchy of academic subjects: whether it is viewed as high status and non-vocational, or low status and vocational. Chapter 3 provides a summary of some of the main theories in the sociology of knowledge which inform the analysis.

The third theoretical element is the historical origins of the subject in teacher training. Education Studies was the academic underpinning to teacher training in the 1960s, but the growth of state intervention saw teacher training become progressively de-theorised. Chapter 4, Section 1 gives a historical account of the developments in teacher training and the ways in which the new Education Studies has been developed in response to state control of teacher training. The second section explores the possible theoretical frameworks for Education Studies and the epistemological issues in the subject’s knowledge, particularly in relation to the contributory disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and the History of Education, its role in professional preparation and as a critique of education policy and practice.

### **Empirical methods**

The body of the thesis is a two-part empirical investigation of Education Studies in higher Education institutions in England and Wales. The first part is a survey of

university websites which provides an overall picture of the variety of curricular content in Education Studies at the time (July 2004). The second, and the more substantial, is a series of interviews in nine selected institutions with Education Studies subject leaders and faculty senior managers. The analysis of the interviews provides evidence for identifying a pattern of developments in the subject in the different institutions. Comparisons are made between the different cases and a series of conclusions is drawn.

The methods used in the study are described and discussed in Chapter 5 which includes an analysis and evaluation of the pilot interviews. Chapter 6 offers the data from the analysis of university websites. The main interview data are presented in Chapter 7. The analysis is structured under five themes with a separate section on each. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the findings and suggested possibilities for future research.

The concluding Chapter 8 is a discussion of the findings, relating them to the salient points in the literature and their relevance to the thesis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the research findings and considers their implications for the future of the subject.

Appendix 1 is an example of a theoretical framework for Education Studies depicting the course content at Bath Spa University as illustration of the author's vision of the subject. Appendix 2 is the anonymised transcript of each of the interviews. Appendix 3 comprises the initial analysis for the interviews from each of the nine institutions.

### **Academic background and context of the research**

The initial reason for the study was the author's interest in the development of the subject from his own perspective as the leader of the new Education Studies course at Bath Spa University (BSU). The following account of his experiences of the origins and the growth of the subject at Bath Spa is offered for two reasons. First it explains the author's motives for undertaking the study; second, it provides a detailed example of one instance of the subject's development. It is intended to furnish the reader with a grasp of some of the typical factors which contribute to the developments and which

can be compared with the features described by interviewees in case studies in the research.

The role of the author is a significant feature of the study and will be discussed further in the methodology (Chapter 5). Together with colleagues in the University, he has been responsible for the development of the subject at Bath Spa University and edited a book for a national publisher (Ward, 2004) to which School of Education members contributed. The author is also a founder and Chair of the British Education Studies Association, a newly-formed network for academics involved with non-teacher training Education Studies. Some of the data in the dissertation are drawn from members of that network. Research participants are therefore familiar with his role at Bath Spa and in the Association. As will be shown in Chapter 5, this has a significant bearing on the research methods. The following is an account of the development of Education Studies at BSU.

Bath Spa University, formerly Bath College of Higher Education, is typical of post-war teacher-training institutions which diversified from teacher training to a wider range of degree subjects during the 1980s. With BEd degrees formerly awarded by the Universities of Bristol and Bath, the 1980s diversification brought a change of awarding body to the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). Taught-degree awarding powers were awarded in 1992 with ‘university’ title in 2005. With this background of different awarding bodies, the institution, like others, has a depth of experience of course planning and change. The new degree awarding powers brought both the opportunity for, and a particular interest in, rapid and radical change in programmes.

By 1997 the institution had a large undergraduate primary teacher training degree with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a secondary PGCE teacher training programme. A small primary PGCE course of 45 students was also included. 1995-96 had seen a sequence of Ofsted inspections of primary undergraduate teacher-training which had given the providers a largely clean bill of health (Ofsted, 1996). The then Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, was said to be dissatisfied with this outcome and ordered a second round of primary teacher training inspections with a more rigorous framework, the so-called ‘Primary Follow-up Survey’ (PFUS) (Ofsted,

1999). The institution was one of the first to have its small Primary PGCE course inspected under this framework and it was found to be ‘non-compliant with the Secretary of State’s criteria for initial teacher training’. The consequences of such a judgement were, and still are, highly threatening to an institution’s funding from the Teacher Training Agency (TTA<sup>1</sup>). At that time teacher training still was a major element in the institution’s funding stream and its removal would have had serious consequences. A later re-inspection found the course to be compliant and the threat was removed.

However, the experience brought the realisation that Ofsted inspections could have a serious effect on funding and steps were taken quickly to help to preserve the institution’s teacher education numbers from such threats. Some 600 student fte numbers in the undergraduate QTS course were potentially threatened by the new inspection regime. The Education Studies degree was born as part of a primary ‘3+1’ degree plus PGCE programme to avoid this threat. The four-year degree with QTS would be replaced by a three-year combined honours degree with Education and a second subject followed by progression to a primary PGCE teacher-training course. The place on the PGCE course was guaranteed to those who graduated, offering a secure four-year programme with QTS. So Education Studies at Bath Spa originated as a means of evading Ofsted inspection of the undergraduate course. The PGCE programmes, of course, were still subjected to inspection, but a substantial proportion of the student numbers, funded by the Higher Education Funding council for England (HEFCE), were protected.

While the threat to funding from Ofsted had been the original motivation, other benefits quickly became evident. For example, the training salary of £6000 was introduced in 1999 for PGCE students. In 2001 when tuition fees were introduced, PGCE trainees were exempted and still received the training salary. These improved the programme’s standing in the market. The 3+1 also offered students increased flexibility within the programme and in their career choice. While the QTS degree

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<sup>1</sup> The Teacher Training Agency was re-named ‘The Training and Development Agency for Schools’ (TDA) in 2005. In this study the term TTA is used because all the references to its work and literature are from the period before its re-naming. On the occasions where there is reference to its current action, the term ‘TDA’ is used.



committed them to a vocational outcome, the 3+1 allowed them a change of direction at the end of the degree. It also offered them a far wider choice of modules and content than had been available in the QTS programme. And it was the liberation from compliance with teaching standards (TTA, 1998) that proved to be the most substantial benefit of the change for both students and staff.

It was necessary to construct the new subject, Education, to form a part of the combined honours degree. It was an interesting experience for the planning team to sit down in 1998 with a blank sheet to create a subject that would be suitable study for those who were to enter teacher training, but would not be teacher training in itself, and would not need to comply with the TTA standards. In reality, there were both constraints and influences. The constraints were first that the subject could only be a combined subject because, at the time, a requirement for entry to a primary PGCE course was degree level study in a subject in the primary curriculum. So students had to take such a second subject with Education. Second, it had to be taught by staff who had previously worked in the QTS degree. An influence was the small International Education subject which had been designed in 1993 to offer diversification from teacher training in the event of numbers declining, but also to engage staff in a wider study of education than teacher training. So this small core of staff was able to join the planning and its modules were available as options for the Education Students. In 2001 the two subjects merged formally into a single subject, but it is important that it was possible to inject from the beginning this broader view of the subject.

The planning team worked for a year to draw up the programme and there were some interesting developments in the team. The task was complex because, on the one hand it was necessary to provide for those who were progressing to teaching. And this seemed for some of the team to be an important matter, because the course would be for, and marketed to, those who would have entered a primary QTS course. So there was a strong element that felt that the QTS experience should be replicated with modules about the curriculum and teaching. On the other hand, a new subject was to be designed and it would also be for those who might not be interested in teaching and there were those, particularly those from International Education, who were anxious to make the subject more diverse. The relationship to teacher training, then, was a controversial factor in the discussions.

Of course, the individual interests of the staff were also critical. Those who had developed International Education were keen to see their work extended to the larger number of students on the new programme. Those who had come from the QTS teaching perhaps felt threatened by areas of knowledge with which they were unfamiliar and wished to restrict the subject to what they knew. Another interesting feature was that some of those from the QTS course found it difficult to shake off the constraints of the teacher-training framework. For example, it took time for some to be persuaded that the mathematics curriculum need not be compulsory. Staff appointments to the QTS degree had included those with recent and relevant teaching experience in the National Curriculum subjects, and this imposed some limitations on the range of content.

In all, though, the experience was an energising one in that, through discussion, colleagues were able to devise a curriculum which met both the needs of those who would be teachers and the wider interest. Individuals were able to discover a range of interests and knowledge which they had not taught before, but which offered a different vision of Education from teacher training. The advantage of creating the subject from the teacher-training numbers was that the student numbers were large, some 200 in each year, and it was easy to offer a wide choice of modules. Students were therefore able to select from those modules which were close to the teacher training curriculum, such as *Learning in Science*, or *Understanding Classrooms*, and those modules which had a wider view, such as *Education for the Future* or *Education in the Pacific Rim*.

The expectation had been that those students who were intent on teaching and the PGCE course would select those modules which appeared to be closer to the teaching agenda. However, this proved not to be the case and some of the most popular modules with future teachers have been those with an international content or broader outlook. On reflection, the concerns about the students' need to see the course as the replacement for a teacher-training course were misplaced and the view of Education Studies as a subject with broader ambitions has grown over the years. Along with that have grown large numbers of students who are interested in alternative careers to teaching, and the subject has now established itself as an entity independent of teacher

education. Since the growth in numbers of students who do not wish to teach, and the change to the regulations for teacher training removing the need for undergraduate study in a school subject (TTA, 2002), single honours Education, including International Education, has been introduced.

The planning for the new subject was completed in 1998-99 and at that time there was no obvious network of contacts for undergraduate Education Studies. The sense was that it was necessary to derive the subject *de novo* from the staff resources available and without other models to compare it with. It is a part of the findings in the research carried out here that most of the other subject leaders were working in isolation in a similar way. Again, a part of the rationale for the research was to uncover the experiences of other subject leaders involved in a similar process.

## **Conclusion**

This descriptive account has been offered as an example of the kind of constraints, influences and thinking behind the origins of one example of undergraduate Education Studies. The institutional context of an Ofsted failure combined with a vision of an alternative means of teacher education produced this particular version of the subject. Further details are discussed in Chapter 8 which also provides an account of the theoretical framework for the subject and the ways in which Education Studies and professional training are seen to relate.

The account is intended also to provide a context for comparison with the case study interviews in Chapter 7 in which it will be seen that institutional contexts, staff interests and ideological perceptions of the subject intertwine to create the different versions of the subject.

## Chapter 2

### **The historical background to the development of university knowledge**

#### **Introduction**

The central theme of the study is the emergence of Education Studies as an example of university knowledge in England and Wales. The subject is developing at a time when universities are changing politically and economically, and the nature of knowledge in universities is under discussion. In order to understand the institutional and political effects on growth of the subject, it is necessary to formulate an account of the historical background to the university as an institution and to university knowledge. This chapter examines the development of the university and university knowledge as the context in which the subject has grown. Section 1 traces the development of knowledge from its religious origins in the medieval universities to the principle of reason as the basis for knowledge in the modern university. The second section considers the development of the post-modern university in the context of mass higher education and the effects of that phenomenon on the nature of knowledge.

Academic freedom and the role of the state in defining university knowledge is a theme throughout the chapter. The role of the state is especially important in the case of Education Studies. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the subject has largely grown from the context of a high level of state control of teacher training and it will be shown that this feature has had a powerful effect upon academics' perceptions of the new Education Studies. The history of British higher education is also important to the thesis. In particular the relative status of vocational and non-vocational university education is relevant to the analysis of interviewees' perceptions of the role of Education Studies.

The university is a historically international phenomenon and there is an interesting literature on the role of the university in the global knowledge economy. However, much of it is beyond the needs of this study which is limited to institutions in England and Wales. The account contains some references to the international literature to

demonstrate the ways in which universities in England and Wales have developed along the lines of a combination of the European and US models.

## **Section 1: The development of the modern university: knowledge and the state**

### **Pre-modern origins of the university**

The term ‘university’ derives from the Latin *universitas*, meaning ‘a community’ and the notion of a universal kinship of scholars underlies the original concept of higher education. Haddad (2000) explains that the medieval European universities which began in Paris and Bologna in the thirteenth century were internationally linked, borderless institutions sharing knowledge across Europe. This was made possible by two characteristics of the time: the relative weakness of national frontiers allowed academics to interact freely across geographical areas and the use of Latin as a *lingua franca* enabled easy communication. There appears to have been a form of cross-European Quality assurance in the recognition of diplomas between institutions. A third factor enabling unity of scholarship across the medieval universities was a singular commitment to the theological teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

MacCulloch (2004:12) shows how the medieval university was derived from ‘the burgeoning industry of intercession’ and a function of the university was also to explain the miracle of the corporeal presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. The twelfth and thirteenth century concept of university knowledge was adapted from Aristotle: ‘a logical system of questioning and listing data from the authorities ... called scholasticism’ (p.25) This reached its highest level with Thomas Aquinas who tried to show that human reason was a gift of God designed to give human beings as much understanding of divine mysteries as they needed.

The Reformation began to free the universities from the Church to allow tutors to be recruited from civil society; less doctrinal teaching allowed the fermentation of new ideas and the development of knowledge. As MacCulloch points out, this was driven by the innovation of the printing press, the proliferation of texts and the development of Humanism and the notion of the power of words which could be ‘used actively to change human society for the better (p.77). This saw the emergence of what now

would be known as ‘critique’: to analyse texts and question their assumptions. It is significant in the later development of university knowledge and of the theory underpinning Education Studies. The source of these ideas was the re-discovered classical literature of Greece and Rome because ‘part of the project of transforming the world must be to get as clear a picture as possible of those ancient societies.... (p.77)’.

However, as well as a change of curriculum in the universities, the Renaissance also brought the formation of nation states, border controls and the use of national languages in education. Universities lost their universal, borderless quality and became a function of national systems. Van der Wende and Huisman (2004:9) point out that ‘the modern university is a national institution’ and that attempts to develop a common university curriculum across Europe have been frustrated by government resistance and closed national systems. It is perhaps ironical that the European Union now struggles to reinstate the convergence in higher education which existed in the thirteenth century.

It would be a mistake, though, to see the medieval university as a golden age of academic freedom in higher education. While an elite of academics was free to engage as a scholarly community, Haddad (2000) explains that the knowledge they were allowed to share was largely determined by the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the Sorbonne in Paris was based upon a contract between the college and the crown to teach theology. What is more, the control of the Church over university knowledge remained powerful even throughout the Renaissance. Universities developed the idea of ‘nation’ through scholarship, defining the culture of their area of origin, but there was no original research and privileges were guaranteed only so long as the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church remained unquestioned. MacCulloch (2004) shows that the development of Humanism within the universities was slow and many humanists chose to stay outside the university system working on scholarly editions in cooperation with printers in large commercial centres from where there were good distribution systems for their books, rather than in university towns. Humanists could be seen as practically-minded and close to everyday life and government, in contrast with ‘ivory-tower academics, who wasted their time arguing about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin’ (p.85).

The restraint on scientific enquiry in the universities is demonstrated by the fact that in 1633 they supported the Church in Galileo's trial for heresy, with the sentence against him read publicly in every university. The role of the university at this time, then, was restricted to preserving and deepening the officially recognised knowledge of the Church: revealed, rather than verifiable, knowledge. Readings (1996:56) explains that disciplines in the medieval university reflected the seven liberal arts, grouped according to the nature of matter to be studied in the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric and knowledge and the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. The unifying principle of knowledge was only its confirmation of the goodness of God: theodicy.

The Reformation brought changes with the foundation of the University of Wittenberg in 1502 without the permission of the Church and with its Theology lecturer, Martin Luther. The university advertised itself as a Humanist institution, although Luther despised the philosophy of Aristotle, and it might be said to herald the coming of the modern university with what MacCulloch calls 'a softened view of humanity's role in its own salvation presented by the *via moderna*' (2004:117).

### **The university as a function of modernism**

The modern university began with neither the Renaissance nor the Reformation, but with the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution. Whereas the Church was never seeking new knowledge, but only the reinforcement of the traditional, the entrepreneurial society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries turned to the university for scientific knowledge and a trained professional elite. Medieval England saw non-ecclesiastical professional training for the law and at the Inns of Court and medical training at St Bartholemew's Hospital from 1123. However, it is the Humboldt University of Berlin in 1809 which is depicted as having introduced research and innovation: 'The university became a privileged place where the future of society is forged through research' (Haddad, 2000:32). Readings (1996) argues that Humboldt's was the first university to provide the highly educated professionals required by industry and civil administration in exchange for freedom from the state and autonomy in the knowledge it produces, although the current concept of the

teacher-researcher appeared only at the end of the C19th. Here the concept of knowledge as ‘critique’ originated by the humanists is developed.

The concept of the modern university is a product of the Enlightenment and its philosophy derives from nineteenth century German idealism, notably the work of Immanuel Kant. For Kant (1979) the basis of the university is reason, in contrast to superstition and tradition. Readings (1996) summarises Kant’s thinking, suggesting ‘the life of the Kantian university is.... a perpetual conflict between established tradition and rational enquiry’ (p.57). He explains that, while theodicy – the justification of knowledge as the work of God - was the only unifying principle of the medieval university,

Kant ushers in the modernity of the university by naming this principle reason.... And reason has its own discipline, that of philosophy, the lower faculty (p.56)

In contrast, the higher faculties of theology, law and medicine draw from the ‘unquestionable authority’ of the Bible, law on the civil code and the decrees of the medical profession. For Kant, the authority of the lower faculty of Philosophy is autonomous. It depends on nothing outside itself; ‘...it legitimates itself by reason alone, by its own practice’ (p.56).

The higher faculties, in that they draw upon external authority are accused of promulgating acceptance of tradition, and of controlling the people by making them accept established authority. ‘They do not educate the people in reason but offer them magical solutions. .... Philosophy, on the other hand, replaces the practical savoir-faire of these magicians with reason, which refuses all shortcuts ‘ (Readings, 1996:57). The ‘conflict of the faculties’, then, reflects the tension between superstition and reason. Kant does not see the university as divorced from culture and society, but he strikes a balance between the autonomy of reason and the power of the state.

This theory is important to the thesis because of its resonance with the control of teacher training by the state in England and Wales (see Chapter 4). But Kant also argues that the role of the university is to produce technicians for the state – ‘men of affairs’. However, knowledge should be used in the service of the state and



philosophy must protect the University from the abuse of the power by the state, in limiting the establishment's interests in the higher faculties. 'This unlimited right of reason to intervene is what distinguishes legitimate conflict, *concordia discors*, from illegitimate conflict (which is the arbitrary exercise of authority by the powers of the higher faculties and the state)' (p.58).

As Readings explains, the problem for the modern university is how to unify reason and state, knowledge and power. The difficulty lies in the notion of institutionalising reason which then becomes its own self-referential authority. The issue is resolved through self-critique and rational reflection in which autonomous reason breaks down the established authority of heteronomous superstition. The problem, though, is that once rational autonomy is institutionalised it becomes heteronomous to itself and the subject of superstition rather than reason. Kant argues that Philosophy promises to do this through self-critique and, through that critique, realising the essence of humanity.

Kant also proposed an antinomy between pure reason and nature. The educated person must leave nature and childhood behind, creating a hermeneutic circle: a rational state educates humanity, but educated humanity is required to create the rational state. But Kant's university, as Readings points out, 'can only be fictional: reason can only be instituted if the institution remains a fiction, functioning only "as if" it were not an institution. If the institution becomes real, then reason departs' (pp.59-60).

Humboldt argued that philosophical reflection must be preserved from 'the Scylla of mere leisure and the Charabdy's of practical utility' under the direction of the state. 'The state protects the actions of the university; the university safeguards the thoughts of the state. And each strives to realise the idea of a national culture' (Readings, 1996:69). The modernist university, as conceived by Humboldt, then, is a means of the realisation of state nationalism, culture and identity. Humboldt's genius was to create a system in which the state finances the university, but allows it autonomy and ensures academic freedom for its teachers and the Humboldt University of Berlin has been the pattern for European universities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Neave (2000b) notes that, following the Kant-Humboldt model, the traditional role of the university has been the transmission of fundamental knowledge and the

socialisation of those later to hold elite positions in society. He identifies three factors which interplay to form the minimum requirement for the university to fulfil its responsibility to society: government influence; university autonomy and academic freedom. In order to serve society, the university must be controlled neither by society nor by government. Neave also shows that the university contributes to a definition of the nation state itself in the form of the transmission of national culture and particular knowledge traditions. It also prepares for citizenship and the highest administrative responsibilities. Neave makes an important distinction between ‘university autonomy’ - the freedom of the institution - and ‘academic freedom’ - the freedom of individual academics within the institution. The case for independent governance is somewhat paradoxical in that, to serve society best, the university must be seen to be free of it, or, at least, free of government controls. Neave (2000a) explains this with the joint notions of responsibility and power. Academic freedom and university autonomy have been seen not just as privileges, but vesting universities with the responsibility for protecting truth. Freedom and autonomy, he says, are ‘the fundamental moral and professional ethic which underpins what once was termed the “search after truth” which today is seen as “the advancement of fundamental knowledge”’ (p xv).

Neave (2000b) goes on to describe two contrasting models of independent governance which have existed in Europe and the USA and which are defined by differing visions of ‘community’. The first, the Napoleonic model, is the university of the ‘national community’ where there is a unitary concept of the nation state which the university serves. The local community is not served by the university; instead it is an institution of the state created by laws, circulars and decrees which define it as a national entity. Members of the academic staff enjoy the status of public servants with secure employment conditions and there is a direct chain of command between the government ministry and the university. Here the government apparatus and the contract between the government and the university protect the latter from the invasion of private or sectional influence.

The second model is based on a vision of the local community and characterises the higher education systems of the UK and the USA. Rather than an optimistic view of the nation state as ‘the quintessence of national values’ (Neave, 2000b:9), the state is

seen as a necessary evil which should not control academic life and a distance is drawn between them. Independence comes not from the Napoleonic model of close and formal legal control, but in an acknowledgement of the status of the university as a self-standing, property-owning corporation. The university enjoys a high level of self-governance in provision of services, admissions and personnel. The civic universities established in England during the early twentieth century, typically Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield and Leeds, are examples of universities whose mission was to serve the locality. There is also a level of private investment and interest in the universities, particularly in the US. In Britain universities are governed by a senate or convocation and in the USA by a board of trustees. Neave suggests that, whereas in the European model the direction of governance is to protect the university from the influence of private and sectional interest, in the UK/US model, the university is protected from the intervention of the state. Within Britain there were some differences in that Scottish universities were closer to the European modern model.

### **Academic freedom in the modern university**

One way of examining the role of the university in relation to the state is to analyse the notion of ‘academic freedom’ in higher education. This is particularly relevant in a discussion of Education Studies because, in many universities in England and Wales, the subject has emerged during the last decade from the controlled context of teacher-training courses and tutors have found themselves with a new level of freedom of operation with regard to curriculum content and methods. It is worth, therefore, considering some of the dimensions of ‘academic freedom’ in universities. The concept has a long-debated history, although the term is used less frequently in the most recent literature.

Tight (1988), writing at the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act but before the 1992 Act which ended the binary higher education system, provides a helpful summary of thinking at that point before the effects of 1990s marketisation and the top-up fees debate of 2004. He points out that, in human rights terms, all have academic freedom in the sense that both university staff and students have the freedom to learn what they wish: there is no legal or political restriction on learning.

What is problematical is the freedom within the context of employment as an academic or as a student on a course. It is a matter of freedom *from* the constraints on intellectual activity as well as the freedom *to* engage in intellectual activity: academic freedom which is provided by the provision of time and resources to carry it out.

Freedom must, then, be within a societal and institutional context of values. Academic freedom was originally instituted in order to protect universities from political or religious dogmatism, although in fact, as O'Hear (1988) points out, there are differing values within and between universities and they have in the past often been associated with particular religious or political persuasions. Tight notes four levels of interlocking values: personal, professional, institutional and societal. The notion of 'academic freedom' must, then, be mitigated by the societal view of the role and responsibility of the university. He suggests that, at the societal level, values have changed, moving from university education for its own sake to higher education skills as a pragmatic investment in the future.

Barnett (1988) makes the point yet more strongly that academic freedom must be moderated by societal values and views and not be the separation of the university from society:

.... Higher education in the modern world is inescapably bound into its host society. If the term 'academic freedom' ever implied the desirability for the academic community to separate itself off from the wider society, that kind of aspiration must today be seen for the nonsense it is (p. 89))

The extent to which higher education can separate itself from the wider society is limited by the power of the professional associations. For example, the British Medical Association (BMA), the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) all have a varying interest in, and influence on, the curriculum for their relative subjects in universities. The question which emerges here is the extent to which society has influence and to which the state has direct control. In contrast with the higher education for medicine, architecture and psychology where the professional associations exert influence, in England and Wales higher education in teacher training is now directly controlled by the state through specified standards which define the curriculum in its entirety.

Tight (1988) is among the first to notice the distinction between institutional autonomy and individual academic freedom, pointing out that the two are confused in the Robbins Report (1963) and by Robbins (1966). Autonomous institutions, he suggests, can choose to be oppressive and restrictive with their own employee academics. As to differences between institutions he cites Wagner's (1982) suggestion that the academics in polytechnics and colleges seemed to have as much freedom as those in universities, even though their institutions were more tightly controlled by the CNA and the LEAs. However, Tight concludes that institutional autonomy and academic freedom, while separate concepts, tend to go together and to be mutually supporting. But the distinction, he claims, has been overlooked in the growing state control of universities: 'The freedom of the individual has become lost under the blanket of freedom of the institution' (Betteridge, 1969:198).

The individual-institutional distinction is worth considering again, though, in terms of academic freedom and human rights. Tight notes that the relationship between academic freedom and individual human rights can be problematic in the institutional context. The autonomy of the institution allows it to marginalise the interests of minority groups such as women and ethnic minorities, and the power relations in higher education institutions makes them like any other human organisations and prone to such abuse. Given that universities should be about the development of intellectual ideas, Tight recommends that newly autonomous universities should review their practices in this respect.

Another means of protection of the individual's academic freedom was academic tenure. This Tight describes as redundant because of other protective mechanisms, and as unfair because it is not universally applied across all university staff. He therefore welcomes its abolition in Britain in the 1988 Education Act.

Universities had their origins as private corporations of scholars with the support of the Church or state which could bestow autonomy upon them. Neave (1988) makes the point that, for universities, their institutional autonomy was conditional upon the extent to which they conformed in general with government policy, and this was still the case in the 1980s. A quote from the Secretary of State, Keith Joseph, underlines

this and signals the future direction of government policy and a reconfigured role for universities:

Every step that the higher education institutions can take to increase contributions from the private sector will be a step towards the greater reality of academic freedom and real independence (Hansard, 26 October 1984, p. 912).

Tight also considers the academic freedom of students who must have an interest in the curriculum which they learn and may demand their own freedoms, as in the student riots of the 1960s in France, Britain and the United States. However, he sees this as an anomaly and concludes that students tend not to seek freedom or autonomy in their education. Barnett (1988) agrees, suggesting that modern-day students would not know what to do with academic freedom. Reflecting Aronowitz's (2000) view of American students, they are, he says, 'focused instrumentally on the final outcome, relatively passive imbibers of what is placed before them, undemanding, undemonstrative, and narrow in their concept of the place of their studies in wider education' (p. 97). Goodlad (1988) suggests that improved teaching methods which encourage students to be reflective and critical are required in order to enable students properly to exercise their academic freedom. However, it is interesting that Tight, Barnett and Goodlad were all writing at a time before the more explicit onset of the market in higher education. It might be said that students now exercise their academic freedom through the choice of a wide range of customer-oriented course provision and modular choices within courses. Perhaps students' reluctance to engage in critique is due to the fact that it is largely redundant: they can choose the courses they want and, if not to their liking, they can go elsewhere. The need to storm academic barricades of the university curriculum has simply disappeared as students have become customers and they exercise their human rights as consumers.

The notion of freedom, of course, entails accountability and Tight rehearses the tension between the freedom of institutions and their accountability to government, predicting the onset of stronger constraints on universities with the arrival of the contract arrangements for higher education funding. He notes that, indeed, there is no use of the term 'academic freedom' in the 1988 Act. Neave (1980) presents the radical versus conservative view of accountability where radicals see it as 'corrective' and

conservatives see it as infringement of liberty. The latter is a view in which academic freedom is depicted as an ideology. Tight's conclusion is that accountability was strengthening as the UK government in 1988 took stronger powers to control higher education.

In conclusion, Tight rejects the definition of 'academic freedom' offered by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals in 1987 because it is limited to staff and their employment:

..... not as job protection for life but as the freedom within the law for academic staff to question and to test received wisdom and to put forward new and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing individuals in jeopardy of losing their jobs (CVCP, 1987)

and opts for a wider definition which takes account of society:

Academic freedom is granted in the belief that it embraces the pursuit and application of worthwhile knowledge, and as such is supported by society through the funding of academics and their institutions. Academic freedom embodies an acceptance by academics of the need to encourage openness and flexibility in academic work, and of their accountability to each other and to society in general (p. 132).

Despite his earlier discussion of academic freedom for students, there is no reference to students in this definition and, what is more, there is no reference to students' academic freedom in their choice of courses and modules. Academics might be free to provide a range of course content, but their freedom can be said to be limited by the extent to which students, in the market place, select their courses and modules. Tight's definition might be modified to the following, in which the italicised phrases are added:

Academic freedom refers to the freedom of individual academics to study, teach, research and publish, *and for individual students to study*, without being subject to or causing undue interference. Academic freedom is granted in the belief that it embraces the pursuit and application of worthwhile knowledge, and as such is supported by society through the funding of academics and their institutions, *as judged by the market*. Academic freedom embodies an acceptance by academics of the need to encourage openness and flexibility in academic work, of their accountability to each other and to society in general *as embodied by the higher education market*.

Another notion which might be employed to analyse academic freedom is the concept of 'the paradox of freedom': that freedom for one can only exist where others are constrained (Berlin, 1969). The interested parties, as Tight notes, are individual staff, students, the university as an institution and society at large. Academic freedom for university staff means less freedom for students and for society. Constraints on academic staff are to give society and students the freedom to enjoy their academic wants. In the current market this sharing of liberty and constraints would seem to match Berlin's model of freedom. What is interesting is that the original Kant/Humboldt model of the university and society enabled the autonomous academic freedom of individuals in the university to appear also to be in the best interest of students and of society in general.

O'Hear (1988) sees the nature of the university itself in terms of academic freedom. Academic freedom and freedom of speech are two inter-related concepts which he attempts to distinguish. He suggests that, while freedom of speech might be accorded to anyone, academic freedom is a particular form of freedom peculiar to the university and thereby defines the nature of the university. Making, again, the distinction between freedom *from* interference, which can be enjoyed by all, and the freedom *to*, which can be offered by a university's resources: 'It implies a long-term commitment on the part of the institution concerned to provide conditions in which the academic can study and teach' (p.7). But O'Hear goes on to dismiss the justification for academic freedom as the freedom to be creatively productive through research and the creation of new knowledge. He suggests that what is newly produced by universities is 'miniscule for all the work and resources that go into universities' (p.7). Instead, he cites Newman's (1852) concept of a university which is less to do with extending the boundaries of knowledge than the cultural one of playing a role in the life of society. Academic freedom, then, is more than freedom of speech and more than an environment for research productivity. He offers F.R. Leavis's definition of the educational and cultural task of the universities:

to explore the means of bringing the various essential kinds of specialist knowledge and training into effective relation with informed general intelligence, human culture, social conscience and political will. Here in this



work we have the function that is pre-eminently the university's; if the work is not done there it will not be done anywhere (Leavis, 1979, p.24) (p. 8).

This provides a reason for the existence of the university in which the cultivation of the intellect is valued for its own sake, with staff free of the pressure to publish, attract students and fulfil the needs of industry. O'Hear (1998) argues against that the whole concept of the university, suggesting that we need simply to have a cost-effective means of carrying out scientific research on the one hand and specialist teaching on the other 'without being shackled by the belief that there is some virtue in having a lot of different subjects grouped together in the same institution' (p. 12).

O'Hear provocatively describes universities as economically and politically 'useless institutions'. It is this 'uselessness' that entitles them to academic freedom and his case is that, to the extent to which the university presents itself as politically and economically useful, there is less justification for their academic freedom. 'Useless conversations', he says, are actually the most important of all, for it is only in such conversations that one comes to realise what it is to be a human being .... (p. 15). The Robbins Report (1963) he sees as bringing extraneous pressures to the universities, corrupting their spirit and academic freedom. While this is largely politicised rhetoric, the notion of 'uselessness' is significant in this thesis where it will be seen that there is a view of Education Studies which is that it should serve no vocational or practical purpose.

O'Hear reveals his elitist position in describing the most powerful form of corruption coming in the form of post-Robbins expansion. The Newman/Leavis model can only be for the select few. Of course, this model of the university is a long way from the current view of the university as a means to enhance the economy through the production of skills. It is, though, particularly relevant to a notion of Education Studies in which students and staff are able to engage in disinterested reflection. Wolf (2005) applauds the level of academic freedom, in the sense of freedom of speech, in UK universities, contrasting them with the level of freedom in American Universities which suffer ideological and political censorship of ideas. She insists that such freedoms give UK universities greater status, despite their under-funding and over-

regulation, ‘it helps explain why, despite the past 40 years, we still have universities that are among the most respected in the world’ (p.15).

The historical origins of different models of university autonomy are explained by Neave (1988). He begins with a differentiated perspective in medieval Europe: the Bologna model was based on freedom of the individual to learn, whereas the Paris model ‘viewed autonomy as the freedom to teach’. This is significant in the light of developments today in that, while Paris gave the freedom and control to academe, Bologna made academe the employee of the students, close to the free-market context of today. Medieval university autonomy, then, was derived largely from guilds or corporations and their need to be protected and to have their freedom to interpret the scriptures. So autonomy ‘owed much to the conflict between princes and prelates’ (p. 34). By the mid-eighteenth century, Neave says, this pattern of organisation had become inward-looking and ‘devoted largely to the perpetuation of established orthodoxies’ (p.34). Reform came from outside the universities with two Enlightenment methods of modernisation linking the university to the state. The Humboldt and Napoleonic versions each saw the university as an instrument in the modernisation of the state, but in different mutual relationships. As noted above, Humboldt’s model is based on Kant’s differentiation of university knowledge into that which should legitimately be controlled by the state – law, theology and medicine – and that which should not be controlled, principally philosophy. Philosophy should remain free from state intervention because it was concerned with scholarship and truth rather than with the administration of public order and because it should be used to judge the other faculties. Kant further argued that ‘Man is by nature free and under no constraint save that involved in the pursuit of truth’ (p. 34). Humboldt’s model of autonomy was not, however, exactly that which Kant had proposed. Humboldt’s innovation was to put aside the notion of the state being in conflict with the ‘inner life’ of the academic. He emphasised that statehood depends on a common cultural identity and that the role of the university is to reinforce this through the advancement of culture, reason, learning and teaching:

In von Humboldt’s notion of academic freedom, the state itself served as a ‘buffer organ’ against outside pressures, not least of which was the utilitarianism associated with the ‘rising industrial classes’ (Neave, 1988:35)

Instead of Kant's duality of subjects for freedom or control, Humboldt's model for academic freedom was based on a hierarchical differentiation within the university with the greatest freedom for the professor and the least for the student. Autonomy, then, is for the individual, not for the institution, and the 'community of scholars' was not an equal one. This was in contrast to Britain and the United States in which there was 'collegial' autonomy across all grades.

The Humboldt model was employed in universities in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Sweden. France, Italy, Spain and Latin American countries employed the Napoleonic model of autonomy. In the Humboldt model the state provided a legislative framework in which the university advanced culture and learning, which was seen as super-ordinate to the state. In the Napoleonic model the university is clearly subordinate to the state and is deployed to ensure political and physical stability. Both systems were based on nationalism, but Neave explains the subtle difference:

... in Humboldt's Prussia cultural unity was not coterminous with the state, but went beyond into other German-speaking areas of middle Europe. In France, the revolutionary doctrine of the Republic, one and indivisible, brought both state and nation together by administrative means. Teaching and learning were not conceived as independent of the state, but rather as expressions of a unity that had already been achieved (p.36).

This necessarily involved the high levels of bureaucratic control, of the kind now being visited on current-day universities in the UK, and it is consistent with current views of the university-state relationship. At the time, however, it was radical, preserved a high level of uniformity in the university sector and was seen as the means of upholding national unity. This looks very little like autonomy and much more like control. However, Neave explains that in this model autonomy was seen as the privilege of service to the state, rather than as through the serving of sectional self-interest. There was also autonomy in the sense that the university could *initiate* novel procedures, but which had to be ultimately sanctioned by government. The Napoleonic model also offered autonomy in the sense that there were areas of study in which the state did not have an interest.

## **Universities and the state in England and Wales**

In Britain the relationship between the university and the state has been ambiguous. Kogan and Hanney (2000) detail the various forms of scrutiny, influence and direction which have been in place since the nineteenth century. Even before they were publicly funded, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were answerable to the Royal Commissions. However, Kogan and Hanney stress the relative autonomy of UK universities under governments which operated Keynesian economic models. Direct control by the state over university knowledge was limited for much of the twentieth century. ‘Keynesian social democracy was concerned more with intervention in the demand side of the economy than the supply side’ (p.30). On a list of criteria for autonomy by Frazer (1997) British universities score highly: legal status, academic authority, self-determined mission, governance, financial independence, freedom to employ staff, control of student admissions and freedom to determine the content of courses. This contrasted with the government’s relationship to other publicly funded sectors and Kogan and Hanney use the term ‘exceptionalism’ to characterise the hands-off approach to university administration.

Neave (1986) suggests that the universities of Continental Europe were firmly embedded into national bureaucracies, whereas in Britain ‘the status of universities as a property-owning corporation of scholars..... was preserved’ (p.109). The liberal argument for the strength of the university is given by John Stuart Mill (1962) who argued that government intervention in universities should be limited simply to avoid the evil of adding to government power. Mill’s formulation leads to the notion of a ‘facilitatory state which provides resources to universities whose freedom would be enjoyed within an area of negotiation largely controlled by the universities themselves’ (Kogan and Hanney, p.30). Their central point, though, is that the ambivalence towards universities is shared by successive governments and is reflected in the actions of the government agencies, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Advisory Body (NAB), which tended to bolster the power of universities. Universities, then, became used to enjoying the benefits of high levels of government funding, together with freedom from state control: the guardians and codifiers of knowledge.

A feature of twentieth century higher education in England and Wales was the so-called 'binary divide' between those universities with a royal charter and polytechnics and colleges whose degrees were awarded by other bodies, including the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). Kogan and Hanney (2000) note the duality of the thinking behind this. On the one hand there was a commitment to the virtue of the academic independence of the traditional universities. On the other hand there was the notion that there should be both public accountability and connection with the rest of the education system. They explain how Anthony Crosland, Labour Secretary of State for Education set up the system in the mid 1960s with the ambition of creating separate but equal branches of higher education to serve different purposes. There would be the twin virtues of academic independence for the existing universities and, for the new polytechnics, local accountability and an emphasis on applied knowledge for industry. The context for the new system was the future expansion of higher education, as recommended by the Robbins Commission(1963). The binary system was to keep some public control over what was to be an expanding system and this was to be achieved through Local Education Authority (LEA) control. There was an uncapped national funding pool upon which the LEAs could draw and DES Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) were to approve courses and to control quality and student numbers.

Although the binary system permitted some financial independence for the polytechnics and colleges, it saw distinctly different forms of academic control between the two types of institution. The pre-1992 universities with their royal charters were largely self-governing in terms of their curriculum, while knowledge in the polytechnics and colleges was rigorously controlled by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). This was a government-funded organisation which operated to ensure the implementation of strict guidelines for curriculum structure, content and methods. Degree courses to be taught in the polytechnics were to be approved by the Council and were required to meet all its criteria. Although it employed higher education 'peers' to implement its directives, it exercised a high level of control over higher education knowledge with rigorous scrutiny (Silver, 1990). The existence of this body signifies the relationship of the institutions to the state. While the pre-1992 universities enjoyed the trust of the state to define and codify knowledge, the polytechnics and colleges were not to enjoy the Humboldt

model of relationship to the state. Instead, every curriculum item of knowledge was rigorously audited and approved or rejected.

Crosland's vision of an equal binary system embodied the inherent contradiction in government thinking about universities in Britain in the twentieth century: the tension between academic freedom and government control. Kogan and Hanney emphasise the contradiction of the binary system for higher education with Crosland's education policy for schools which was to move to a unitary system of comprehensive secondary education. There was also discontinuity with the Labour government's policy for the funding of the NHS, for which Aneurin Bevan had rejected local controls.

The contradictions in the binary system meant that it probably could not last, but it was modified before being finally abandoned. The polytechnics were created through the merger of small institutions and often became large and powerful bureaucracies. LEA control tended to be weak and the polytechnics succeeded in managing their funding. The Oakes Report (1978) was to address the problem with the setting up of the National Advisory Body (NAB) which centralised the funding because, as Oakes explains:

‘the thing was getting out of hand.... local authorities were nominally running it, but .... the institutions were running themselves and funding themselves very lavishly... the government had to fund this, so we had to have some sort of check and basically the Oakes Report was put together to see how we did this.... without impinging on academic freedom;.... and.... which now seems a far-off dream, preserving some major role for the local authorities’ (Kogan and Hannay, p. 127-8).

This reveals the other interesting dimension within the freedom-control debate: the role of the local authorities in relation to central government. Kogan and Hannay outline the complex structure of the NAB which was created by the early ministers in the Thatcher government, Keith Joseph and William Waldegrave, to try to maintain a role for the LEAs in higher education. The body became a forum for the tensions between the polytechnic directors, government officials and the LEAs, with the directors resentful about the LEA presence.

On the primary issue of LEA control, in the early 1980s the local authorities were strong enough to be able to condition DES thinking about the creation of any body that would affect them or condition their control. The Conservatives in the early 1980s had a small majority and were losing by-elections. Some polytechnics feared that removal of local authority control, with which they were familiar, might be replaced by that of the DES..... It was only later that a convergence of views developed between the polytechnic directors and the Conservative government (p.133).

And it was freedom from LEA control that the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) sought. This was granted by Kenneth Baker in 1989 with incorporation of polytechnics as independent financial institutions, but the request for university title as 'Polytechnic Universities' was refused. However, things were to change rapidly with the new Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke in 1991 who was reported to have said, "'Let's take the great plunge and make them all universities, let's get rid of all the arguments'" (Kogan and Hannay, p.139). With that the binary system was abolished at a stroke. There was no analysis of the issue and there was no public formal consultation on, or discussion of, this major policy change. It occurred in some Scandinavian countries, but not the Netherlands or Germany. Ryan (1999) argues for the binary approach to higher education, regretting that polytechnics 'drifted into all-degree level work' (p.24) and bemoaning the lack of good vocational education in Britain which was always low status and for low achievers, in contrast with Germany where it has had high status.

While this might appear to foreshadow an increase in independence for the higher education institutions, the outcomes were not so simple. The end of the twentieth century brought the New Right in British politics with a different view of the management of public organisations and the professions. These are characterised by New Public Management (NPM) in 'the evaluative state' (Henkel, 1991). NPM is intended on the one hand to devolve power to institutions, but on the other hand to retain central control in order to reduce the power of professional bodies which is depicted as 'professional hegemony'. Margaret Thatcher's 1980s Conservative government reforms were supposedly intended to roll back the state in 'a shift from academic control towards both the market and to the incorporation of universities in the generality of state control' (p.55). Cawson (1982) argues that freedoms were

offered to universities only in exchange for working within the state and Kogan and Hanney explain that ‘the boundary between what should be funded publicly and what earned privately shifted, so that the acceptable sources of higher education funding became multiple and virtually unbounded’ (p.55).

University autonomy was yet different in Britain from continental Europe. In Britain ‘the university was neither incorporated as part of the national bureaucracy, nor was it subject to any one coherent constitutional or administrative theory of the relationship between state and university’ (Kogan and Hannay, p.37). British universities were property-owning corporations of independent scholars. They enjoyed an exceptionally high level of autonomy, not because governments considered that the state would benefit from such an arrangement, but simply because there was no concept of the state as ‘a distributive or regulative entity’ (p. 37) and because of the more general view that the state had no role in education. So the Humboldt model of the state as buffer to ensure commitment to scholarship did not exist; it was simply guaranteed by a self-regulating academe. The feature common to Humboldt was the ‘facilitatory’ state which provided the resources. The setting up of the University Grants Commission in 1919 did not provide a Humboldtian ‘reserved area’, rather it formed an ‘area of negotiation’ between state and university which was effectively controlled by the universities. The buffer, then, was not the state, but an extension of the university itself.

## **Conclusion**

This section has shown how university knowledge has developed from the theodicy of the medieval university to the critical analysis based on reason of the modern university. It has reviewed the development changing role of the university in relation to the state, the issue of academic freedom and, in Britain, the rise and fall of the binary system. The next section considers the effects of postmodern thinking and the influence of the market on universities and on higher education knowledge.



## **Section 2: The postmodern university: knowledge, the state and the market**

### **Introduction**

In the previous section the development of the ‘modern’ university is described. This section reviews the developments in university knowledge and the state in the latter part of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries.

The term ‘postmodern university’ is commonly used to characterise these developments, and it is a term used by the authors discussed here. However, Coulby and Jones (1995) point out that, despite the temporal suggestion in the prefix ‘post’, postmodernism itself is not a matter of chronology, occurring at a point in time:

(The) retreat from rationality is not just a contemporary phenomenon. It is part of a long history of conflict between hegemonising and fissile tendencies within Europe, accentuated by the creation of states and their supportive mass education systems (p.10).

It is, then, not a ‘postmodern era’, but an era in which postmodern thinking has come to affect the development of universities. This period is of particular interest because the ‘new’ Education Studies has grown in the context of the last twenty years of university expansion in England and Wales and in changes in the nature of university knowledge. The section traces the complex changes in the relationship between the university and the state and the ways in which university knowledge has been affected by the intervention of the market in various forms.

The previous section was essentially historical in perspective. This section reviews some of the current literature on the so-called postmodern university. The theoretical perspective of some of this writing is neither historical nor sociological. In fact, some of it may be judged to be journalistic or to be theorising on the basis of minimal evidence. It is included, however, because of its saliency in the current debates on higher education. A critical view of the sources is maintained.

### The postmodern university

The modern period saw the university in full control of the definition and codification of knowledge. Delanty (2001) explains a new role for the university in the context of cultural and epistemological changes in society with the democratisation of knowledge and the end of exclusive privilege. He proposes that the university is brought closer to society. It can no longer retain its distance because it is no longer the main institution in the definition of knowledge; it is no longer privileged. Delanty refers to this as the ‘democratisation of knowledge’. It is not that the university is no longer involved in definitions of knowledge, but that the process has become more complex with a variety of interpretations:

The university cannot re-establish the broken unity of knowledge but it can open up avenues of communication between these different kinds of knowledge, in particular between knowledge as science and knowledge as culture (p.6).

Delanty goes on to cite Bourdieu’s (1988) critiques of Habermas’s (1971) and Parsons’s (1974) views of the university. Parsons sees the university as a shared normative system with a functional link between knowledge and citizenship. For Habermas the university has an emancipatory function in society. Bourdieu on the other hand depicts the university as a self-preserving institution: an autonomous site in which different orders of power clash and struggle for self-reproduction. Using Foucault’s (1972) notion of knowledge as power in which the academic institution serves the interests of the dominant group, the university reproduces society and legitimates inequalities. Bourdieu sees all culture as symbolic violence and based on ‘misrecognition’ (*meconnaissance*). Education is reduced to the means that modern society has devised for the transmission of cultural capital, which are the cognitive structures of the dominant cultural models in society. For Bourdieu culture is a cognitive system which offers groups the means of imposing and maintaining classifications – cultural capital. But beneath the cultural level is economic power. Delanty explains that the difference between Parsons and Bourdieu is the concept of power. Parsons’s notion of a shared normative system does not include power, whereas Bourdieu’s sees culture as a site of contestation, because it is pervaded by power. Where others have seen culture as a means of social integration or of

legitimation, Bourdieu sees symbolic systems of difference and exclusion. Kant's conflict of the faculties is between knowledge and rationality; for Bourdieu the conflicts are between different sorts of capital: cognitive or cultural. Bourdieu's (1988) *Homo academicus* is a product of the field of academic power to control and classify knowledge and restrict the academic field. Academic power is associated with the canonical disciplines of literature, classics and philosophy: a social magistracy. Academic power is a cognitive machine that organises cognitive structures, disciplines and social space, creating symbolic boundaries.

Cowen (1996) analyses government policy for university knowledge in terms of global economics and market forces:

.... the governmental critique of the university, in several of the OECD countries, delegitimises the traditional assumptions made by universities about their own excellence, proposes a rebalancing of the relationships between the state, the productive economy and universities and outlines the ways in which the contribution of the universities within this new social contract may be encouraged, even enforced (p.3).

So the university loses its autonomy from government. The effect of this is a shift from knowledge as truth, to knowledge as 'performativity': that which is seen to be useful in economic terms. It is a part of the dynamic of epistemological change described by Lyotard (1979) as the post-industrial, postmodern collapse of meta-knowledge and the contestation of the nature of knowledge itself. Each author reviewed here uses Lyotard's analysis as the starting point for giving somewhat different accounts of knowledge change and their recommendations for a revised model for the university.

Cowen explains the change in terms of government warnings of economic crisis. He makes strong claims for Lyotard's analysis of the power relationship between the government and the university, suggesting that universities have become part of the training for business in order to cope with the move from material production to the technosciences of the global economy:

The historic claim of universities to have special knowledge, to be creating special knowledge and to be testing truth is undermined. They have no principle for the exclusion of a multiplicity of discourses and they have no

epistemological principle for the exclusion of performativity as a definition of their main functions (p.5).

The late Callaghan and early Thatcher period in the UK doubled the number of universities and placed them in the market, albeit an imperfect one, to earn their income. For Cowen, it is this function which has diverted the university from its role as a custodian of knowledge and forced it to concentrate on its existence as a player in the free-market economy. However, he warns of too strong a reliance on the market notion and stresses the variance between different state systems. He goes on to explain that performativity is not a necessary function of the move from elite to mass higher education. The German system at the end of the nineteenth century was elite, but certainly performative in serving industry and the economy. Conversely, Japan has a mass system which is less strongly dedicated to industry.

Cowen makes the point that performativity is both ‘an epistemological condition... and an explicit political project’ (p.8) and that it is socially constructed. Performativity depends on the government’s perception of the role of knowledge in a competitive world and on the political decision that the university is the right location for connecting state, industry and business concerns. Cowen’s conclusion is that, through the pursuit of performativity, the university is reduced, or *attenuated*, in a variety of ways: spatially, financially and pedagogically. Above all, because its quality is defined externally through the absorption into national research policies and measured by managers, it has become *quality attenuated*.

Barnett (2000) rejects Cowen’s notion of the completely attenuated university. He acknowledges attenuation through performativity in substance in the types of research and teaching which are packaged for consumption. He also agrees with Cowen that the university is ‘boxed in’ by management procedures for staff, financial management and the publicising of teaching through peer observation. However, Barnett does not see the university as reduced: rather it has multiple roles, like Kerr’s (1972) ‘multiversity’. For Barnett there are no limits to the postmodern university and, in a chapter headed ‘death and resurrection’, he gives this aphoristic account which tends to journalistic over-statement:

The contemporary university is dissolving into the wider world ... The postmodern university is a distributed university ... It is a multinational

concern, stretching out to and accommodating its manifold audiences. It lacks specificity; it is a set of possibilities... no longer a site of knowledge, but, rather a site of knowledge possibilities....The university is no longer to be understood in terms of the category of knowledge but rather in terms of shifting and proliferating processes of knowing (pp 20-1).

But the postmodern university is compared to a company with many product lines and activities. Barnett asserts that it has no centre, no boundaries and no moral order. It is globally located with its research and activities conducted across the world by the internet: an example of ‘glocalisation’.

Lyotard’s analysis of postmodernity underlies this, but Barnett prefers the concept of ‘supercomplexity’ which he characterises as

- the plastic nature of research
  - the massive growth of knowledge
  - the evaluative society
  - the questioning of professional competence.
  - multiple (and conflicting) frames of understanding, action and self-identity
- (Barnett, 2000:6)

These all bode ill for the enlightenment university of reason and academic freedom and Barnett argues that a different concept of the university is needed. He outlines several possibilities for the ethos of the university in the ‘supercomplex world’, but dismisses them all. The *dispassionate umpire* cannot work because there is no commonly held value system on which to base the rules. *Collegiality* fails because there is no common discourse for communication between academics. *Self-criticism* is disingenuous because academics simply are *not* self-critical: there is a tension between the university’s desire to correspond with the world and to improve the world. *Excellence* and *authenticity* are simply flawed concepts in themselves. These failures leave the residual ethos of *self-irony*: deep down the university is impure and ultimately infected by its self-interest.

Barnett argues that the real tension within the university is between those who profess certainty and those who acknowledge uncertainty. The university is becoming a virtual university. There are different positionings within the university along the

academic-utility axis. Some situate themselves in the world, others keep to scholarly values. Kant's conflict of the faculties in the postmodern age is relatively restrained. The university simply dissolves: there is no *lingua franca* and no unifying set of ideas and the reason universities need to set out a mission is that they really don't have one.

The university is epistemologically generous, but its generosity betrays its emptiness. As an institution with rules of its own that governed what it is to know, the university is no more. There being no unifying sense as to what is to count as legitimate inquiry, new forms will increasingly appear and the gaps between them will accentuate over time .... Deep down it is understood by all parties that no such mutual understanding has been or could be reached. It is a silence of the deaf: there is no attempt to leap the chasm. It is seen as too wide. Incomprehension and, therefore, invisibility are the inevitable result (p.94).

For Barnett, academics live profoundly different lives because they inhabit different worlds. It is not Kant's conflict of the faculties; it is simply disconnectedness. New forms of knowledge-handling connect neither with each other nor their predecessors. Conflict requires engagement, but in the postmodern university nothing is connected. All parts are nomadic, unsettled and confused. It requires no decentring from the postmodernists, it has decentred itself.

He criticises the conversion of university knowledge into performative skills through government evaluation procedures: there are no longer historians, only those who possess a range of transferable skills for society. Barnett points to Lukasiewicz's notion in *The Ignorance Explosion* (1994) that the proliferation of knowledge is text-based and there is more of it than can be comprehended. Knowledge production is out of step with knowledge comprehension and the relationship between academics and their audience has broken down. So there is a new illiteracy: students are reduced to having data-handling skills and the human mind is reduced to data-processing skills. Inert knowledge is not knowledge, so the paradox is that knowledge-production creates ignorance. The increase in academic fields also increases illiteracy and produces the need for academic literacy courses. We are ignorant of the world we have created: an unknowable world.

There is, though, optimism in Barnett's possibilities for the future of the university. It may be able to retain some of its modern role. Surveillance and performativity are

‘qualifiers to the general picture of widening opportunities and expansion’ (p15).

Although industry demands skills, and the university responds to the demands, Barnett argues that the wider society longs for knowledge, breadth, critical reason and freedom:

... society is hesitantly intimating that it needs the universities to live up to their rhetoric of guardians of reason. The university seems intent on constructing itself in narrower frames of self-understanding. A trick is being missed (p.34).

Barnett refines Lyotard’s performativity thesis and identifies two theories of performativity:

- 1 the overt features of epistemological performance: income, economic regeneration, making friends, securing public interest and professional security; these are not malign and do not contradict the search for truth;
- 2 performative features become ends in themselves and the definition of truth, rather than just the application of truth.

Version 2, Barnett suggests, spells the end of the modern, western university. The university has always had a link with society and there is nothing new about the relationship to society. What is new is the ‘infusion of use values into the university’s knowing efforts’ (p.41). Lyotard, Barnett suggests, was wrong in linking performativity to postmodernism. While Lyotard suggested that there is no longer a ‘grand story’, he argues that there is a new unifying narrative now: it is performativity supported by the state and ‘it strikes at the core of the university as a site of disinterested reason’ (p.42).

Barnett’s notion of the university dissolving into society is reflected by Aronowitz (2000) who sees the same picture in terms of intellectual decline. Writing from the American perspective, his analysis of the change in the university derives from the universities links with industry in which they become simply the training sites for business. With presidents as full-time fund-raisers, students are no longer required to challenge intellectual authority or criticise. Graduates enter minor administrative positions in the entertainment industries; knowledge is irrelevant. ‘They have learned the skills to tolerate boredom’ (p.10). In other ways, universities are sites for

technological change, for making things that advance production. The university now mirrors society, it doesn't stand back from it and comment on it.

Barnett's future for the university in a world of 'fragility' is an institution that acknowledges uncertainty, unpredictability, challengeability and contestability. Scholarship should take on a worldly role; it should be more than private debate between academics which he argues has become self-indulgent and unnecessary. The postmodern university needs to live out the uncertainty principle to help people to live without fear in an uncertain world. The argument goes: the university has brought about supercomplexity; supercomplexity involves a disturbance of the whole person; the university has a responsibility to enable individuals to prosper amid supercomplexity.

As to its management, Barnett argues that the university requires a management that can enable the 'epistemological chaos' (p.138) in the supercomplex world. This is an optimistic future for the university, in contrast with Aronowitz who argues for the need for re-intellectualisation, but sees only the strength of commerce and industry.

Postmodernists reject universals and proclaim the end of the 'meta-narrative'. However, Habermas (1989) argues that there must be a universal feature in the basic elements of reason and human interaction. Barnett disagrees with Habermas's assertion that there are necessary conditions of human interaction, but agrees that postmodernists can never 'get behind their own utterances', and to say that 'there are no universals' is in itself a universal. Meta-narratives, then, have not gone away; they are everywhere and it is a matter of selecting between them:

The values implicit in rational critical dialogue helped to generate supercomplexity and they can help to keep supercomplexity in its place.... The ladder of the university's value background has to be kept in place, not kicked away (p.83).

Similarly, Readings (1996) pursues the notion of structural collapse and argues that the postmodern university needs to be built on new foundations, not located in the 'technno-bureaucratic concept of excellence' (p5).



Both Barnett, Aronowitz and Readings provide a level of analysis, mainly drawn from Lyotard's (1984) conception of the commodification and marketisation of knowledge. However, rather than analysis their contributions can be largely characterised as programmatic visions of the university based upon limited data. They are important in that they are salient works in the field of higher education and the proposals which they make form part of the general current discourse.

Green (1997) warns against assuming the end of the nation state in the university picture. He criticises the extremist account of postmodern education by Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) and Donald (1992). They argue that the search for a common curriculum is futile and advocate choice and diversity in higher education. As typical postmodernists they portray the breakdown of Keynesian economics with governments no longer able to deliver services and with education fragmented and individualised; university education is out of state control. But Green argues that this is overstated and that governments will still continue to seek national identity through education and particularly the higher education curriculum.

He goes on to conclude that postmodernism has little to offer educational theory and criticises free-market notions of education. Successful education systems in Europe and Japan do not have marketisation; it exists in the USA where schooling is poor. Choice in education, he insists, disadvantages the poor and working class. The argument for choice is not that it raises standards, but that it is an inevitable concomitant of the changing cultural configurations of modern societies:

The postmoderns argue that greater pluralism and 'choice' in education is good because it empowers individuals and subordinates cultures. They also suggest that it is somehow inevitable in the modern world because society and culture itself has become so fragmented. Both of these claims are highly questionable (p26).

Barnett, Parry, and Coate (2004) suggest that in many university subjects the curriculum has become increasingly 'performative', with emphasis on knowledge for vocational outcomes. They advance a three-domains model of the university curriculum: knowledge, action and reflective critique of self. In an empirical study they find that the weight of each of the three domains varies across different curricula.

For example, science and technology are knowledge-dominated with a high level of action; arts and humanities are knowledge-dominated with little action and professional subjects – in their example, nursing - are action-dominated and there is a particularly strong self-reflection element as students are asked to reflect on their practice in journals or logs.

Stevens (2004) gives a thorough and detailed history of the post-war development of British universities. His account is written from an acknowledged ‘elitist’ perspective, arguing for the retention of differentials funding for universities of different status and quality. It is also informed by his experiences of American universities and he argues strongly for increased independence for freedom from state control. The recent introduction of tuition fees in England and Wales he regards as a laudable step towards this. Nowhere, though, does he discuss the state control of universities in terms of the higher education curriculum. Again, the account is a programmatic one.

For Bok (2000) the reasons for the shift of universities from ideological priorities to commercialisation are simply economic, rather than philosophical or sociological. He rejects the accounts by Readings (1996), Bloom (1997) and Aronovitz (2000) that universities lost their epistemological mission in the 1970s, creating a vacuum which materialist pursuits have filled. Instead he suggests that commercialisation is part of the infusion of the market into the whole of western society. He argues that the philosophers and sociologists have taken the humanities as their model for analysis, whereas for science and technology, commercialisation can be explained by the multiple economic factors: cutbacks in government resourcing for universities in the 1980s, the general entrepreneurial spirit of the 1980s and the growth of financial opportunities for universities caused by spiralling demand for technological advances in society.

For Readings (1996) the University of ‘excellence’ is a mere simulacrum of the university in which its president ‘is a bureaucratic administrator who moves effortlessly from the lecture hall, to the sports stadium, to the executive lounge. From judge, to synthesiser, to executive and fund-raiser, without publicly expressing any opinions or passing any judgements whatsoever’ (p.54). And ‘culture’ is no longer the watchword of the university:

The university is no longer Humboldt's, and that means it is no longer *The* university. The Germans not only founded a University and gave it a mission; they also made the University into the decisive instance of intellectual activity. All of this is in the process of changing: intellectual activity and the culture it revived are being replaced by the pursuit of excellence and performance indicators (p.55).

Maclean (2005:3) would depict Readings's description as a 'narrative of decline' and it is countered by those who see universities as the partners of socio-economic and cultural development. The last decades have seen attempts to link university research and teaching to the world of work with new teaching methods and widening access. Haddad (2000) for example, argues that universities have moved from elitist groups in ivory towers and become closer to society and suggests that they need to go further in developing openness and producing research for peace, human rights and a sustainable future. He points to the mixture of respect and distrust there has always been about universities and suggests that, with the revision of missions, society now has a better idea of university roles and responsibilities. Democratisation of education and increased access remove the old elitism, but bring with them challenges of pertinence and quality.

The expansion of higher education dilutes the original role of the university in that it can no longer be seen to deal exclusively with an elite; it must engage with a broader range of the population (50% of the 18-30 cohort). Furedi (2004) bemoans the increase in managerialism in universities, but Kearney (2000) argues that this is inevitable with the paradigm shifts in higher education and that, with the massification of higher education, 'more effective governance and greater managerial efficiency are essential factors' (p.135). Kearney makes a case for the international demand for skills from employers and from students, but emphasises the universal request for merit-based higher education.

### **The university in the marketplace**

Kogan and Hannay present the abolition of the binary system as whimsical: a cavalier action by Kenneth Clarke following a period of horse-trading and pressure from the directors of the polytechnics. Readings (1996), however, sees the move as part of a larger process of converting the whole British university system into the 'excellence'

model with performance indicators to reflect the United States model of higher education. The conversion of polytechnics into universities, he argues, is not an ideological commitment to expanding higher education as such, but is a mechanism to bring all institutions into the same competitive market in which the successful – as measured by the performance indicators – are rewarded by higher grant allocations. He describes the action as ‘a classic free-market manoeuvre... analogous to the repeal of sumptuary laws that permitted the capitalization of the textile trade in Early Modern England’ (p.39).

This marks the move towards government control through market forces, or more particularly, the use of government controls to enable a free market: not a magnanimous egalitarian gesture towards the polytechnics, but an example of pure Thatcherism. Gray (1998) helps to explain this apparent contradiction in Conservative government policy where ‘rolling back the state’ appears to mean the removal of government controls, but actually involves controls on institutions through nationally prescribed curricula and criteria. Gray maintains that the strong government intervention is always required to permit a completely free market, pointing out that,

encumbered markets are the norm in every society, whereas free markets are a product of artifice, design and political coercion. *Laissez-faire* must be centrally planned: regulated markets just happen. The free market is not, as New Right thinkers have imagined or claimed, a gift of social evolution. It is an end-product of social engineering and unyielding political will (p.17).

The removal of the binary system, then, should be seen as a move to the American free market in higher education and the mixture of freedoms and controls which that has brought. Readings (1996) argues, then, that the very foundations of the traditional western university are crumbling in post-modern chaos. Again, the over-use of metaphor weakens the case, but there is a convincing argument about the hollowing out of the nation state through global capitalism and trans-national corporations. For the modern university is dependent on a strong nation state:

The modern university was conceived by Humboldt as one of the primary apparatuses through which this production of national subjects was to take place in modernity, and the decline of the nation-state raises serious questions about the nature of the contemporary function of the university (p.46).

The commodification of knowledge as information, and the proletarianisation of the student population means that the university ceases to be a function of the state's realisation of itself and becomes an economic instrument, like a privatised national airline. Like Barnett, Readings goes on to criticise the concept of 'excellence' as the defining characteristic of the university: ..... the appeal to excellence marks the fact that there is no longer any idea of the University, or rather that the idea has now lost all content (p.39).

There is an identifiable distinction between American and European universities here. The European model of the university is about realising the existing cultural content. For the American university there is no cultural content, but a contract, a promise to deliver on the future. Readings argues that, while the European university was a continuation of culture and the nation state, the American university should be seen as a private institution working in the public service. There is no cultural content and no nation, only the cash nexus. So globalisation American-style, Readings describes as 'culturally vacuous' (p.40).

### **UK Universities and the state in the twenty-first century**

In legislative terms, the UK government is still restrained from direct influence on the curriculum of its universities. The 1988 Education Act (HMG, 1988) shifted government control into the state school system and included a major reconfiguration of the funding for higher education. However, it contained no changes to the relationship between government and universities in terms of the curriculum, assessment and higher education awards. Changes to funding in the 2004 Education Bill (DfES 2003a) and the controversy which surrounded it saw no suggestion of intervention in university knowledge. Recent decisions by some universities to close certain subject departments which created controversy in the popular media saw the government maintaining its considered distance from decisions about university knowledge.

The studied remoteness of the UK government from the university curriculum might be seen to be a continuation of the 'post-war political consensus' in education (Lawton, 1992) in which the government kept back from interference in the school

curriculum because of fears of the replication of totalitarian governments in which the education system became a state propaganda machine. Ironically, it was Humboldt's University of Berlin which fell into the Soviet sector of the city in 1945 and lost its autonomy from government.

However, Neave (2000) argues that the traditional relationship between university and society is now being challenged with increasing and 'unforgiving scrutiny' by the state. Furedi (2004) also argues that the government role has become stronger through academic auditing and that it is made powerful by enlisting the service of academics themselves in policing the audit process through government agencies. This makes it appear that the universities retain autonomy, but Furedi argues that the removal of university autonomy through audit leads to the denigration of intellectual life. His concern is that intellectuals are turned into professionals who act on behalf of the institution, rather than in the search for 'objective truth'. It is, then, the shifting balance between Neave's three factors: increasing state control and increasing control by the institution, resulting in the diminishing of the third, academic freedom. Furedi's argument is that the government is controlling university knowledge through the agencies and mechanisms for audit, employing the university itself as a means of controlling intellectuals and knowledge. The Quality Assurance Agency is a large bureaucracy designed to police higher education in Britain. However, its mission is

... to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education (qaa.ac.uk)

It is concerned, then, with standards and quality, but not with knowledge.

Furedi (2004) argues that, with the diminished level of individual freedom, academics now play a new 'professional' role. He suggests that intellectuals should engage with, and influence, the politics of the real world; instead they are trapped as professionals in the institutional bureaucracy of the university:

Professionalism promotes values and forms of behaviour that may well be inconsistent with those of the intellectual. Activities such as offering a critique of the status quo, acting as the conscience of society, or pursuing the truth regardless of the consequences are not what the job of a professional is all about (p.39).

However, not all reflect on the golden days of modernism. Haddad (2000) argues that early twentieth century universities, independent of government but funded by them, saw their role as commenting on political issues, but their relationship with society has never been simple. “Society looked upon the University with a mixture of interest and respect and distrust” (p.33) and certain universities used their research centres to develop pseudo-scientific theories to support *and oppose* the dominant political ideologies.

### **Divergence in Higher Education: the UK, Europe and the USA**

Debates over the 2003 Iraq war and the European currency are recent examples of the ways in which the UK stands astride the political and economic divide between the United States and Europe. Locating the UK universities in relationship to their American and European equivalents is a means of understanding their nature as academic institutions. Neave (2005) looks from the European perspective and marvels at the ‘orgy of legislation’ in education since 1988, culminating in the 2003 White Paper (DfES 2003a) and the 2004 legislation. He notes the strong centralising government initiatives which have been taken and, incidentally, the direct and ‘Anglo Saxon’ tenor of the text. The culture which has been thrust upon British universities he explains as the attempt to move higher education into the market place and notes the apparent paradox in the idea of increased government intervention to bring about a free market.

Washburn (2005) presents a negative view of the effect of market transformation in universities in the USA. She argues strongly that universities have been taken over by corporate interests and, adopting a strong moral tone, suggests that the 1967 University of Berkeley demonstrations are relevant again:

What’s truly new – and dangerous – is the degree to which market forces have penetrated into the heart of academia itself, causing American universities to look and behave more like for-profit commercial enterprises’ (p.140).

The political will to drive the pace towards the American and Australian free-market model outstrips such initiatives in Europe where, for example, top-up fees are only beginning to be discussed. Neave sees the developments as inevitable, although his

term, 'the supermarketed university' expresses his criticism of the direction which Britain is taking. He argues that the higher education system in Britain is even more stratified than it was before, defined by state evaluative methods of 'the conjoined workings of audit, assessment, public statements of quality, performance evinced by the services provided, by output achieved....' (p. 18). Stratification, then, is an explicit instrument of state policy in creating a higher education market, the variables being the knowledge available, teaching or research and differentiated length of courses (honours degrees and foundation degrees). Neave regrets the loss of Britain to the American model, leaving its commitment to European collaboration in the Bologna process 'on the back burner' (p.19).

Europe will not provide an income flow to higher education and Neave goes on to attribute yet stronger ulterior motives to British governments, suggesting that their principal aims for higher education are to make it a 'global player' (p.18) in world markets, using the strength of English as the international *lingua franca* in education. From the European point of view he sees Britain creating its revolution in higher education to garner the rich pickings of international research income at the expense of its European partners. He does suggest that there is some ambiguity, though, and that the issue is whether the agreements it can forge within the global context may be made to work in the European setting - tensions between American competition and European competition, between market energy and social cohesion.

Neave describes the events in Britain as a change in 'political style' and notes that in European countries such as France and Sweden where state control determined the relationship between the government and the university, reform 'drove in opposite direction...' and thus '....reducing the very position that British governments set out to strengthen' (p. 20). He depicts, then, state intervention and the development of the free market as a 'paradox' in Britain. However, again the apparent paradox is explained by Gray's (1998) theory that encumbered markets are the norm and that free markets are a product of political coercion. Neave notes the 'licentious multiplication' (p.20) of regulatory agencies in Britain as a sign of the lack of trust in educational institutions to deliver in the national interest, but these might be seen merely as the instruments of 'political coercion' to which Gray refers.



Neave does acknowledge the need to enable private sources to fund higher education, but points to the need to increase alumni endowments, as in the US. This, he notes, depends upon a notion of social solidarity, ‘ a sense of collective obligation amongst individuals and gratitude .... for the opportunities and benefits higher learning has bestowed on them’. This is implicit in the 2003 White Paper, a new social contract between government and society and it will be interesting to see whether the private-funding model will spread to Europe.

While Neave sees Britain looking west with only an occasional glance towards Europe, Trow’s (2005) analysis of British higher education finds contrasts with the American model. His ‘surprising features’ (p.8) of UK universities are worth summarising:

1. the lack of friends of universities beyond their borders, enabling governments to cut the unit of resource;
2. withdrawal of the trust of universities, academics and administrators and a continuing hostility by governments;
3. a resistance to, and reversal of tendencies towards, diversification;
4. hostility towards private higher education;
5. resistance to tuition fees;
6. a myth of a common degree standard across institutions and subjects;
7. the political weakness of universities and the academic community on the national scene;
8. a view of the university as only able to deliver a limited range of functions – liberal education, scholarly and scientific research – and not vocational training, which was seen as a threat to the integrity of the university;
9. the definition of the university as a place where people do both research and teaching;
10. the assumption by the government that the way to encourage research achievement was to fund them on the basis of the research profiles of the component departments.

For the American model, diversity of institutions is the key to a competitive market. Trow is critical of the failure to engender diversity in higher education in Britain and

attributes it to the centralising movement in government policy during the last twenty-five years. The culprits are the lack of trust in higher education formed during the Thatcher years when universities were depicted as self-serving institutions which did not contribute to the national economy, and to the inherently apolitical attitudes in the universities. University vice chancellors and professors, he suggests, were simply too 'gentlemanly' to engage in the real politics required to shake off government control. Keith Joseph, in the early 1980s as Secretary of State for Education, suggested that universities be allowed to charge tuition fees which, Trow argues, would have given them power and independence. However, this was actively resisted by the middle class who had paid for independent schooling, but were politically strong enough to resist paying for higher education.

He points out that Crosland's binary system in 1966 was an attempt to create diversity which was destroyed by the 1992 Act, merging the two sectors to bring all higher education institutions under the same funding agencies and regulated by the same criteria. The recent policy on research funding, which excludes the post-1992 universities, has in effect created non-research universities and, thereby, diversity:

Today it is something of an irony that through the continuing concentration of research support in the leading research universities....., the British government has finally accepted that it has created a set (if not a system) of non-research universities. It has done so not through a policy but through a failure of policy (p. 10).

The 2003 White Paper, Trow suggests, gives universities a first limited taste of freedom and independence, while encouraging them to enter contracts with industry, although, again, such a policy is in the form of top-down injunction, rather than through consultation with higher education. Also, he argues, it 'does not address the fundamental issue of institutional autonomy and the diversity of character, function and quality that is the natural consequence of autonomy' (p 11).

Trow makes the point that, as in all societies where there is mass higher education, a greater contribution of the resource must come from the user, the student, and ends with a searing criticism of government regulation:

But even as Britain solves this problem of finance, as in one way or another it will, it will be left with an unwieldy and dysfunctional regulatory system, serving as a state substitute for university autonomy (p.11).

So the UK is criticised from East and West. The common criticism is of state intervention, but from different perspectives: the one because it is seen to inhibit diversity and the other because it is designed to make higher education into a competitive market. Britain, then, seems to lie between the European demand for homogeneity and the American call for diversity.

## **Conclusion to Chapter 2**

This section has shown that the move from the modern to the postmodern university can be seen either as a loss or as an opportunity. It sees the loss of the university control of knowledge, and possibly a loss in anti-intellectualism as the market becomes the arbiter of ideas and academics are concerned only with industry's demands and their students' skills. However, the postmodern university can also be a site of hope and optimism in which the university emerges from its elite shell and closer to society. As Maclean (2005) suggests, there is the opportunity for society to be recreated and transformed intellectually.

University knowledge can be seen to have metamorphosed over the years in relation to the relative roles of the university and the state, from its origins as Church theodicy through its service of Enlightenment industrialism and to its recent rapid changes with the geo-political effects of global markets. There have been historical distinctions between America and European universities and we have seen the UK between the two, but latterly inclining to the American model.

A continuing theme has been the question of academic freedom and national definitions of culture. The trust invested in university academics in the modernist university is now evaporating with the new public management. There is a paradox, though, in that, while the state has gained in strength relative to the powers of the modernist university, at the same time globalisation has simultaneously reduced the power of the state. What we see is the state using its powers, not to define knowledge or to dictate to universities, but to impose accountability measures to set up free

market conditions in which knowledge will be defined. The third factor in the equation, the demands of the mass market, now appears to define the nature of knowledge, and even threaten the very existence of the university.

There are themes in the chapter which are relevant to the analysis of data in this study on the development of Education Studies as a university subject. The role of the state will be shown to be important in the definition of knowledge in Education Studies in the way that it emerges from state-defined teacher training. The changing concepts of knowledge in the modern and postmodern universities will be seen to affect the different ways in which knowledge is portrayed in Education Studies.

It will be seen that knowledge in Education Studies is to some extent defined by institutions and individuals and the concepts of institutional autonomy and academic freedom for individual academics is crucial to the analysis of the data. In contrast to academic freedom is the role of the market in defining first the existence, and then the nature, of the subject runs through the data in the sense of the extent to which subject leaders in Education Studies respond to the student market. It will be shown that there is a variation between different cases in their response to the market.

The differential status of knowledge in UK universities will also be seen to be a feature of decision-making about the nature of Education Studies as a high status 'academic' subject, or a low-status vocationally-oriented subject.

The chapter has been concerned with the macro analysis of the control of knowledge: the role of the state and the market. The next chapter will explore theoretical frameworks for analysing the social and cultural definitions of knowledge.

## Chapter 3

### Sociological theories of knowledge

#### Introduction

The previous chapter explained the general developments in university knowledge to offer insights into the historical, political and economic influences on the construction of Education Studies. The dissertation is also concerned with the ways in which the subject has been socially constructed in relation to the perceptions, ideologies and career intentions of individuals and in the higher education institutions. It examines the ways in which individuals and groups have used their power and influence to define knowledge in a university subject. To provide a basis for the analysis, this chapter reviews some of the theories of the sociology of knowledge.

The principle theories employed in the data analysis are Mannheim (1952) on knowledge and competition and Bernstein on the classification and framing of knowledge (1971) and the curriculum, social class and the means of production (1975). The chapter provides an overview of theories in the sociology of knowledge in order to locate the particular theories within their historical and intellectual context.

The first section discusses the development of different theories and perspectives on the sociology of knowledge. The second examines some of the theories which relate directly to education, schooling and the curriculum. In a conclusion there is a discussion of the relevance of the theories to the analysis of the research data.

#### Section 1 – Sociological theories of knowledge

The academic study of knowledge has been concerned with the ways in which it is selected and organised and has been approached from two distinct methodological frameworks: the philosophical - ‘epistemology’ – and, in more recent years, the sociological. Honderich (1995) defines ‘epistemology’ as ‘the study of our right to the beliefs we have’ and shows that it is ‘explicitly *normative*: it is concerned with whether we have acted well or badly.... in forming the beliefs we have’ (p.245). In

contrast, the sociology of knowledge eschews the normative in favour of scientific analysis, with an empirically verifiable hypothesis. As Mannheim (1952) explains:

Philosophy..... may look at this matter differently: but from the point of view of the social sciences, every historical, ideological, sociological piece of knowledge.... is clearly rooted in and carried by the desire for power and recognition of particular social groups who want to make their interpretations of the world the universal one (pp.196-7).

Mannheim distinguishes the work of the philosopher and the sociologist: the philosopher describes what *is*, while the sociologist goes on to explain how what is has come about in a world in which meaning is problematised and the public interpretation of reality is not that which is thought through and cannot be taken for granted, but 'is the stake for which men fight' (pp. 197-8). In this sense, the sociology of knowledge deals with reality, or perception of reality, not simply knowledge in the sense of information.

#### **Marxist perspectives**

Law (1986) outlines a three-phase history of the sociology of knowledge. The first originates with Marx and Durkheim. Marx sought the relationship between knowledge and social control. Durkheim used ethnography to trace the relationship between culture, social structure and knowledge. Durkheim differed from Marx in not relating knowledge to social control. First there is the problem of the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and structure as this is mediated through practice, and what this implies for an understanding of the latter. Second, and often closely linked with it, there is a problem about the relationship between discourse, structure and knowledge, and whether the last two retain any status at all within the analysis of discourse. And third, there is a concern with what Foucault called the microphysics of power – 'the tools of social control' (p.3).

Durkheim's proposal that knowledge and belief are derived from social structure is a one-way model with no reciprocal effect on structure by belief. Marx shows that structure and knowledge are in a complex two-way relationship. It is not just that structure determines knowledge, but that belief also affects social structure, and

ideology is the key to this. The working class have an interest in the change of the means of production, and it is in the short-term interest of the bourgeoisie that this is hidden from the working class. So ideology distorts and conceals, but it must also form the basis of practice which makes it 'possible to interact with both the natural and the social worlds. Hence ideology is both interested and distorted, but also practical and lived' (Law, 1986:4).

Durkheim rejected empiricism because it does not explain how the mind is capable of generating stable categories out of shifting appearances, but *a priorism* is unsatisfactory because it solves the problem by mystical mentalistic means. Law notes that Durkheim proposes a kind of social *a priorism* in which categories of thought come from our social experience. Our social classifications provide a template upon which we build our structures of thought. 'The social, as always for Durkheim, provides a reality that is prior to individuals' (Law, 1986:5). Societies 'feel the need for the occasional reaffirmation of the collective sentiments and ideas that make their unity and personality' (Durkheim 1915: 427). Thus ideas may feed back into institutions and influence them. Ceremonies require justification in terms of systems of ideas and theories if they are to be maintained or spread. A society creates an ideal of itself that may be pulled in different directions to the past or to the future. Categories are tools, the 'intellectual capital' of society. For Durkheim there is no difference between religion and science: they are both methods for making sense of the world. So in fact he was sensitive to the reciprocity of structure and belief and Durkheimians and Marxists writing in the second phase are all working within the three-way relations of practice, knowledge and social control.

The second phase which Law describes occurred during the 1960s and saw separate lines of enquiry. There was Berger and Luckman's (1967) dialectical analysis of the relationship between structure and knowledge and the structuralism of Levi-Strauss (1969). Another thread was the work of the 'New Sociologists' in England such as Bernstein and Young. Law suggests that the second phase was thrown into crisis by uncertainty about what might be counted as the social structure within both the Althusserian tradition of Marxism and the sociology of science.

The third phase derives from Foucault's work on knowledge and power. Mannheim's epistemological problems were dealt with by the acceptance of methodological relativism: 'Scientific knowledge was treated as a culture like any other form of knowledge and was seen as being directed by social interests with the corresponding social control limitations' (Law, 1986: 5).

Young (1971) provides another overview of the sociology of knowledge and notes the following features:

- 1 the power of some to define what is valued knowledge
- 2 restriction of knowledge areas to different groups and the scope of curricula
- 3 the stratification of knowledge relation between different areas and between those with access to them

There are two dimensions which have occupied sociologists in the study of knowledge. The first is in the account of the way knowledge itself operates in social contexts; the second is the way in which the study of knowledge offers different methodological perspectives within Sociology as a discipline in the theory of culture. Writing in 1971 Young predicted that research in Sociology on questions about the ways in which knowledge is selected and organised would bring about 'significant advances in the sociology of knowledge in particular, and sociology in general' (p.19).

Glover and Strawbridge (1985) describe the functionalist approach to the sociology of knowledge. This emphasises perceptions of reality which are determined by the structural functions of the social context in which they are located. For example, Sorokin and Merton (1937) point to varying models and perceptions of time in different societies and show that they are determined by their particular social needs. So while European societies use a standardised clock-measured time to enable the functioning industrial production, agricultural and 'simple' societies will rely on a time system dictated by daylight and the seasons. The functionalist perspective, however, fails to account for the effects of power; in the time example, there is no account taken of the way that the European time system dominated the world because of its economic and military strength during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



German idealism viewed knowledge as inherent in the rationality of human beings and any change in society was determined by the logic of human ideas. The consensus was that the basis of social life lies in the ideas which people hold and upon which they act. Marx overturned this notion proposing that in fact knowledge is dependent upon social structures. Berger and Luckman (1967) point to Marx's 'route proposition' that 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness' (Marx and Engels, 1968, p. 181).

Young (1971) notes that, while Marx wrote little on the nature of knowledge or of education, it was his observation that education and definitions of knowledge are both tools of ruling class interest. This concept of the relationship of power definitions of knowledge is fundamental to the classical perspectives on the sociology of knowledge and is missing from the functionalist perspective. The Marxist thesis was that a 'dominant ideology' would determine definitions of knowledge and perceptions of reality. For Marx and Engels (1970), the significant feature of knowledge is its relationship to the means of production and the division of labour. Their treatise is based on a critique of nineteenth century German idealistic philosophy which had been solely concerned with religion: 'The entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to the criticism of *religious* conceptions' (p.40).

The observer is therefore blind to the realities of the material world and has a tunnelled vision of the effects of social class in industrial production on social relations. Knowledge is simply the material of production converted into the ideas which enable the domination of the working class. Marx and Engels see this as a universal phenomenon and the dynamic is expressed as follows:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (p.64).

It might be described as a reductionist view of knowledge in so far as

.... the ruling ideas are *nothing more than* the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationship grasped as ideas: hence the relationship which make the one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance (my italics) (p.64).

Hamilton (1974) offers a clear interpretation of Marx's sociology of knowledge as expressed in *The German Ideology*. He suggests that there are two central concepts: that the production process derives from that of life itself and that the process is related to social structures. So there is a connection between theoretical productions and their specifically social foundation. Marx derives from these elements his political thesis that knowledge and thought can only be changed by the removal of the social conditions which give rise to them. Thus, 'revolution is the driving force of history' (p.27). Knowledge and its production, then, are in direct relationship to the power structure of society. Hence, "the class, which is the ruling *material* force of society is, at the same time, its *ruling* intellectual force" (p.22). Hamilton makes an important reservation which suggests that the direct relevance of Marx's theory to the educational selection of curriculum content must be tentative, because Marx does not refer to any specific forms of knowledge, merely the relation of 'knowledge' as a whole, to society.

Scheler (1926) first introduced the term 'sociology of knowledge' (*Wissensoziologie*) but, like Mannheim, distanced himself from Marx's critique of ideology. For Scheler the sociology of knowledge was concerned with intellectual and spiritual structures which existed in different social and historical settings and which inevitably were differently formed. He extended Marx's theory by identifying the 'real factors' (*Realfaktoren*) which condition thought in different historical, social and cultural contexts. Scheler's insistence on a realm of eternal values and ideas, however, limits his notion of real factors for the explanation of social and cultural change.

Others working within a Marxist framework provide more elaborated discussion of knowledge and power. For example, Gramsci (1957, 1967) explains the ways in which knowledge is differentiated and introduced the concept of 'cultural hegemony' so that a particular definition of reality and knowledge is imposed upon the working class. The effect of this is to prevent the proletariat from being able to think for

themselves. A definition of reality is uncritically accepted as normal and unquestionable. The ‘common sense’ of powerful people with access to institutional contexts is defined as ‘philosophy’. Gramsci suggests that it is the knowledge available to certain powerful groups that becomes defined as ‘school knowledge’.

#### **Critiques of Marx and post-Marxist perspectives**

The Marxist explanation for the failure of revolution in western economies is the power of the dominant ideology which disables working class perceptions of their oppression. This is criticised by Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1980) who examine the empirical evidence for this notion and find it lacking. For example, in British feudal societies the dominant ideology of the Roman Catholic Church was not extended to the working class, who preferred belief in witchcraft, magic and demonology. In early capitalism there were no developed means to inculcate the values of *laissez-faire* economics and individual self-improvement. Glover and Strawbridge (1985) explain that in the current period of late capitalism there are powerful communication systems – schooling and the media - which would be ideally designed to promote dominant ideologies. However, there is only a series of ideological themes which are often in contradiction with one another: support for the welfare state clashes with a belief in free markets; belief in individualism is replaced by the rise of giant corporations and finance houses. ‘Even the patriotic fervour of nationalism is at odds with the economics of the multinational conglomerate’ (p. 12).

While Scheler coined the term ‘the sociology of knowledge’, it was Mannheim who did most to elaborate it as a serious branch of sociological study by systematically attempting to identify the ‘roots of knowledge’. Mannheim argues that a proper understanding of the origins of knowledge would provide a political framework for the proper management of society: ‘the scientific guidance of political life’ (1960, pp. 4-5). He contributes to the critique of Marx’s ‘dominant ideology’ theory by broadening it from simply the idea that working class interests are intentionally distorted by the ruling class. Instead he proposed, like Scheler, that ‘mental structures are inevitably differentially formed in different social and historical settings’ and uses the term ‘the total conception of ideology’ (pp. 238-9). He also argues that ideas are conditioned by membership of other types of group based on age, status, occupation,

ethnicity and religion. But Mannheim's singular contribution is the notion that ideas are in constant conflict and competition, even to the extent that human thought derives from competition between polarities. Mannheim's position is between those who see competition as marginal and those who see the whole of cultural production as a marginal by-product of competition: '...evolution and change in mental life can be largely traced back to two very simple structural determinants of social character: to the existence of generations and to the existence of the phenomenon of competition....' (1952, p. 193). Mannheim also contributes an interesting theory about the effect of the study of the sociology of knowledge: he suggests that it has a transformative effect on its practitioners. It makes intellectuals 'strive for synthesis and distances them from the parties contending, giving them distance and overview' (p.194).

Underlying Mannheim's model, though, is a distinction between two forms of thinking which are differentially susceptible to the social context. Existentially-determined thought in the arts, humanities and politics - the results of the thought processes - are partly determined by the nature of the thinking subject - the whole person. Whereas in the natural sciences, thinking is carried on, in idea at least, by an abstract 'consciousness as such' in us (1952, pp 193-4). Mannheim argues that in the natural sciences it is impossible to tell who is doing the thinking. It is only existential thinking, then, that is susceptible to the social context. Mannheim's distinction leads to the conclusion that scientific thinking is rational, logical and therefore immune from the effects of the social context. The later thinking of Berger and Luckman (1961), of course, developed a sociology of knowledge in which scientific thinking is included within the socially determined framework.

Mannheim's critique of the dominant ideology goes further in that he describes the opposite of the ideology: *utopia*. Utopia is a threat to the immediate social structure and to dominant power groups. Utopias are safely confined to other-worldly and spiritual locations to remove the threat. Mannheim sees the origins of politics when people begin to compare the reality of their own existence with such ideals. Oppressed groups no longer fatalistically accept their traditional place in society, but join in the struggle to determine how society should be organised and run.

Durkheim's mission was to establish a science of the social world and he perceived individual action as shaped by the fashions, systems and social currency in which they exist. A common set of signs and symbols form the basis for a public world of beliefs and ideas, such that there are 'social states of mind.... qualitatively different from individual ones' (Durkheim and Mauss, 1952, p. 313). Through his work on religion and on primitive classifications he explored the social origins of these collective representations. Durkheim proposes that societies are differentiated into the simple and the complex and that those inhabiting complex societies are said to have a more complex view of the world. He maintains that logical and clear thinking is not an innate human characteristic, but has emerged recently. As an example of 'primitive' societies, Sioux Indians symbolically identify themselves with certain colours and animals. Similar pre-scientific ways of classifying things, events and facts about the world, such as the belief in transubstantiation, still linger in the modern world. The sheer variety of these forms of beliefs led Durkheim to conclude that such beliefs and assumptions cannot be innate and must be defined by their social context. His thesis is that modern scientific thinking evolved because the modern world became too complex for the emotional attachment to totemic representation, allowing thought to become more objective and rational. This notion of complexity of thought being determined by the complexity of society would today be judged in a more relativist context to be untenable in the light of empirical anthropology. However, Durkheim's more general thesis about the link between the structure of society and individual thinking still carries weight and is an interesting perspective on the development of scientific thought. Young (1971) also points out that Durkheim's notion of social categories of thought is important in his influence on more recent thinkers, such as Bourdieu.

Berger and Luckman (1961) depart from the classical sociology of knowledge outlined by Durkheim, Scheler and Mannheim. As noted above, for Mannheim scientific knowledge lies outside sociological enquiry and is not culturally determined. Berger and Luckman, however, in the discussion of issues of epistemology and methodology, assert that everything that counts as knowledge is a legitimate subject for sociological analysis, including science and technology. They argue that scientific knowledge and everyday knowledge are in fact very similar. Inspired by the history of science, the sociology of knowledge has become empirical analysis of the social

construction of scientific facts, frequently by social construction of studies of laboratory life. The manufacture of scientific knowledge has led to a reassessment of assumptions about the unique rationality of science.

Foucault (1972) depicts the differentiation of knowledge through various forms of discourse. It is through the analysis of the discourse of disciplines that he constructs a 'history of ideas, or of thought, or of science, or of knowledge' (p.21). He finds six theoretical processes in the historical description of knowledge: discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformations. Statements, he notes, are borne of a particular discipline; they might be newly derived or continuous with long-standing traditions. The point here is that it is the form of discourse which identifies the form of knowledge:

There are statements, for example, that are quite obviously concerned and have been from a date that is easy enough to determine - with political economy, or biology, or psychopathology; there are others that equally obviously belong to those age-old continuities known as grammar or medicine (p.31).

However, he queries the concept of 'unities of discourse' or knowledge, and thereby challenges the whole concept of the disciplines themselves. The task Foucault sets himself is to query assumptions which lie in the use of discourse, to disclose inconsistencies and error:

We must question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination, those links whose validity is recognised from the outset; we must oust those forms and obscure forces by which we usually link the discourse of one man with that of another (p.22).

Familiarity is the danger and Foucault urges that the taken-for-granted be questioned, which leads to the querying of the very nature of differentiated knowledge.

Stehr (2002) moves the theoretical framework of the sociology of knowledge into the twenty-first century with the notion of 'knowledge politics'. His focus is on new scientific knowledge which is seen as a threat to the traditional mundane or the sacrosanct. Whereas the sociology of knowledge investigates the essentially covert relationships between society and definitions of knowledge or reality, 'knowledge

politics' is the overt and explicit attempt to control what is known and learned. Stehr reflects on the historical perspectives on scientific knowledge and human progress. In antiquity the idea of progress was 'completely absent', and in the Middle Ages it wasn't expected to come from secular sciences. Scientific knowledge did not have support until Francis Bacon 'realised that advances in society were not taken for granted by the ruling classes and the role of science needed to be demonstrated' (p. 645-6). The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe saw the commitment to advancement through science, but the nuclear age in the second half of the twentieth century saw the questioning of the benefits of specialised scientific knowledge. During the 1950s and 60s period of economic growth the idea was that knowledge would replace politics and ideology. But with the demystification of scientific knowledge, the social role of ideology has been invigorated. Conflicting expert advice has led to a loss of trust in specialist experts, although we rely on them more and more, and encourages a reliance on normative perspectives, rather than fostering the knowledge that was supposed to displace ideology. The use of science and technology to enhance an ever-increasing life-span leads to

the fear that we know too much and that we are about to assume the role of God.... increasingly replac(ing) the fear that we do not know enough.... (p.647).

The ability to manipulate nature has been seen as emancipation, but biotechnology does not now enjoy the same welcome as earlier technological breakthroughs. That scientific knowledge is no longer regarded as a humanitarian project means that it must come under disciplined direction. An example of knowledge politics is the attempt to control work on cloning and stem-cell research by George W. Bush's Council of Bioethics. This need for control, says Stehr, accounts for the rise of knowledge politics where the state takes explicit control of the debates about knowledge. Knowledge politics, then, consists of

... strategic efforts to move the social control of new scientific and technical knowledge, and thereby the future, into the centre of the cultural, economic, and political matrix of society (p.644).

Stehr notes Adolph Lowe's (1971) perception of a change from conditional social realities in which things just happen, to a social world in which things are made to

happen. In the knowledge society the individual's ability to do what s/he desires is enhanced. Autonomy or conditionality of social action can increase or decline; in a knowledge society the perceived autonomy of the individual increases and previous boundaries of what is possible are penetrated. The Lamarckian idea of being able deliberately to induce genetic transformations that can be passed on to offspring is perceived as a danger to creation. Early concerns that we are acquiring too much irrelevant knowledge is replaced by fears about deviant and questionable knowledge. Knowledge is controlled, not just in science, but in medicine, demography, criminology and meteorology. So the control of knowledge is now recognised as a legitimate function of the state. However, Stehr points to the conflict of knowledge-control in the neo-liberal de-regulated world and that knowledge politics will have to deal with the loss of sovereignty of the nation-state.

**Section 2 - The sociology of knowledge and education**

This section discusses those theories of the sociology of knowledge which are applied directly to education, schooling and the curriculum.

Within a Marxist framework of power relations and using class as the variable, Williams (1961) distinguishes four educational ideologies which explain the emphasis in the selection of knowledge in the curriculum. Williams stresses the role of groups, their differentiated locations in the power structure, and the way these define educational philosophies and knowledge selection:

<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Social position</i>	<i>Policies</i>
Liberal/conservative Bourgeois	Aristocracy/gentry Merchant professional	Non-vocational –educated man Higher vocational and professional. Access to positions
Democratic Populist/proletarian	Radical reformers Working class/ subordinate group	Expansionist – education for all Student relevance, choice, participation

(adapted from Young,1971, p. 29)

Young (1971) describes Weber's (1952) contribution to the sociology of knowledge which is based upon his formulation of ideal types of the 'expert' and the 'cultivated



man'. Weber's interest was in comparative religions and it was his study of the Confucian literati which provided a basis for a theory of the selection and organisation of knowledge:

- Bookishness and memorisation of classic texts;
- Science seen as non-academic;
- Entry to academic elite controlled by examinations.

Curriculum selection is explained in terms of patrimonial bureaucracy. Changes in the curriculum would have 'undermined the legitimacy of the power of the administration whose skills therefore had to be defined as absolute' (p. 30).

Bourdieu (1971) is concerned directly with definitions of knowledge in the school system and, in a critique of the French education system, argues that both knowledge and thought are determined by the systems of teaching and learning. He begins with the social origins of categories of thought in small-scale societies with the development of thought categories through the process of transmission of culture and regards the school as the means of such transmission in complex societies. The effects of schooling in 'schooled societies' is similar to the effects of the intellectual and linguistic patterns of simple societies. He argues that the effect of schooling on systems of thought is utterly powerful and complete:

In all cases ... the patterns informing the thought of a given period can be fully understood only by reference to the school system, which is alone capable of establishing them and developing them, through practice, as the habits of thought common to a whole generation (p.192).

And it is schooling which has embedded patterns into culture. It is not that schools reflect culture, but that they define it and modify it and schooling becomes the subject of individual consciousness.

Bourdieu's work inspired Bernstein's (1971) theory of the 'classification' and 'framing' of knowledge. 'Framing' is the extent to which school knowledge is strongly differentiated from everyday knowledge. 'Classification' is the degree to which knowledge is identified and differentiated by subject boundaries – collection codes - or is treated with weak boundaries between subjects - integrated codes.

Bernstein differentiates the collection codes with their strong boundaries between subjects, and which characterise the traditional school curriculum, from the integrated codes with weak subject boundaries. In contrast with collection codes where the educational assumptions are implicit and unquestioned, the effects of integrated codes are to make educational thinking more explicit and redefines the relationships between teachers and pupils:

There must be consensus about the integrated idea and it must be very explicit... It also is the case that the classification and relaxed frames of integrated codes permits greater expressions of differences between teachers, and possibly between pupils, in the selection of what is taught. .... The nature of the link between the integration idea and the knowledge to be co-ordinated must also be coherently spelled out (p.64).

He adds that the collection code can be managed by mediocre teachers, whereas integrated codes need greater powers of synthesis and analogy in teachers and the ability to both tolerate and enjoy ambiguity at the level of knowledge *and* social relationships.

This is interesting given that, since Bernstein's paper in which he detected a shift towards integrated codes, governments, at least in the UK, have imposed collection codes upon all schools in the shape of national curricula, suggesting a levelling down of professional skills and removal of 'ambiguity' in the teaching profession. In the chronology of the curricula available for analysis at the time (the 1960s) Bernstein describes integrated codes occurring in infants schools and in the combined degrees in universities. Notably, at the time, these were seen as low-status areas: the curriculum for young children and the curriculum of general degrees. He also refers to the permeability of knowledge, which is seen to be low in the collection codes, where knowledge is made exclusive and where knowledge is seen as private property:

Knowledge under collection codes is private property with its own power structure and market situation. This affects the whole ambience surrounding the development and marketing of new knowledge. Children and pupils are early socialised into this concept of knowledge as private property (p.56).

Bernstein (1975) applies the theory of classification and framing to the mode of production and uses it to relate education to the dominant culture category, class.

Although he does not refer explicitly to Marx, the formulation seems to derive from Marx's thinking in '*the German Ideology*' (1970) where he shows that knowledge and human ideas are related to the means of production. Bernstein critiques previous theories of the relationships between education and production. Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that education produces personalities which are suited to the means of production: compliant workers; education is seen as dependent on the mode of production. Althusser (1971) sees education as a means of ideological control through transmission and reproduction. For Bourdieu (1971) knowledge is cultural capital, like financial capital, which is legitimated by education. Bourdieu sees education as relatively autonomous from production. But Bernstein claims that none of these theories addresses change, conflict and contradiction, which he attempts to explain through the application of classification and framing to education and production.

In strongly classified production, there is differentiation of labour and roles: workers are not interchangeable. Strong framing means repetitive, individually-performed, strongly-paced, explicitly-sequenced work, which is only remotely linked to the final product. So strong classification and framing depicts typical repetitive factory work. Where there is weak classification and framing, work varies and there is cooperation between workers; individual workers possess autonomy and the outcomes of work are strongly related to the total product. Weak classification and framing depict professional and managerial occupations and provide a class framework. Bernstein lists the following possibilities for strong and weak classification and framing in production:

1	++C	+F	Isolated and divisive
2	+C	+F	Related agents, divisive act
3	C	-F	Related agent, labour categories, integrated acts
4	-C	+F	Integrated categories, divisive acts
5	-C	-F	Integrated across categories, interdependent

(Bernstein, 1975, pp.183-4)

The comparison of education and production using classification and framing allows Bernstein to highlight the contradictions which are not evident in Bourdieu nor in Bowles and Gintis (1976). Bernstein explains the contradictions in relation to class. Where classification is strong – in the high-status, subject-differentiated grammar school curriculum - education is not related to production. Education is seen to be for

the development of the mind. Where classification in education is weak – the low-status integrated subject matter - production is vocationally integrated with education. Here education is a crucial integrator of social relations of work, learning and research:

The relative autonomy of education is the basic means whereby the consciousness of the agenda of symbolic control is legitimised and monitored and, in cooperation with the family, reproduced..... We consider this.... the crucial fundamental ideological message of the education system (p.190).

Bernstein suggests that intrinsic (autonomous) and extrinsic (employment) education replicate the tension between faith and reason in the church schools. He notes that there are differences between societies that see education as the preparation for employment or for its own sake. Where education is for its own sake it is middle class and high status. The traditional notion of employability after a university degree is that the graduate is provided for any type of profession, not specifically trained for a single one.

Other work in the so-called ‘new sociology’ in England at this time used knowledge and class as variables for analysing the social structure. For example, Keddie’s (1971) study found that working class pupils were labelled as ‘low ability’, ‘socially deviant’ or ‘culturally deficient’ and that these commonsense educational notions produced social deviance through the self-fulfilling prophecy. Ladwig (1996) notes that Keddie worked from Young’s framework to answer his three questions: How stratified are knowledge areas? What is the scope of the knowledge areas? How related are the knowledge areas? In Keddie’s case, the wider social structure was differentiated according to social class. However, as Ladwig argues, Keddie gave no theoretical explanation for the focus on social class, other than saying that the differentiation of schooling corresponds to social class differences. Sharp and Green (1975) criticised Keddie for limiting the scope of the analysis to teachers’ perception and their power as actors in the educational context. Thereby, if teachers were to change their perceptions then inequality and inappropriate differentiation could be righted.

In their study of teachers and pupils in ‘progressive’ primary classrooms, Sharp and Green find, like Keddie, that teachers’ perceptions of pupils are locked into the

‘psychometric paradigm’. However, the alternative which Sharp and Green offer is the broader social context in which teachers are located. Classroom practice is related to social class at multiple levels: understanding the relationships between headteacher and teachers, between teachers and parents, between teachers and pupils. They raise the matter of the interpretation of the reality of teachers’ actions, arguing that ‘teachers are encapsulated within a context where the problems of management and control require some implicit hierarchical differentiation of pupils in order to solve the problem of order and provide some legitimation for the allocation of scarce resources, i.e. the teacher’s time and energies’ (p.127).

This is a Marxist analysis in that it locates teachers as members of a proletarian working class selling their labour, and the material conditions of their employment are under the control of a capitalist state apparatus. Teachers’ perceptions could be interpreted in terms of the classroom conditions in which they faced large numbers of working class pupils with few material resources. ‘Sharp and Green directly connected their observations of school experience to the “larger” class structure of society... ‘ (Ladwig, p.21).

Popkewitz (2000) draws on Foucault’s use of discourse to depict knowledge as power, power *over* and power *to*. He uses Foucault’s (1979) concept of ‘governmentality’ in which knowledge is related to the rules generated for action and participation, the effects of power in that it examines the relations of knowledge in governing the problematic rules through which choice and possibilities are generated – the way the individual is disciplined to act through discursive processes. The self is defined as a knowing being: a reasoned person who disciplines the self. Popkewitz points out that rarely are the rules through which we know about the world questioned or thought of as the effects of power and he notes changes in the structure of power. In the Nineteenth Century the state shifted from care of its territory to care of the population. Power no longer operates from the apex of society through the sovereign rulers. Rather, knowledge is linked to power by the micro-processes through which individuals construct their sense of self and their relations to others. Power functions through an individualisation that disciplines and produces action rather than merely repressing action.

Governmentality enables a re-thinking of the distinction between state and civil society. Rather than the state as a sovereign entity separate from other social actors, the state is the historical relations through which principles of governing are produced. Multiple institutions overlap as different discourses – state agencies, philanthropic organisations, lending agencies and professions – provide the discourse to fashion subjectivities. The state is an epistemological category to study the relations in which discursive practices construct governing principles. Popkewitz explains that, whereas sovereignty focuses on the negative, repressive side of power, the idea of governmentality considers knowledge as disciplining productivity through the rules that are generated for actions.

In knowledge politics the covert relationship between social structure, power and knowledge, and the debates about knowledge, become an explicit agenda for the state. In the education context knowledge politics is taken up by Apple (1993) who sees the construction of the state curriculum as the overt and explicit attempt to sculpture knowledge to supply the technical skills needs of western capitalism. However, Coulby (2000) shows that these explicit attempts by the state to control knowledge can be misplaced in the context of global capitalism which requires an imaginatively wider range of knowledge than that provided by the simple basic-skills national curriculum.

The examples of the sociology of knowledge discussed above are located at the statutory school age. In a discussion of higher education in the USA, Aronowitz (2000) transfers the theme of knowledge and social class to higher education. He asserts that, with 80% of high school students graduating and 50% going to university or college, universities are now operating at the same level as schools did fifty years ago. There is, then, a broader class base within the university and he asks,

Can universities maintain their role as political unifiers of an increasingly diverse population by providing the basic guidelines for what constitutes “citizenship” in the contemporary social world? (p.3).

Higher education, then, is reduced to advanced and intermediate training schools. Schools create the work ethic. Higher education formerly provided the critique of society through the humanities and now through the social sciences. ‘The social

sciences have increasingly veered towards the natural sciences in their self-conscious subordination to the prevailing order' (p.4). Universities are now the 'intellectual servants of power' and its employees 'follow the money'. Nineteenth century literature first replaced philosophy in the quest for the national identity. The university now joins the rest of the education system as the means of integrating American culture.

Aronowitz (2000) cites Willis's (1981) study in which working-class boys reject the cultural capital of schooling. He suggests that the effects of post-industrialisation, leaving some US towns completely jobless, means that resistance to cultural capital in schools has moved up to students in higher education. He depicts Bernstein's (1975) class linguistic codes as cultural capital and, while students attend classes they refuse to acquire the linguistic codes of higher education. Higher education merely delays entry to an uncertain job market. As noted in Chapter 2, Aronowitz is critical of the enlarged student population and the way in which it has become simply the site for learning the skills for industry. The point about Aronowitz's analysis is that it transfers the social class debate about higher education from one about access and exclusion to a debate about the process within the walls of the university.

#### **Conclusion - The sociology of knowledge and the Education Studies curriculum: Explanatory theory for the data**

This section attempts to assess the relevance of some of the theories of the sociology of knowledge discussed above to the development of the Education Studies curriculum and to the data which have already been collected in the research project in nine institutions. In so doing it attempts to sketch some elements of an explanatory theory for the findings. There must be some reservation about the explanatory power of these suggestions. The theoretical level of the sociology of knowledge means that the relationship to the university curriculum must be tenuous and is dependent upon analogy. The fundamental theory from the sociology of knowledge which is relevant to the analysis of the Education Studies curriculum is the two-fold theory of structure and self-interest summarised by Law (1986). On the one hand, the nature of the antecedent curriculum is seen as structural and cultural, on the other hand, the curriculum is constructed to serve the individual and institution interests of those

involved. And in a Marxist sense, ideology – or belief in professed educational values – is the key mechanism for concealing self-interest.

Young's (1971) interest in the sociology of knowledge and the curriculum makes his paper particularly relevant: the power of some to define what is valued knowledge. A feature of university knowledge is that, until recently, it has been completely controlled by the universities, in contrast with school knowledge which is state-controlled and serves as a mechanism for social control. The university as a powerful agent in the definition of knowledge is a central factor in the development of Education Studies knowledge and it can be shown from the data that the power of the academy to define the curriculum rests almost entirely with the higher education institution, or with those individuals within it. Of course, the development of Education Studies is partly a function of the attempt to maintain institutional control of the curriculum, as against the loss of control of the teacher-training curriculum in the 1990s through the appropriation of the discourse and definitions by the state by the Teacher Training Agency.

Williams's (1961) theory is relevant in that the old Oxbridge university model was based upon the liberal/conservative paradigm in which education was seen as non-vocational. The red-brick universities operated in a bourgeois framework to project students into higher vocational positions. The forty years since the Robbins Report (1963) has seen the rise of the democratic perspective with the expansion of higher education through polytechnics and post-1992 universities. Widening participation has also seen the proletarianisation of the university curriculum through increased student choice and the participation of the working class in university life. This is elaborated by Readings (1996) who suggests that the university becomes an economic instrument, rather than the state's realisation of itself. The market, then, which was probably outside Williams's purview in 1961 has now made his fourth category of 'populist/proletarian' into a significant one.

Weber's (1952) 'patrimonial bureaucracy' is a useful tool to explain the power of the academy. The university is a bureaucracy and its medieval role in defining and codifying knowledge has been unchallenged until recent years (Barnett, 2000). This might be seen to operate at two levels. First the bureaucracy of the university's



curriculum exists in its formal structures: the curriculum is defined through formal approval mechanisms and assessment procedures. These tend to conserve old definitions over time and the structures themselves are designed to resist change. Second, the patrimony of the faculty staff tends to conserve the knowledge defined and taught by themselves over time. This is now being challenged by the market, but Gramsci's (1957) hegemony tends to diffuse the effect of the potential in the market for change. Students tend to accept definitions of knowledge. This is demonstrated in the data by the acceptance by students of a remarkable range of different curricular definitions of Education Studies in different institutions. The data suggest that a factor in the Education Studies curriculum is the simple continuity of the traditional Education knowledge, often preserved by individual staff who use the subject to maintain particular interests and expertise to preserve the career continuity of individuals. Examples of this will be found in the data analysis.

A key thinker for the discussion is Mannheim, whose theory of knowledge in competition has become particularly apposite in the current market context. Education Studies is frequently selected in order for the institution, or the faculty, to define itself in competition with other institutions, or in competition with other courses in the same institution. This is sometimes rationalised as making alternative provision, but essentially it is about marketing. So Mannheim's theory works well in the current market context. Examples in the data analysis will show the university using Education Studies as a marketing device to attract students and funding. The other way that Mannheim's theory is relevant is in individual academic competition. This has always existed in the academic-recognition race, but it is heightened by the market context of universities and the sharpened competition for posts. Another interesting point from Mannheim is his suggestion that the study of knowledge has a transformative effect on its practitioners; it 'calls intellectuals to their vocation of striving for synthesis' (p.193). It distances them from the parties contending, giving them distance and overview. This is most relevant to the idea of Education Studies as a subject in which students reflect on and analyse their experiences of education in practice.

Bourdieu (1971) is relevant in the way the institutional structure affects knowledge. What is particularly significant is his suggestion that the institution 'modifies the

content and the spirit of the culture it transmits and, above all, that its expressed function is to transform the collective heritage into a common individual unconscious' (p.194). In the case of the university curriculum knowledge can be trapped inside a modular framework, determining the structure of thought. The combinations of subjects and modules offered by universities in the data indicate this.

Foucault's critique of the unity of discourse makes the notion of creating a unity of discourse for Education Studies seem remote. The research data indicate that there is currently no systematic discourse for Education Studies, and a question is whether such a discourse will ever emerge. So far it is distributed among the discourses of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Economics.

Bernstein's (1971) classification and framing proves to be particularly useful in conceptualising the development of the Education Studies curriculum in two ways. The first is framing and raises the question of the extent to which the Education Studies curriculum might be very weakly framed, allowing general knowledge of schooling and educational experiences without any strong theoretical basis to distinguish it from 'everyday knowledge' about education which students bring with them. As former pupils in the education system, they are, of course, familiar with a wide range of 'everyday knowledge' about education and this is a particularly significant feature of the study of Education. Data from the project would suggest that this *is* the case in that there is a lack of a strong theoretical basis for many of the Education Studies courses described; students' everyday knowledge of schooling appears to be a substantial feature of the curriculum. The second dimension is classification and the extent to which Education Studies is an integrated code with weak classification. Evidence from the research project again suggests that the subject is very loosely structured and is an amalgam of a variety of other disciplines. Most subject leaders refer to the use of the disciplines, but few could clearly explain their articulation within Education Studies. Bernstein's suggestion that under the integrated code there must be 'consensus about the integrated idea and it must be very explicit' is generally not upheld by the research which finds that course leaders do not easily articulate a theoretical framework for the subject and frequently propose that it will arise *post hoc* after the course has been running.

Bernstein's (1975) paper on the relations between education and production is also relevant to the theory of the Education Studies curriculum. The data show that institutions differentially depict their curriculum as strongly or weakly classified through the foundation subjects of Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy of Education. They also vary in the extent to which the course is related to teacher training and the intellectual – or class - status which they claim. The Discussion of the Findings in Chapter 7, Section 2 gives the detail of this analysis.

Aronowitz's (2000) description of the class orientation with the US university is relevant in that the direction of the UK higher education system might be seen to be parallel to that of the US, albeit some years behind. While the UK changes to higher education are characterised through the ideology of 'widening participation', it might also be seen as the introduction of social class differentiation into the university and the effects of this can be seen in the interview data where subject leaders depict Education Studies as high or low status for differentiated populations. There is, of course, a question as to how much the school categories of Bernstein (1971), Keddie (1971) and Sharpe and Greene (1975) can be transferred directly to higher education. However, with widening participation, the class dimension is no longer one about access and whether students attend university; instead the class debate is now taken inside the university. Aronowitz shows how this has already happened in the US. The indications are that it will happen in the UK as it heads towards the 50% cohort entry to higher education. So working class students inherit a different curriculum from the middle class. This effect becomes evident in the data analysis.

Sharp and Green's (1975) critique of the 1970s 'New sociologists' is relevant in that it is necessary to take into account the wider interpretation of social context in which the actors in Education Studies courses are operating. It is necessary to interpret interviewees' statements in terms of the larger social context of:

- Their employment and career trajectories
- Relationships within the faculty
- The management of the university at the faculty level
- The capitalist-run state apparatus of the university
- The higher education market

- The knowledge politics of the control of teacher training
- Socially constructed professed ideologies

Law's (1968) discussion of the trends in the sociology of knowledge is interesting. He differentiates the structural and cultural effects on, versus social interests in, knowledge. The research data indicate that the development of Education Studies is cultural in the sense of its relationship to other courses and former traditions in teacher training, but it is also determined by social interests of individuals and institutions. The two-way relationship between structure and belief is also present in the analysis: structure determines the knowledge content of courses, but belief and ideas also contribute to the institutional structure.

Glover and Strawbridge's (1985) critique is not to deny that beliefs are socially determined in the way that Marx suggested, but that the notion of a single dominant ideology is too simple a means of accounting for the way that ideas are held. In Education Studies the data show that there is a complex intertwining of self-interest, Marxist ideology, class and classification and response to the markets.

Apple's (1993) and Stehr's (2003) concept of 'knowledge politics' addresses the facts about the overt and explicit government control of knowledge as a twenty-first century phenomenon. Governments have progressively expunged theory from teacher training as it is seen as a threat. Teachers should not know too much, they should simply be technicians. This is part of the deprofessionalisation and proletarianisation of teaching noted by, for example, Mahony and Hextall (2000) and Education Studies could be a threat to the teacher-training framework of educational knowledge. Obviously this is not to be compared with stem-cell research; however, it might legitimately be seen as part of the culture of knowledge control and knowledge politics that have become the everyday business of the state.

As noted in Chapter 2, Furedi's (2004) complaint about the reduction in intellectual activities in universities and Aronowitz's (2000) characterisation of US higher education McLean (2006) would call 'a narrative of decline'. She argues that this is neither necessary nor inevitable and urges, instead, that universities should be, using

Habermas's (1989) phrase, '*enlightening the public sphere* by educating their students as intellectuals'. Education Studies has the opportunity to do this by providing a critique of state structures and policy, or it can follow the Furedi's and Aronowitz's tide of anti-intellectualism by restricting the curriculum to descriptive accounts of 'good practice' in pedagogy and child development. The latter serves to make Education Studies an attractive recruiter in the higher education market, but does not reach to the 'enlightenment of the public sphere' which Habermas and McLean envisage. The research evidence indicates both these possibilities with some depicting Education Studies as a subject for 're-intellectualising society' and others view it as a subject for low achievers. The antinomy is also reflected in the different accounts of the subjects vocational outcomes.

McLean's (2006) injunction about academic teaching is particularly applicable to the Education Studies curriculum, which is frequently depicted by the subject leaders as 'intellectual critique':

I suggest that university teaching could enlighten the political public sphere by engaging in pedagogic practices which develop students as intellectuals, that is, as people who deal in ideas, questions, argument and critique.... academics-as-teachers could try to reinstate and insist on a critical role for universities. Universities are both emancipatory *and* elitist, they both reproduce *and* subvert the larger society. We should be able to find spaces within the contradictions to wrench the teaching role back from technical-rational constructions (p.13).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Knowledge in Education Studies**

This chapter examines the literature on knowledge in undergraduate Education Studies in England and Wales: the way it has grown from its origins in teacher training and the epistemological discussions of its form and content. In Chapter 2 it was shown that higher education knowledge in the UK has been defined by autonomous universities and their academics, largely free of the direct influence of the state. Teacher training in England and Wales has been an exception to this pattern. Section 1 gives a historical account of the political development of state control in undergraduate initial teacher training and its effects on the theoretical study of Education. Section 2 returns to the epistemological debates about the nature of Education Studies, when it was first conceived for undergraduate teacher training and the way these issues are relevant to current discussions of the nature of the emerging subject. The chapter is intended to provide the background to the analysis of the research interviewees' comments about the theoretical framework for the subject.

### **Section 1 - Education Studies and its growth from initial teacher training in England and Wales**

#### **Introduction**

Non-teacher-training Education Studies has existed since the 1960s in a small number of institutions, notably the universities of Cardiff, Lancaster and York. However, the last six years have seen a dramatic increase in undergraduate Education Studies degree courses: students registered for the subject in the UK rose from 4,285 in 2001/2 to 7,725 in 2003/4 (HESA, 2003, 2005). This section traces the political context of the development of the subject from its origins in teacher training and its growth alongside the increasingly government-determined teacher-training curriculum. It will be seen that this historical account is important to the study in explaining the background to the views of state control of teacher training expressed by interviewees in the data.

### **The origins of theory in teacher education**

Ross (1990) explains that prior to the 1960s, teacher education in the UK had been in the form of two-year practical training courses for primary school teachers. Such courses were relatively free of theoretical considerations, concentrating mainly upon providing the practical resources which teachers would need to function in the classroom. Theoretical Education Studies began in the 1960s with attempts to create an all-graduate teaching profession and it developed as a collection of related disciplines in Bachelor of Education degrees: Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History of Education. These were to be taught in the former training colleges, but validated and awarded by universities. It was the universities' insistence on an academic grounding for teacher training degrees that led to this selection of disciplines. There are several accounts of these origins.

Richardson (2002) explains that the McNair Committee of 1944 had complained that teacher training was impoverished and needed to be improved through a blending of academic and professional study and that the Robbins Committee (1962) had recommended the development of BEd degrees with the absorption of the training colleges into the universities. The latter was a two-fold strategy to increase the numbers in higher education and to increase the intellectual quality of the teaching profession. However, the merger into the universities was politically resisted by the Local Education Authorities (LEA) which then controlled the teacher-training colleges. Instead the universities were linked with the colleges to validate courses and make awards, leaving teacher education formally out of the university sector.

Crook (2002) explains that the validating universities were suspicious of the teacher training, believing it not to be a proper academic subject, but simply tricks of the trade. Richardson notes that they had been involved in the high-status training of grammar school teachers, but lacked knowledge or interest in the theory of Education Studies. But Richardson shows that it was the universities' priorities which remained uppermost in the development of the new degrees and it was judged that in the training colleges there was a lack of a 'binding theory' or epistemology of education. It was at this point that the subject disciplines were drawn in to form a theoretical basis for education. In a Kantian move, RS Peters of the London Institute of Education, argued that philosophers should

determine the subject balance and he met with CJ Gill, HMI for teacher training, in a closed seminar at the DES to agree the subjects to be included in the new degrees. The proposal was for Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Economics to be the theoretical basis. Economics was subsequently dropped and history of education substituted.

This was a remarkably autocratic event with little open discussion and agreement of those involved. As Richardson points out, there was a very limited research base for the disciplines in education in the universities and little research competence in the training colleges. Pedagogy was excluded and Crook (2002) details the historical problems which Education Studies encountered alongside demands for practical teacher training.

.. the absence of pedagogy as a core component of Educational Studies in the undergraduate degrees established during 1965-68 was indicative of the general difficulties of educationists making a decisive theoretical contribution to practical problems in education (p.23).

Simon (1994) also suggests that the Education Studies programmes developed in the 1960s suffered from being simply academic elements grafted onto teacher training by the universities. He suggests that the process was to put theory into what had been essentially the practical and vocational studies in non-graduate Teacher Certificate courses. Crook (2002) describes the consequent neglect of the professional dimensions of ITT as a ‘wrong turn’ (p.60).

McCulloch (2002) traces the discussions between Peters (1963) and Tibble (1971) about the nature of educational theory and the role of the disciplines. Richard Peters in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, London, in 1963 insisted that ‘education is not an autonomous discipline, but a field, like politics, where the disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology and sociology have applications’ (Peters, 1963/1980, p.273). This was intended to be a conscious reaction against the ‘undifferentiated mush’ of educational theory which had damaged the study of education. However, Tibble asserts that there is no single methodology for education:



It is clear that ‘education’ is a field subject, not a basic discipline; there is no distinctively ‘educational’ way of thinking; in studying education one is using psychological or historical or sociological or philosophical ways of thinking to throw light on some problem in the field of human learning (Tibble, 1971, p.16).

The debate then was the extent to which educational theory could be seen as a distinct entity in itself, or an amalgam of the so-called foundation disciplines. There are, however, different notions of what constitutes ‘a discipline’. McCulloch cites King and Brownell who suggest that it is not simply an area of study or knowledge, but ‘a community of scholars who share a domain of intellectual inquiry or discourse’ (McCulloch, 2002:102). This looser definition allows Education Studies to be described as a discipline. McCulloch notes that Bassey’s (1999) more recent suggestion that ‘a dependence on the disciplines could be seen not only as unduly theoretical and tenuous in its connections with educational concerns, but as restrictive in holding back the growth of an independent field of enquiry’ (McCulloch, 2002:101). McCulloch goes on to examine the counter claim that a grounding in the disciplines is essential. He notes Gamble’s suggestion that the competition between the disciplines has not been simply an intellectual one, but a matter of power: who gets published, who gets appointed. McCulloch goes on to list the various power struggles between the proponents of the disciplines in a series of lectures at the University of Leicester: Hirst (1968) for Philosophy, Charlton (1968) for History, Taylor (1968) for Psychology and Musgrove (1968) for Sociology. During the 1960s all the protagonists were attempting to assert ‘the practical relevance of the subject to education’ (p.110), and thereby to demonstrate its role as an explanatory and prescriptive model for practice. It was Stenhouse (1975) who argued to the contrary that, while the disciplines had contributed to ‘rigour’ and ‘intellectual tone’, they had done little for ‘their relevance to the problem of improving the practice of teaching’. He argued for a form of curriculum studies which would analyse curriculum content and the nature of teaching and learning in order to be relevant to classroom practice.

However, by the mid 1970s, McCulloch shows that the disciplines were well established,

... both in terms of their general rationale for contributing to the study of education as a whole, and increasingly as clearly defined and discrete

disciplinary communities in their own right. They aligned themselves closely in a theoretical sense to a mainstream disciplinary culture (p.114).

He goes on to discuss the apparent demise of the foundation disciplines during the last 25 years, but suggests that they have in fact continued to survive, albeit in a modified or reduced form. He mentions particularly the continuing strength of sociology which, although it had no single academic association, had a strong influence during the 1980s through a diverse and loosely organised community with journals such as the *British Journal of the Sociology of Education* (BJSE) and *International Studies in the Sociology of Education*, the latter launched in 1991 and originating in the annual Westhill Conference in Birmingham. McCulloch points out that conferences and journals still flourish and that the disciplines are alive and well in the context of the British Educational Research Association (BERA).

But even by the 1980s, the assuredness about the centrality of the disciplines to the theory-practice question was faltering. McCulloch quotes Hirst (1983) who insists that the disciplines survive but acknowledges that they do not constitute principles for practice:

The disciplines cannot tackle any given practical questions as such for each tackles questions which are peculiar to itself, those that can be raised only within its own distinctive conceptual apparatus. Psychologists, sociologists or philosophers faced with any matter of practical policy on, say, the grouping of pupils in schools or the use of punishment, can legitimately comment only on different psychological, sociological or philosophical issues that may be at stake (Hirst, -1983, p.6).

And it is here that the difficulty for the disciplines lies. Their origins in education had been as explanatory theory for practice, and it is in this respect that their existence has been most strongly challenged. McCulloch makes a good point that the disciplinary-based journals were aimed at two audiences: ‘a disciplinary priesthood and a broader educational laity’. The BJSE, for example, cited its main objective as being ‘to contribute to a better understanding of schools and education systems’. Perhaps the fundamental weakness of the disciplines has been their failure to inform the practice of ‘the laity’. McCulloch notes the reference to the disciplines in the criteria for the unit of Education in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), ‘*Disciplines contributing to education: History, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology and other*

disciplines of education' (RAE, 1999, paragraph 3.59.5.d). However, McCulloch makes no mention of the lack of any reference to the disciplines in the Teacher Training Agency standards for teaching (TTA, 1998 and 2002). Of course, it is this state pressure on the educational theory and practice debate which has had the most significant effect on driving the mention of the disciplines from a theoretical model of practice (Mahony and Hextall, 1997). The picture, then, would seem to be that the disciplines might have an explicit role in informing the work of educational researchers, the priesthood, but not the work of practitioners, the laity.

This account explains the two problems in the attempts to give teacher education an academic basis. First, the clumsy 'bolting-on' of the academic disciplines to the old training courses and the failure to include pedagogy in the theoretical framework was bound to make the new courses appear irrelevant to practice. Second, the failure to absorb the teacher training colleges into the university sector, as Robbins had recommended, meant that teacher training was to continue to be a relatively low-status activity, with its degrees given by the consent of the distant universities. It was not long before the difficulties arose and the academic theory for teacher training came under attack. The situation was somewhat improved during the 1970s and 80s when many of the teacher-training colleges were merged into the new polytechnics and the BEd degrees were validated by the Council for National Academic Awards. However, it left primary undergraduate teacher education on the low-status side of the binary divide (see Kogan and Hanney, 2000, Chapter 2, Section 2). It is also worth mentioning that the mergers with the polytechnics in the 1970s had come at a time when teacher education was suffering from cuts to numbers, college closures and redundancies (Hencke, 1978). Overall, the academic origins of Education Studies are in a community which was threatened both in terms of its knowledge, its status and its viability.

### **Criticisms of teacher training theory and the rise of government control**

It was the Thatcher government of the early 1980s which began the serious attack on university teacher training as a part of its attempt to disempower professional academics (Furlong et al, 2000, Cowen, 2002), although similar signals had been given earlier by the Labour government under Callaghan (1976). The charges were that teacher training was a self-serving process for the benefit of professional

academics, irrelevant to the needs of teachers and children and taught by those who were out of touch with classroom practice. Successive governments were joined in their critique of teacher training from many quarters, including complaints about irrelevant theory from teachers and student teachers (Tomlinson and Hobson, 2001), but also from virulent criticisms by right-wing academics and political groups (Hillgate Group, 1989, Phillips, 1996, Hargreaves, 1996).

These criticisms progressively strengthened successive governments in making moves against the universities through various regulatory bodies. The first in the early 1980s was the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE). This was relatively tentative, requiring teacher training institutions to submit their courses for audit and approval and to demonstrate their relevance to practice. One feature of CATE which was most notable was the requirement that all staff teaching on programmes should have ‘recent and relevant’ experience of teaching in classrooms. This caused a flurry of short placements, with academics sent out to gain the necessary experience in local classrooms. It caused, also, a high level of anxiety among older teacher-training staff who had to make considerable readjustments to accommodate this (Fish, 1988).

The attack on teacher training was continued into the Major years of the Conservative administration as part of the ‘back-to-basics’ policy of the early 1990s. The Prime Minister’s speech to the Conservative Party conference in 1993 announcing the plan to rid teacher training of irrelevant theory about gender and race and to enable teachers to teach numeracy and literacy was received to rapturous applause. The significance of this was the link between ‘the basics’ (what we all know to be true and good) and the ‘abolition of theory’. This was a powerful populist mixture, attractive both to some practitioners and apparently to the voting public.

Although the CATE criteria had made heavy demands on teacher training institutions and their courses, it had still left the teacher education curriculum in the hands of the institutions: they had only to justify its relevance. It was still possible in the 1980s, then, to include at least vestiges of some of the academic disciplines within courses. With Major, the 1990s brought much stronger controls in the form of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). This was one of the first examples of a whole series of such

agencies designed to enact policy on behalf of government ministers. The TTA was first staffed by a series of individuals who openly demonstrated their hostility to the old ‘academic’ courses and set upon a course of explicitly ‘reforming’ teacher training. The rancorous nature of the debate at this time is well summarised in an account of a discussion between academics and right-wing politicians in UCET (1997). There was at the time, not only in documents, but in personal exchanges between Agency staff and university academics a sense of universities being gratuitously punished for their theoretical misdemeanours of the past.

The New Labour Government elected in 1997 brought no respite for the universities and the TTA was urged to continue its policies. With the full force of government behind it the TTA (1998) moved rapidly to take control of teacher education from the hands of the universities through the following moves:

- a set of standards (or competences) to be met by all qualified teachers which were entirely defined by subject knowledge and teaching competence;
- a set of requirements for teacher training, including the length of time to be spent in schools;
- an Ofsted inspection regime which allowed for no deviance from the standards or requirements;
- a funding mechanism which rewarded only those with good Ofsted grades and penalised those non-compliant with the requirements by removing accreditation and funding.

These measures had the effect of completing the process which had begun in the early 1980s of removing teacher education from the rest of the unregulated higher education system. Teacher education had now become government business. The standards were the means of removing academic theory from teacher education, and rendering it ‘teacher training’.

As if to make the process indisputable, the TTA ruled out the features of academic discourse from teacher education: the process is *teacher training*, students were to be known as *trainees*, universities as *providers*, successful teaching as *compliance with the standards*, assessment as *auditing subject knowledge*. The discourse engaged in by the

TTA at this time of the 1990s was often uncompromising and over-emphatic. An example is from a speech by Anthea Millett (1999), then Chief Executive, commenting on the arrangement for unsuccessful Newly Qualified Teachers:

...some will fall by the wayside... individual tragedies... But I am sure that most of us will remember what happened when weak teachers escaped the nets erected in the past ..... untold damage to the education of the pupils in their charge (p.6).

On the other side, the language is equally uncompromising. Barton et al (1994) criticise the new reforms as a part of government attempts to de-professionalise teachers removing the universities from teacher training. They quote Stuart Maclure (1993):

(The) sub-plot... is to take teacher training out of the universities and colleges and ultimately to sever the connection between the study of education in higher education and its practice in schools. This is a deeply damaging idea and must be fought tooth and nail ... the (proposals) must be examined closely for insidious attempts to dismantle the traditional defences of teaching as a profession (p.531).

The moves against universities included attempts to divert ITT from Higher Education Institutions with the introduction of a variety of school-based modes of training, known as School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) (TTA, 1995) and the Graduate and Registered Teacher Programmes (GRTP), now Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP). Where teacher training is carried out in higher education, the university is obliged to work in close partnership with schools and to devolve its funding to school partners to pay for supervision and assessment of students' teaching experiences. Simple tests of numeracy and literacy which all trainees must pass before gaining QTS are administered by the TTA; university 'providers' are not to be trusted with this.

The 1990s, then, saw confrontation between higher education and the state over teacher education, which the state was likely to win, given its absolute control of resources. It is remarkable, though, in its contrast with the state's relationship with the rest of higher education and by the end of the decade the Standards, the Requirements and the Ofsted inspection framework were firmly and unequivocally in place. Institutions settled into the tireless pursuit of standardisation and compliance.

### **Academic response to teacher training reforms**

While university institutions acquiesced in the hand-over of the teacher-training curriculum to the state-defined standards, there has been considerable academic resistance and objection, some of which is cited here. These are important in forming the basis for many of the opinions of individual interviewees in the research.

Mahony and Hextall (1997, 2000) question the whole principle of government-appointed 'QUANGOs' such as the TTA, calling it 'reinvented government' in which non-elected and non-representative individuals are appointed and vested with powers over the lives of professionals. Others, such as HEI and LEA staff are 'used by the TTA, but have no formal relationship with it' (2000:20) in various committees and groups. Responsibility for decisions is thus diffuse and unclear. So how the assumptions are drawn for the selection of standards and requirements is never clear. Mahony and Hextall (2000) also make the point that there is bound to be tension between the standards as developmental aid for trainee teachers and as regulatory mechanism. In a similar vein, Richards (1998) argues that there is no rationale argued for the teacher training curriculum and that the Standards are based on undiscussed and value-free notions. There is no proposed ideal of the good teacher, merely technicist definitions of skills.

Maguire, Dillon and Quintrell (1998) criticise the over-explicit detail in the standards which, they argue, is designed to de-professionalise. Again, there is no rationale for the type of teacher to be produced. The set of unquestioned competences is inappropriate to teaching, they suggest, pointing out that the professional teacher operates in largely non-routine situations, especially when children's learning is taken into account. Teachers need to have some freedom, and the ability, to make judgements; the reduction of teaching to a set of rules is, therefore, inadequate for the education of professionals. They argue also that the emphasis on subject content is misplaced, and that it is sensitivity to children's learning which is important.

The opposition to reductionism is taken up by Hargreaves, (2003) who sees the controls of teacher training as a function of a wider malaise caused by the global demand for increased standards through standardisation:

In many parts of the world, the rightful quest for higher educational standards has degenerated into a compulsive obsession with standardisation. By and large, our schools are preparing young people neither to work well in the knowledge economy nor to live in a strong civil society. Instead of promoting economic invention and social integration, too many schools are becoming mired in the regulations and routines of soulless standardisation.... (p. xvii).

Bottery (2000) sees dangers in the very process of compliance and conformity to the reductionist model of initial teacher training. He argues that a culture of compliance with the state-defined curriculum now suffuses initial teacher training which feeds into the profession. The problem is that it removes the ability to apply critique of education policy and practice. Not only is critique removed from the list of skills and knowledge, but the very ability to engage in critique is obviated by the whole process. Like Hargreaves, Bottery recommends that teachers in the 21st Century need a global perspective on their own practice, on government policies in education and an analysis of the context in which their professional work takes place. He warns of the dangers of a single vision of education and suggests that

educators may be complicit in the meshing of a primarily technical-rational and implementational culture with a set of centralising government priorities... (This has) produced a monolithic approach to education which has silenced alternative views, and contributed to a greater corporatism and a reduced form of democracy (p.155).

The role of the universities in teacher training is couched within the rhetoric of 'partnership with schools'. Partnership is always an attractive proposition in a democratic and free-thinking society, but Crozier, Menter and Pollard (1990) point out that it is also a means of concealing the loss of the curriculum by the universities.

Heartfelt and powerfully argued as they are, few of these protests made an impression on the Agency as the machinery for the implementation of the state definition of the teacher-training curriculum. The 2002 revision (TTA, 2002) made some concessions to the concept of education values with a section on 'Professional Standards' and the number of detailed standards was reduced with a (large) accompanying handbook of guidance. However, the essence was the same and the machinery for ensuring compliance, the Ofsted Framework (Ofsted, 2004), was made even stronger.



The new Chief Executive, appointed in 2000 from a higher education background, appeared to signal a softening of the hard-line, anti-university approach of the 1990s (Tabberer, 2000). However, change was slight and significantly there was no concession to change the nomenclature back to ‘teacher education’ and the ‘training’ language continues.

It is important to note that while the TDA allocates student numbers in Wales, the specific allocation is under the jurisdiction of the Welsh Assembly and its policy is outlined in the document, *Wales: The Learning Country* (Welsh Assembly 2005). Trainees in Wales are not required to take the Literacy and Numeracy tests. While the Welsh teacher-training courses are inspected, the inspection regime is less rigorous than the English one. This is significant in the discussion of the institutional case in Wales.

### **Institutional responses to government control**

The University of Liverpool in 2000 found the rigours and trials of compliance with national standards not worthwhile and withdrew from teacher training. At the time there were rumours that other universities would act similarly, but none did and, to date, all have volunteered to continue to offer teacher training under the new regime.

Other institutions did modify their programmes to take account of the new compliance culture and the threatening Ofsted methodology. As noted in the example at Bath Spa University in Chapter 1, it was possible to convert an existing primary undergraduate QTS course into HEFCE undergraduate numbers plus an enlarged PGCE teacher training year, the pattern known as 3+1. A small proportion of institutions took advantage of this. The reasons for the willingness of the TTA to make this type of conversion is not formally documented; the assumption is that at the time the PGCE course was favoured by the TTA as a method of training, because the one year programme was more flexible and easily susceptible to modifications than a four-year degree course. However, while all those who applied to make the change were granted it, there was no pressure from the TTA on institutions to make the change to 3+1 and the great majority chose to retain their undergraduate courses.

Again, there is nothing documented as to the reasons for institutions not making the 3+1 change, although Kynch (2003) argues for the retention of the undergraduate QTS course, suggesting that it provides a stronger training for the standards than the one-year PGCE. It is somewhat surprising that more institutions did not opt for the 3+1, given the apparent benefits listed in Chapter 1. Of the nine cases in the research study, two had elected to do so. It will be seen from the data that most seemed to prefer to retain the *status quo*, the reasons being that the courses had generally been successful and recruited students and there was a fear of a risk in making the change.

The institutional resistance to the government take-over can, then, be said to have been weak. If others had joined the University of Liverpool in a coordinated act of defiance, then the TTA and the government's grip on the situation could have been weakened. However, the income and status provided by teacher training must still have been a sufficient incentive and university vice chancellors were probably fighting other more important battles at the time.

### **The emergence of undergraduate Education Studies**

Undergraduate Education Studies appeared by 2005 in some 45-50 HE institutions in England and Wales (HESA, 2005). Precise numbers are difficult to determine because the content of courses is sometimes ambiguous. For example, some Childhood Studies and Early Years Studies courses count as 'Education' and are difficult to distinguish from courses in child care or child development.

The different courses appear, then, to have grown, apart from the very small number of original sources of the 1960s, from within teacher training contexts. They are either conversion from an undergraduate QTS course, or complementary to an existing QTS course in the school or faculty. One of the questions to be explored is the extent to which Education Studies exists because of the government appropriation of the teacher-training curriculum. This will be addressed in the analysis of the interview data.

Before examining the epistemological aspects of the Education Studies curriculum in the next section of this chapter, it is important to note more recent developments in government Education policy which are likely to affect the development of the subject in the near future. These are the so-called ‘School Workforce Remodelling’ (DfES, 2005) and the *Every Child Matters* Agenda (DfES, 2003). This range of initiatives is an attempt by HM government to broaden the range of skills employed in schools and to extend the range of the school within the community. As a strategy to improve the care of children and young people it seeks to integrate the educational and social services for children. The consequences of these initiatives are likely to be an expansion in the range of career opportunities for graduates in education with non-teaching qualifications.

In addition, in 2006, the Early Years Professional Status has been announced by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC, 2006). This is deemed to be equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status for those working in early years care and education. It will be a requirement for those employed in early years settings. Those who wish to obtain the qualification will need to have met a set of national standards similar to those for QTS. Other forms of ‘professional status’ are expected to emerge for other aspects of education and care. These are likely to affect the future development of the subject.

Finally, 2006 saw the publication of *The Furlong Report* (Furlong, 2006), commissioned by the Welsh Assembly to provide recommendations for the reduction of teacher training in Wales. In order to make the necessary reductions the report recommends the termination of all undergraduate initial teacher training and the move to all postgraduate courses. Those institutions holding undergraduate QTS numbers will be allowed to retain them as non-teacher training Education Studies places. This in effect means an injection of undergraduate Education Studies in the Welsh institutions and the suggestion of a 3+1 format. This publication is important in the discussion of the Welsh case in the research. It is also significant for all Education Studies courses in its use of the term ‘pre-professional courses’ (para 25) to denote the Education Studies degrees. This suggests a possible return to government involvement in the design and content of such courses.

## Conclusion

The response of universities and individual academics to the state control of teacher education outlined here is central to the research in this study. The government policy and literature cited here is a pre-requisite to the understanding of the interview data. A number of historical facts are important to an explanation of the data. The first is the way in which Education Studies originated as the theoretical basis for undergraduate teacher training and the subsequent criticisms of educational theory which that produced. It will be shown that a recollection of these criticisms is important in shaping the theoretical frameworks in some of the cases examined.

Criticisms of educational theory were the grounds for the imposition of a state-controlled and competence-based curriculum for teacher training. This had the effect of removing the disciplines-based theory from teacher training and thereby transforming the staffing requirements. The data in the dissertation shows that this had a significant impact on the autobiography of those working in teacher training and it becomes in some cases a significant feature of the way that Education Studies is defined. It will be shown that Education Studies to some extent is an effect of resistance to compliance with government policy. The existence of undergraduate teacher training alongside Education Studies in the same institution will be shown to be significant.

Recent government policy on the Remodelled Schools Workforce and the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2003b) and the Furlong Report (Furlong et al, 2006) on Wales are significant in making new demands on university graduates. It will be shown to be relevant to a discussion of the employability aims for the subject.

## Section 2: Theories of Education Studies

### Introduction

The previous section outlines the way in which undergraduate Education Studies emerged as a subject from the historical and political changes to teacher education. As shown there, educational theory in the undergraduate teacher training degrees of the 1960s and 70s was intended to provide prescriptive theory for professional practice. The new Education Studies is not, in itself, teacher training and needs to define itself as a subject or discipline with methods and theory which do not depend on practice. Davies and Hogarth (2004) who attempted a definition were unable to locate any consensus about the nature of Education Studies and it would appear that definitions are to emerge. A central theme in the research data in this study is the way in which the subject leaders and senior managers, in devising new courses, have conceived the theoretical framework for the subject. This section proposes some of the possible theoretical frameworks which are relevant in the analysis of the research data. It is not intended to anticipate the detailed findings, although occasional references to the main findings are made in order to explain the choice of material. Some of the epistemological issues for the subject are discussed, again in order to inform the data analysis.

Some explanation of theory is required. The term ‘theoretical framework’ is intended to mean that which guides or organises the content of the curriculum. This might be a methodological approach, such as the application of the methods of certain disciplines, or it might be through a definition of the aims for the outcomes of the subject, such as the preparation of professionals. While it is not suggested here that there might be a single theoretical framework for all Education Studies courses, it is assumed subject leaders would use some means to organise its material, and it is that which is sought.

The main types of theoretical framework suggested are:

- the use of the contributory disciplines
- critique of policy and practice

- professional preparation

The section concludes with a short analysis of attempts to provide an explicit account of the nature of Education Studies from the QAA Benchmark (2000) and from those drawn from the recent textbooks which have emerged for the new subject.

### **Current views of educational theory**

One finding of the research in this thesis is that Education Studies in undergraduate university courses is under-theorised. However, more general claims about the insufficiency of educational theory are made in the literature. There have been long-standing criticisms of the state of educational theory. Carr (2003) suggests two definitions of ‘theory’ of education. The first he calls a ‘technical’ definition where theory informs educational practice, using the analogy of the doctor’s knowledge of physiology directly to inform medical practice. A second definition concerns values and issues in education:

... educational theory is invariably more concerned with the *normative* dimensions of educational policy and practice – with reasonable evaluation and *prescription* more than true or false *descriptions* or explanations of educational conduct and affairs (p.57).

This second normative definition Carr appears to write off as no theory at all:

... in so far as academic theory is concerned with the discovery of *truth*, it is also genuine theory, whereas normative enquiry or speculation –concerned as it is more with what is *good* or worthwhile rather than true – is less evidently (or strictly speaking) any form of theory at all (p.57).

It is perhaps this ambiguity about the nature of educational theory which makes it an ill-defined activity. In a discussion of the nature of educational research, Turner (2004) argues that education is under-theorised. Responding to Tooley’s (1998) critique, Turner lays the blame for weaknesses in educational research, not with individual researchers and their efforts, but with the lack of an adequate theoretical base and then to build upon it:

.... We are witnessing a failure to develop ‘good theory’ in education... the failure of researchers, policy makers and practitioners to take up and build upon existing research frameworks is symptom of an underlying problem with the development of theory in the area of Education Studies. Until that theoretical shortcoming is addressed directly, educational research will remain a collection of fragmented and sometimes brilliant insights into the educational process, but a body of accepted understanding of educational processes will not be developed (p.5).

Good educational research, argues Turner, ‘needs to address the active learner as a knowing agent in their own development and also as a participant in social networks’ (p.6). Turner also makes interesting points about the inhibition of the development of educational theory by governments who reject theory and have only a crude and naïve acceptance of discovery science, as in, for example, a perceived cure for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Turner argues, instead, for theory based on the following criteria:

- It must be ethical, based on Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, and to be ethical it needs to be universally applicable and this prevents the use of deterministic models which reduce the possibility of free will among participants and which remove responsibility for personal choices within educational settings.
- It must be multi-centred, allowing that there is more than one way to develop an educational career.
- It should allow for partial autonomy between levels of understanding: between the individual and society (pp.13-14).

Turner suggests that comparative education is fertile ground for examining the implicit assumptions which people hold about Education Studies. By focusing on socially constructed concepts, it highlights the shortcomings of universalising assumptions.

Hirst, Carr and Turner appear to be operating from a definition of educational theory as that which informs or prescribes practice. It is easy to see why discussion of educational theory has focused almost exclusively on the theory-practice issue. Education Studies began its life as the theory for undergraduate teacher training and the theory-practice paradigm has dominated thinking about educational theory. However, for the purposes of the discussion of educational theory in the new Education Studies this is likely to be too narrow a definition, because the new subject

is not simply ‘theory for practice’. For Education Studies, educational theory can be a more general framework for analysis and study rather than as prescription for professional practice.

### **Theory as the contributory disciplines**

As noted in the previous section of this chapter, in creating the new Bachelor of Education Degrees in the 1960s, the validating universities had insisted upon an identifiable academic framework, and it was to the known disciplines which they turned. As Richardson (2002) points out, the actual study of Education in the universities themselves at the time was limited and the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History were employed because they were seen to be a reliable academic base. From the beginning their role was problematic and complex. It has already been shown that the decision to include the four was made quickly between a small number of individuals, and that History was only included as a replacement for Economics.

A way of theorising undergraduate Education Studies is through the use of those disciplines, perhaps with the addition of the discarded Economics. Education Studies, then, becomes a combination of, or a selection from: the Psychology of Education, the Sociology of Education, and so on. The problems encountered by the disciplines as the basis for teacher training, noted in Section 1, can be avoided in that Education Studies is not being directly prepared for professional practice. However, the research data in this study indicate some reluctance by subject leaders simply to adopt the disciplines as the theoretical framework, perhaps because their role has been historically contested and problematic, but also for other reasons. One is the problematic nature of disciplines of the inclusion of discipline *within* another subject or discipline. The following is a discussion of some of the issues concerning the roles of the foundation disciplines and of the notion of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right, a matter which occupies some of the subject leaders in the research data.

It is first necessary to clarify the distinction between disciplines and subjects in the context of UK higher education. In contrast with the ‘encyclopaedic’ European model based on the premise that education should include all human knowledge, the tradition



of higher education in the UK has been grounded in narrowly specialised disciplines. Holmes and McClean (1989) use the term ‘essentialist’ to characterise the university curriculum in the UK. Derived from Plato’s notion of education for elite political leaders, philosopher kings:

... the essentialist curriculum.... consists of a few carefully selected subjects whose internal logic and coherence are self-evident. Such subjects, presented in logical sequences, provide learners with the intellectual skills, and presumably the moral fibre, expected of a societal leader (p.10).

A key feature of the disciplines is that they are self-defining by the academics who maintain the boundaries round them: what counts as Psychology, what is Sociological. Becher (1989) suggests that disciplines are defined by the various ‘tribes’ within the university as disciplinary territories and boundaries are defined by the tribal members. And disciplines are said to be ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ and ‘pure’ or ‘applied’. These two dimensions form a grid which ‘structures the territory of academic life’ (Barnett, 2005:33).

While the terms ‘discipline’ and ‘subject’ are frequently used interchangeably, Barnett makes the distinction between subjects and disciplines. He cites Peters (1964) and Oakeshott (1989) who argue that membership of a discipline requires *enculturation* or *initiation* into its community and

...as Parker (2002) has pointed out, a discipline requires *immersion*; it is to be engaged with and mastered. It has a kind of hardness to it, requiring ‘discipline’ for its mastery.

A subject, on the other hand, is constructed more as a curriculum package for those who choose to study it; it is more easily commodified into curricular packages and defined through taught units and assessed outcomes: ‘A ‘subject’ sits in a pedagogic and curriculum space. It is interactional and shaped by human hopes and intentions’ (p.33). Barnett concludes, then, that there is a distinction between *disciplines* that require long-term socialisation through immersion in an academic community and *subjects* which are determined by external agendas such as applicants and employers.

This is a helpful analysis for distinguishing Education Studies and its contributory disciplines. The *subject* is defined in order to meet the needs of students who wish to learn about the nature and effects of educational institutions, values and practice with a view to their employment in education-related fields. As Barnett also points out, a characteristic of university education in the UK is that it has moved towards a subject-based approach to the curriculum with benchmarks and designated competencies and skills and away from curricula based exclusively on disciplinary specialisation.

Becher (1989) further distinguishes the types of disciplines: the more academic and the more professionally-related disciplines, such as Engineering and Law. He finds that for the more professional disciplines the boundaries are to some extent defined to include professional requirements from without the academic community, and sometimes by the state. Readings (1996) makes the same point more strongly about Kant's 'higher faculties' of law and medicine and their lack of critique:

Given their reliance on heteronomous authority, the three established faculties of theology, law, and medicine are on the side of superstition in that they promulgate the blind acceptance of tradition, which seeks to control the people not by making them use reason but by making them accept established authority. They do not educate the people in reason, but offer them magical solutions. Thus, theology teaches people how to be saved without being good.... Law tells people how to win cases without being honest.... Medicine teaches people how to cure diseases rather than how to live healthily .... Philosophy, on the other hand, replaces the practical savoir-faire of these magicians with reason, which refutes all shortcuts. Hence, philosophy questions the prescriptions of the legislative power and asks fundamental questions on the basis of reason alone, interfering with the higher faculties in order to critique their grounds. (p.57).

It is easy to see teacher training within this framework with a state-defined and unquestionable curriculum. On the other hand, non-teacher-training Education Studies is allowed to be a self-defining community. Becher's formulation is important, then, in showing how Education Studies can be a self-defining community, drawing its own boundaries. His underlying assumption is 'that there are identifiable patterns to be found within the relationships between knowledge forms and their associated knowledge communities' (p.150). Education Studies might be said to be engaging in the act of defining its community and drawing its boundaries. The forms of knowledge

in Education Studies are being defined by its community. Becher goes on to explain that

Disciplinary communities may in varying degrees be seen as convergent, i.e. manifesting a sense of collectivity and mutual identity, or divergent, i.e. schismatic and ideologically fragmented (p.151).

In the light of the above discussion, the following issues arise about the nature of Education Studies in relation to the disciplines.

The first question is whether Education Studies can exist as a subject without explicit reference to the disciplines. It was Tibble's (1971) view that there could be no specifically 'educational' way of examining questions. Under this analysis, there can be no academic Education Studies without the contributory disciplines which become a necessary requirement. If it is agreed that the disciplines are a necessary requirement for Education Studies, then there is a question as to how many disciplines are necessary: whether the study of education can be based on a single discipline, such as Psychology - convergent, in Becher's terms - or whether the study of Education requires 'divergent', multiple perspectives. If a single discipline, such as Psychology is chosen, it might be more appropriate to label this 'the Psychology of Education', or 'Educational Psychology', while 'Education Studies' is the use of multiple disciplines.

However, if a diversity of disciplines is employed, then there is a problem created by the definition of a discipline as that into which students need to be 'immersed' or 'enculturated'. This definition pre-supposes the exclusive and essentialist approach to the discipline, and it might be argued that it is impossible to achieve this with students in all the disciplines. The danger for Education Studies, then, would be that it would be a subject which uses a diversity of disciplines, but which are not studied properly and there is the danger of 'dabbling', possibly with students referring exclusively to secondary sources. What does appear to be difficult is the ability of Education Studies students to examine the methodologies and paradigms within the discipline, in the way that a Psychology undergraduate would discuss behaviourist and cognitivist approaches to the subject. Subject leaders in the research data do express concerns about this.

The essentialist view of the disciplines, as Barnett (2005) suggests, is not the current trend in UK higher education at present, with the move to more skill-defined subjects. However, there might be some attraction to Education Studies subject leaders in depicting the subject in the more traditional disciplinary terms in order to lend it a higher status in the academic community, and this in itself might attract students. There is some evidence of this effect in the research data.

Some may try to argue for a uniquely ‘Educational’ way of analysing questions and to define Education Studies as a ‘discipline’ in its own right and with its own particular methods distinct from the contributory disciplines. In this case, the other disciplines may be seen to be intrusive and to hinder the development of this distinct theoretical framework and it might be a reason for de-emphasising the other disciplines. There is some evidence of an interest in this approach in the research data.

Another way of defining Education Studies as its own discipline is through a looser concept of ‘discipline’. It would not be defined by identifiable methods, but simply by the fact that, in Becher’s terms, there is now a community of scholars, ‘tribal members’, who are able to give it such a title. This view is also expressed in the data.

### **Theory as critique**

‘Critique’ of educational policy and professional practice is mentioned as a key feature of Education Studies by a number of interviewees and is a salient feature in the survey of university websites (Chapter 6). There follows a short discussion of some of the literature on Education as critique. Peters (1966) demonstrated that education must include the concept of that which is valuable. This concept is now broadened in that education is always intended to make ‘a better world’ and this is where Critical Theory becomes relevant. Blake and Masschelein (2003) examine the role for educational theory of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. They point out that critical theorists have never taken much interest in education, even though they long for a better world. Educationists have, though, drawn from critical theory. Key features of critical theory are:

- a critical stance towards society

- ethical concern for the individual
- rejection of all possible excuses for hunger, domination, humiliation or injustice
- longing for a better world

Blake and Masschelein trace three phases of critical theory of the Frankfurt School. The first is Horkheimer's (1977) blending of Marxist analysis of social relations with Freudian psychoanalysis to clarify the relationship between psychological, social and deep structures. It advocates reason in the Enlightenment tradition, but denounces positivism. This had no effect on education until it informed the student movement and anti-authoritarianism. The second phase is the critique of instrumental reason. Here reason is seen as complicit with the catastrophic events of the early twentieth century. Adorno (1972) argued that pre-twentieth century *Bildung* had equipped people to radically question the social order, whereas *Halbbildung* (half-Bildung) merely made people competent to be fit for the existing social order. The decline in the scope of individual autonomy is disguised by progress in science and technology; the existing social order is immune from critique by the mass media. Revolution is inconceivable and all that remains is to rescue the individual from a totally bureaucratised and economised world. This second phase is highly negative and pessimistic and depicts education as only contributing to alienation.

The third period is characterised by Habermas's attempts to reinstate the original emancipatory programme of critical theory by formulating the concept of 'praxis'. He first used Marx's idea that science is part of the economic praxis of material production, enabling man to flourish. But since science is a discourse, Habermas differentiated praxis into labour and linguistic interaction. To the technical interest in economic production he added the interest in normative discourse. He further proposed a species-general 'emancipatory interest' – a necessary interest in emancipation in both social and psychological forms, and thus a critical understanding of society. Habermas developed this into a theory of communicative competence: the necessity in human affairs of open and undistorted linguistic interaction. By this, he could demonstrate the necessity of communicative, as opposed to strategic, interaction for socialisation, social integration and cultural reproduction and consequently

theorise the pathologies of society under late capitalism: the colonisation of the lifeworld by the discourse of dominant social forces – the media of money and power. These gave him a ‘discourse ethics’ as the normative core of critical theory and this made him break with the negativism of the Frankfurt School.

Blake and Masschelein suggest that there are powerful links between educational theory and the Critical Theory of Habermas because of their common basis in Enlightenment thinking, and Kant in particular:

Kantian and Enlightenment moral thinking more generally inform not just progressivism but also the traditional German educational concern with *Bildung*, while, remarkably, when Peters, Hirst and Dearden sought to establish a mildly conservative analytic philosophy of education in Britain, it is Kant they took for inspiration, going quite against the grain of most British philosophy. What seems fundamental to modern educational thought is the post-Kantian emphasis on ideals of autonomy and critical reason as ultimate educational goals (p.42).

Critical theory and educational theory are said to echo each other in the work of Peters and Habermas, although one has not acknowledged the other. Peters attempts to demonstrate an intrinsic human interest in enlightenment through ‘initiation into culturally given Forms of Knowledge’, while Habermas argues an intrinsic interest in communicative rationality, which necessitates the liberalisation of intellectual discourse. Blake and Masschelein suggest that Habermas’s notion of unconstrained dialogue is a potent force in education and see the centrality of critique, or critical debate, fundamental to the development of modern forms of knowledge. Blake and Masschelein go on to explain that critical theory has not been taken up by educational theorists in Britain in the way that it has in Europe. In the sociology of education the work of M.F.D. Young (1971) was dominant and portrayed education as a form of social control.

Under this model the suggestion is that Education Studies should provide critique and have an emancipatory function. Interestingly, the student’s direct experience and involvement in education is relevant here. The Frankfurt School claims that the theorist’s involvement in the reality under investigation is not an obstacle to, but a pre-requisite for, objectivity. This would seem, then, to be a possible framework for

theoretical analysis in undergraduate Education Studies, given that it has students who are familiar with the subject at one level of consciousness. It should move the learner from false consciousness and shake off the taken-for-grantedness of immediate experience to a critical and analytical perspective. This would suggest that emancipation and self-determination are the general aims of education. As Blake and Masschelein conclude,

If Critical Theory is ..... to be seen as important to the education of teachers, then teacher education must be treated as more than just a form of teacher training (even one characterised by a deeper understanding and reflective consciousness). Teacher education in the spirit of Critical Theory must have a transformative aspect. A teacher might perhaps come to be seen as being as good as her or his own sense of dissatisfaction (p.55).

McClean (2005) also uses Habermas's notion of modernity as an unfinished project to promote the idea that university education, rather than continuing to its performative decline, can be used to educate its students as intellectuals. Education Studies might be seen to do this. So this would be the role of Education Studies as a non-professional subject: 'to formulate emancipation and self-determination as the general aims of education' (p.42).

Tubbs and Grimes (1999) offer a model for educational theory based upon critique. Although they do not mention the Frankfurt School, they do refer to German idealism. They speak from the role of managers of an undergraduate course in Education Studies and argue that

... the most significant feature of Education Studies at undergraduate level is that, perhaps alone of all degree courses, it has as part of its subject matter critical examination of what it is to be 'educational'. Our claim for our own programme is that it is not just about education but is structured around a model of development and learning, based on the German idealism of Kant and Hegel, and as such is in itself an 'educational' experience (p.2).

They are critical of the QAA (2000) Benchmark model for the exclusion of any explicit theory (see below) and they see it as theory replaced by pragmatism. They describe a single honours Education Studies course which is intended to provide a theory of Education Studies as a subject in itself. The model employs the synergy between theory and practice as its central dynamic, a Kantian distinction between

‘what is’ (theoretical reason) and ‘what ought to be’ (practical reason). Rather than deploying the traditional theoretical perspectives to interrogate educational sites such as schools and classrooms, the intention is to ‘move Education Studies on from the disparate and incoherent understanding of education that is produced by the disciplines approach, primarily by examining what is (and is not) educational about such disjointed and fragmented experiences’ (p.4). Further, they see

..... Education Studies as what might be called *the philosophy of cultural critique*. We believe that studying what is actually *educational* about anything that calls itself education, can lead to a coherent identity for the academic study of education. The astonishing corollary of this claim, if it can be sustained, is that Education Studies then becomes the terrain on which the disputed meanings of the experience of ‘culture’ in other academic subjects is fought out. In addition it becomes an essential element of all academic study and perhaps the basis for determining notions of ‘value added’ in Higher Education (p.5).

Emancipation is derived from Kant, rather than Habermas:

For Kant, at least, such participation in ‘public reason’ is manifestly a sign of an enlightening and emancipating citizenry, and is surely the purpose of all higher education and of Education Studies in particular! (p.7)

Here, then, is the critique of educational practice itself as ‘the theory’ for education studies. It is not that other theories are employed, the critique is the theory itself. And they make Kantian claims for the role of Education Studies in the university curriculum:

.... the cultural representation of philosophy and the philosophical representation of culture recognise the fundamentally educational nature of their relationship. Our programme of Education Studies takes this challenge seriously, seeing in it an opportunity both to rediscover education at the heart of social and political critique, and to redefine Education Studies accordingly (p.7).

Tubbs and Grimes are interesting in both proposing the theory of critique for Education Studies, but also disclaiming the role of the contributory disciplines. What is not explained is the role of Philosophy as a discipline, when what the authors describe appears to be a philosophical process in which students engage.



### **Theory as preparation for the professions**

One obvious theoretical framework for Education Studies is that it should prepare students to enter teacher training. Defined in this way it might prescribe a curriculum similar to the content of the teacher training standards (TTA, 2002). Alternatively, it might also be seen to prepare students for other careers in education. In order to understand the nature of the subject as professional preparation, it is important to understand the context in which undergraduate Education Studies takes place in the contemporary university. The subject has developed in the context of the changing relationship between the university and the state, described in Chapter 2, in which employability is an increasing demand for university courses and performativity an increasing demand on university knowledge (Barnett, 2000). However, a strong feature of the interviewee data in this study is the attempt to define Education Studies as highly distinct from teacher training and as an autonomous subject free of teacher training or other vocational orientation. This section discusses some of the issues in professional training in universities.

Watts (2000) presents the notion of professionalism in higher education as problematic with the change from the profession-centred concept to the client-centred concept of higher education with Eraut's (1994) three core concepts of professionalism: specialist knowledge base, autonomy and service. Watts makes a distinction between knowledge and professionalism, suggesting that academics need subject knowledge and teaching expertise and the accreditation of teaching in HE is the Professionalisation of university staff.

An old concept of professionalism was based on mutual trust and trust by the public. Growing distrust of professionals since the Thatcher years (Bottery, 2000) has led to a change in the concept of professionalism. Now it is defined as compliance with external requirements, and many see this as the demise of professionalism. An old concept of professional service was based on an asymmetrical power relationship with the dominant professional bound by ethical codes to operate in the client's interest. Because of the market and liberal ideology now the client is more empowered and may wish to act in a way which the professional would see as against the client's interest. This relationship is therefore now problematical.

Modular schemes have also led to a perceived reduction in professional autonomy of university staff as they see their role reduced to delivering the skill outcomes of a module and restrictions on their teaching and assessment strategies. Watts cites Eraut's (1994) suggestion that the service ideal should be based on the needs of the client, but also Barnett's (2000) argument that the needs of education are not just those of the individual, but those of broader society which are delegated to the university.

Consumerism is a form of human rights and universities need to take account of clients' rights as consumers with a client-centred approach to professionalism; to reject this brings accusations of paternalism. But Watts poses the question of whose views count. The increase in market forces means that there is a lack of professional autonomy and increasing stress on university professionals. There can also be a lack of long-term educational goals. However, he maintains, professionals do have an influence on the direction of policy.

Paisey and Paisey (2004) analyse the higher education curriculum for three professions, accountancy, medicine and law, and note that in all three there are the same issues: an overcrowded curriculum caused by the knowledge explosion in each of the subjects; tensions between the liberal and vocational views of education and the move towards a wider skills curriculum, moving away from knowledge retention. They note the historical resistance by universities to vocational preparation.

Watson (2000), however, describes the role of the university as a provider for the professions, noting that traditionally the elite university population prepared people for the professions: the Church, law, medicine and administration. He argues against those 'essentialists' who would see university education as entirely non-vocational, criticising Warnock's (1996) assertion that vocational training is 'corrosive of the higher education enterprise itself' (p. 3), as merely a status judgement. Watson applauds the polytechnics of the 1970s and 80s for bringing together academic and professional values to create a higher education curriculum in dialogue. He also points out that the 'lifelong learning' aim for higher education has already been created through the diversity of degree provision already on offer: the number of students on

full-time first degree courses is actually less than those taking postgraduate and part-time courses of various kinds. The challenge for higher education in developing the curriculum is, he says, the further development of partnerships.

Such partnerships must exist inside and outside the academy, making the curriculum 'transparent of aims and outcomes' (p.4) and he makes a contrast between the preparation of health and education professionals which is particularly relevant to Education Studies. He points out that the National Health Service (NHS) shifted medical training into the higher education sector:

As the NHS gambled that trusting higher education for a much greater influence over its professional formation would improve practice and service outcomes in the longer term, another agency..... has been marching in the other direction. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was established by the last Conservative government as a means of wresting responsibility for the professional formation of teachers away from higher education (p. 4).

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for this opposition of directions, although Watson declines to do this. It may be that the reasons are historical in the perceived weakness of university teacher training, as against the perceived strength of university medical training. But these perceptions might be a function of the nature of the professions themselves, in particular the power of the medical profession in maintaining its professional integrity and protecting itself, and its training, from scrutiny. Some research on the comparison of medical- and teacher-training certainly does not point to one being more efficient or successful than the other (Booth et al, 1995).

Katz (2000) compares three professions: engineering, teaching and nursing. All three have externally imposed professional standards to be met and in all three knowledge needs to be located in practice (Eraut, 1992). However, he makes an interesting distinction between engineering and the other two, noting that, because they are dealing with human beings in social contexts, teachers and nurses need to be able to draw upon knowledge, skills and experience to respond to demands and problems immediately, whereas engineers, dealing with inanimate machines, frequently are able to take the time to reflect and consult over problems. He considers the particular skills and knowledge which universities need to deal with if they are to prepare

professionals and again cites Eraut's (1992) tripartite model of professional skills: propositional (subject knowledge), personal (intuitive and impressionist) and process (application within a job function). While the traditional role of the university may have been predominantly in the propositional area, for higher education to engage with the professions, the other two areas must be addressed, and he summarises these as:

- the understanding and application of an accepted 'body of knowledge';
- competence in generic or common skills: communication, teamwork, managing tasks and self;
- reflective practice, using critical thought and informed ethical judgements.....;
- responsibility and accountability to others;
- engaging in CPD and lifelong learning to develop the profession and the professional (p. 24)

A feature of university learning which he cites is Zuber-Skerritt's (1992) distinction between child learning (pedagogy) and adult learning (androgogy) in which the adult learner, with greater knowledge and life experience is able to engage a more reflective and metacognitive approach to learning. He notes various approaches in higher education which are relevant to professionalism:

- Serial and holistic learner positions;
- Transmission and dialogue metaphors of learning;
- Didactic, problem-based and enquiry and action learning methods of teaching.

In all cases the last of these seen to be the more effective for professional learning in universities.

Finally, Bash (2005) points to the alienating and proletarianising effects of globalisation on the professional role of teachers with increasing state control of education to service the global economy. Drawing on Castells (2000) he proposes an alternative model in which the next generation of professionals are no longer the sole custodians of knowledge, but part of a network of globalised knowledge which is radically informed by information technology.

In summary, the definition of Education Studies as the preparation for professional training involves the following issues:

- The ambiguous status of professional training in universities means that there are likely to be those who wish to claim Education Studies as a non-vocational and high status university subject, as depicted by Warnock.
- With some exceptions, the subject has grown from undergraduate teacher training and is frequently taught by staff who previously, or simultaneously, worked on teacher training courses. Among them are likely to be those who wish to see it as a preparation for the education professions.
- Because of the state regulation of teacher education described in Section 1 of this chapter, it is likely that there will be those staff who would wish to resist the vocational definition of the subject.
- Education Studies exists in the performative market context and to attract students it needs to find ways of relating to practice as students seek a mixture of academic challenge and career-oriented study.

It will be seen in the analysis of the interview data that all these features are factors in the definition of the subject.

### **Definitions of Education Studies**

This section examines some of the attempts which have been made to define Education Studies in the QAA (2000) Benchmark Statement for Education and in a number of Education Studies textbooks.

As noted in Chapter 2, the Quality Assurance Agency is designed to safeguard the quality of higher education in the UK. As a state body it has responsibility for quality, but, as also shown in Chapter 2, its powers to determine the content and curriculum of higher education are limited. In a Benchmark Statement for each subject it has attempted to

‘describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the techniques and skills needed to develop understanding in the subject’ (qaa.ac.uk).

One thing to note here is that the terms ‘discipline’ and ‘subject’ are used synonymously. It can also be seen that the purpose of the Benchmark statements falls short of the definition of curriculum content. There are techniques, skills and understanding, but no explicit statement about the curriculum, other than that the subject or discipline should be ‘coherent’. However, ‘coherence’ would be a promising starting point for the theoretical framework sought here.

There is no explicit reference to the four disciplines, only a generalised list of principles. Programmes should

- draw on a wide range of intellectual resources, theoretical perspectives and academic disciplines to illuminate understanding of education and the contexts within which it takes place;
- provide students with a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of the principal features of education in a wide range of contexts;
- encourage students to engage with fundamental questions concerning the aims and values of education and its relationship to society;
- encourage the interrogation of educational processes in a wide variety of contexts;
- develop in students the ability to construct and sustain a reasoned argument about educational issues in a clear, lucid and coherent manner;
- promote a range of qualities in students including intellectual independence and critical engagement with evidence (QAA, 2000:4).

These are, perhaps necessarily, highly generalised. As to a theoretical framework, there is the notion of interrogation, reasoned argument and critical analysis. There is mention of the subject disciplines, but in the rather oblique statement that the subject will ‘draw on a wide range of .... perspectives... disciplines’. This appears to be designed to accommodate those who would apply the contributory discipline as well as those who would avoid them. The statements give little more than indicate that there should be some theoretical framework.

It is acknowledged that there is diversity in undergraduate programmes in Education, but that ‘all involve the intellectually rigorous study of educational processes, systems and approaches, and the cultural and societal, political and historical contexts within which they are embedded’ (p.4). More specific content is listed in the strand of Knowledge and Understanding:

- the processes of learning, including some of their key paradigms and their impact on educational practices
- relevant aspects of cultural and linguistic differences and societies; politics and education politics; economics, geographical and historical features of societies and contexts; moral, religious and philosophical underpinnings, including social justice and their effects on learning
- formal and informal contexts for learning. Educational contexts will include some understanding of their own education system and other education systems, and value systems underpinning their organisation
- the complex interactions between education and its contexts, and relationships with other disciplines and professions (p.5)

Interestingly, there is a mention of economics, and there is the injunction to study societies and politics, geographical and historical features and social justice. Again, in the fourth point, there is reference to ‘other disciplines’. It is not clear that this refers to the four foundation disciplines, and is thereby assuming that Education itself is a single separate discipline, or whether it refers to yet other disciplines such as Physics or Biology. The reference to ‘philosophical’ in the second point appears to be a mention of Philosophy as a discipline. However, the fact that it is combined with ‘moral’ and ‘religious’ suggests that this is intended to mean the study of assumptions, rather than philosophy as a theoretical framework for study. It is evident that the Benchmark Statement has been designed not to be prescriptive. However, in avoiding this it fails to provide an academic or theoretical framework.

The growth of Education Studies in recent years has seen the appearance of a number of new, usually edited, textbooks targeted at undergraduate students. Each of these in their introductory chapter usually gives some account of the nature of Education Studies. Matheson (2004) asserts that ‘there is no agreement as to what it actually is’ (p.12). He then goes on to describe the QAA Benchmark Statement and notes that it ‘represents a compromise between those who argue that Education Studies is a discipline in its own right and those who see it as an offshoot of teacher training’ (p.13) and he says that it is no surprise that the statements never explicitly state what topics need to be studied. His point is that there is no consensus on what education is; therefore, ‘there can be no consensus on what constitutes Education Studies’ (p.13). The ‘no consensus’ view appears to lead to no theoretical framework.

Bartlett, Burton and Peim (2001) also refer to the QAA Benchmark Statement and argue that it makes Education Studies ‘far more searching’ (p.ix) than teacher training. This appears to be making the claim for Education Studies as a higher status academic subject than training. They describe it as the study of structures and processes in education: a means of gaining access to new thinking in the student’s critical reflection on experiences. There is also explicit reference to the contributory disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History, although not of Economics, and they are cited as necessary requirements for the study of Education. However, there is an attempt to make a claim for Education Studies as a discipline in its own right: ‘This means that education is at the centre of study and therefore draws on the other disciplines as appropriate’ (p.ix). As in the Benchmark Statement, the term ‘drawing on’ the disciplines is used. It is not clear in either what is meant by this, nor what is meant by education being ‘at the centre’. This book emphasises critique and student’s analysis of their own experience, as suggested above in the discussion of critical theory. It avoids mention of vocational outcomes.

The move from Education Studies as the theory for teaching is suggested by Crawford (2003) in the title *Contemporary issues in education* and he stresses the role of debate and critique. However, he still sees Education Studies as vocational in the sense that it is the concern of those ‘concerned with the education and welfare of children, including teachers, parents and those working in allied agencies’ (p.1). The significant point here is that the theory is aimed not just at practising teachers but at the wider range of careers in education. Crawford makes the important point that the subject suffers from the attentions of self-styled experts in that everyone knows something about education, but he also argues for a partnership between professionals and parents in ‘developing a constructive partnership between all those with an interest in educating children’ (p.2).

Ward (2004) stresses that the contributory disciplines are essential in the theory and are required in order to enable an informed analysis. He gives an example of the way that the contributory disciplines can each contribute to the analysis of a particular educational situation. He also includes the notion of critique, but argues that the critical analysis is one of the necessary skills of future teachers and that Education Studies should play a strong vocational role for professionals.



Sharp, Hankin and Ward (2006) dedicate a whole chapter in their edited text to the epistemological nature of Education Studies (Pickard, 2006). Pickard notes that the spate of Education Studies textbooks are located in the tradition of liberal education, citing Stuart Hall's (1986) view of liberalism as a 'progressive social ideology, opposed to the old order of society in that it has consistently favoured an open meritocratic society' and Hirst's (1965) assertion that liberal education is not vocational (p.13). Pickard goes on to recommend a theory for Education Studies which avoids the liberal-vocational debate with a blend of the educational traditions of reflection, action research and critical social theory: a 'phenomenological analysis' of the social definition of educational process. This would appear to be a sophisticated version of the student's reflection on experience.

In the most recent text, Kassem, Mufti and Robinson (2006) evade the question of the nature of Education Studies. In a foreword by another author (Totterdell, 2006) the comment is simply that Education Studies is not 'mere theory', but should be a process of engaging professionals with education 'in a serious way' so that they 'come to appreciate its ideational contours and specific characteristics' (p.xv). So the theme is 'engagement', with no specific reference to a theoretical framework other than the implied sociological critique:

Proposals that impact on education need to be carefully evaluated against defensible criteria, and the positions of powerful political proponents need to be interrogated to see whether or not they advance social justice and a proper ecology of economic and cultural experience (p.xv).

Of course, it should be noted that these examples are drawn from texts which are introductory and written as initial chapters for undergraduate students and they cannot be expected, then, to explore the full epistemological theory of Education Studies. If there is a common theme across the texts it tends to be sociological critique. However, the overall picture is diverse, from Matheson's 'no consensus' view, through various attempts to deploy the disciplines and critical analysis. There is also diversity in the reference to the vocational outcomes of Education Studies.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the influences on the possible theoretical frameworks for Education Studies. The following points from the analysis will be found to be relevant to the analysis of the research data.

- the disputed nature of theory in teacher training and the removal of theory from government-imposed standards and requirements;
- institutional compliance with, and academic resistance to, the government teacher training standards;
- the essentialist role of the disciplines in higher education;
- the problematic nature of the disciplines in relation to Education Studies;
- the role of Critical Theory in Education;
- diverse perceptions of the nature of Education Studies as a subject or discipline;
- diverse perceptions of the academic status of vocational training in higher education;
- changing patterns in the school workforce and potential employment opportunities for Education Studies graduates.

## Chapter 5

### Research Methods

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the research methods. The first section is an outline of the research design, a discussion of its interpretive approach and an analysis of the theoretical issues inherent in the study. The ethical issues in the research are addressed. The second section is an analysis of the pilot interviews in two institutions.

#### Section 1 - Methods employed in the study: outline and discussion

##### Brief description of the research design

The development of teacher education and undergraduate Education Studies in universities was analysed through a discussion of relevant literature. Data on current university provision in Education Studies were collected through the following:

- an analysis of university websites for Education Studies and QAA Review Reports of 2000-01;
- interviews with Education Studies subject leaders and senior managers in a sample of nine institutions in England and Wales.

Interviews were analysed under the following headings:

- 1 Relationship to antecedent and concurrent teacher training courses
- 2 Institutional factors and the higher education market
- 3 Staffing effects
- 4 Theoretical frameworks and the contributory disciplines
- 5 Vocational aims for Education Studies

Immediately following the interview set in each institution, the transcripts were subjected to an initial analysis. They were used to make the final analysis under the five headings.

### **The research perspective (ontology)**

This section briefly considers the distinctions between the positivist and interpretive paradigms for educational research and then evaluates the ontological position taken in the current research.

The aim of the study, outlined in Chapter 1, was to identify the ways in which Education Studies has emerged as an undergraduate university subject in England and Wales through accounts and perceptions of the programme providers: faculty senior managers and subject leaders. These are the people who are formally responsible for the definition of the subject as it exists in each institution and the research is an analysis of their interpretations. The approach, therefore, is broadly within the interpretive paradigm and the methods employed are qualitative, as described by Atkinson, Delamont, and Hammersley (1993).

In educational research the differentiation of quantitative, positivist and qualitative, interpretive paradigms is frequently emphasised. Pring (2000) provides a helpful summary of the characteristics of the two perspectives. In the positivist model, Paradigm A:

- a. There is a world which exists independently of me which is made up of 'objects' interacting causally with each other.
- b. There are different sciences of that world, partly depending on what is to count as an object (a behaviour', a 'physical object', even a 'social context').
- c. Once, however, there is an agreement on what is to count as an 'object' (e.g. 'behaviour') such objects can be studied, their interrelations noted, regularities discovered, causal explanations given and tested, results qualified.
- d. Other observers can check the conclusions through repeated experiments under repeated conditions.
- e. Thus, from carefully constructed observations and experiments, following critical checking from others, a scientifically-based body of knowledge can be built up.
- f. That body of knowledge reflects the world as it is; the statements within it are true or false, depending on their correspondence to the world as it is.

In the interpretive model, Paradigm B

- a. Each person lives in a 'world of ideas', and it is through those ideas that the world (physical and social) is constructed. There is no way that one could step outside this world of ideas to check whether or not they represent a world existing independently of the world themselves.
- b. Communication with other people lies, therefore, in a 'negotiation' of their worlds of ideas whereby, often for practical reasons (they need to live and work together), they come to share the same ideas. A consensus is reached.
- c. New situations arise and new people have to be accommodated with different ideas, so that negotiations within 'a marketplace of ideas' never ceases and new consensuses have constantly to be reached.
- d. Such notions of 'truth', therefore, need to be eliminated or re-defined in terms of consensus, because, given 'a' above, there can be no correspondence between our conceptions of reality and reality itself.
- e. Furthermore, the distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' needs to be redefined since there can be nothing 'objective' in the sense of that which exists independently of the world of ideas which either privately or in consensus with others has been constructed.
- f. Development of our thinking (e.g. about educational problems and their solution) lies in the constant negotiation of meanings between people who only partly share each other's ideas but who, either in order to get on practically or in order to accommodate new ideas, create new agreements – new ways of conceiving reality. Since there is no sense in talking of reality independently of our conceiving it, therefore there are as many realities as there are conceptions of it – multiple realities.

(Pring, 2000, pp. 50-1)

There is a long-standing debate on the relative merits of the two paradigms, with often bitter exchanges between their proponents (Cohen and Manion, 1985). However, there are various attempts to rationalise the polarisation of the two positions and to bring about a working compromise between them for the contemporary researcher. Pring argues that to dichotomise the two perspectives is an error, similar to the fallacious mind-body distinction of Cartesian dualism (Ryle, 1954). Pring argues that while the scientific paradigm as a means of examining human thinking and behaviour may be inappropriate to the study of conscious human beings, it does not mean that it is impossible to make comparisons and to generalise from data.

It is possible to reject .... paradigm A without abandoning the realism of the physical and social sciences and without therefore concluding that reality is but a social construction or that correspondence between language and reality is to be thrown overboard completely (p.51).

The polarisation debate depends on the notion of realism. The 'naïve realism' of the scientific positivism is to be questioned, but so is the relativism which is the corollary

of the extreme of the interpretivist dimension. Hammersley (1992) in attempting to preserve the benefits of both paradigms argues that there is a way between the two which he calls 'subtle realism' (p.54). People's beliefs, their accounts of the world and their actions are still regarded as constructions, and so are those of the researcher. At the same time we do not have to accept individuals' accounts as necessarily true or rational in their own terms. Hammersley suggests two possible ways of interpreting accounts. First, they may be treated as phenomenological in order to understand the cultural perspectives of those holding them, in which truth or falsity is not for consideration. Second, they may be used as 'a source of information about the phenomena to which they refer'. In this case there must be a concern with truth and rationality. Hammersley argues that it is important to keep a distinction between these two in the way that the data is analysed, even though the different approaches may be applied to the same data.

This section considers the extent to which the study offer a wide range of interests and employment destinations falls within the framework of the characteristics of Paradigm B, interpretive ethnography. It operates within an ethnographic framework in that there is no hypothesis to be confirmed or disproved. While the nature of the interrogation is strongly defined by the questions, any possible outcomes were allowed to emerge.

It is also ethnographic in that it relies entirely on the accounts of individuals, their own stories of events and their own interpretations of actions; there is no attempt to confirm or deny the realities expressed by the individuals. It includes accounts of individuals' intentions and their accounts of the motives or intentions of others. It includes the interpretation by individuals of institutional 'intentions' and perspectives in that interviewees offer their ideas about the reasons for the University adopting Education Studies. The study operates in the world of individuals' ideas and depends upon a socially constructed reality of the academic world of the university and individuals' roles within it. Individuals are able to express their own interpretation of events and to construct their own perceptions of ways in which Education Studies has been developed in the institution. This is, indeed, the central content of the data.

There is a lack of objectivity in that the researcher is familiar with a number of the interviewees. While this would be criticised from a positivist perspective, it is argued below in the section on ‘field relations’ that such a position is advantageous in this study and makes the acquisition of the data possible. It is, of course, permissible only within an interpretative paradigm. The interview method is ‘consensual’ in that interviewees were permitted to define their own terms and to discuss the issues at length, giving their own interpretations. The work is also interpretative in that it depends upon the researcher’s interpretation of the interview data, and the researcher’s values are transparent to interviewees. The author’s position and value framework in respect of Education Studies are made transparent to the reader in Appendix 1 which proposes a theoretical framework for Education Studies to which he subscribes.

A more quantitative element in the study is the survey of university websites and QAA reviews in Chapter 6. It is interpretive in the sense that the researcher drew inferences from the texts to create a series of categories, but after that the exercise was a simple arithmetic totalling of instances and comparison across the set of institutions. However, this element is not central to the aims of the research. It was employed simply to provide a picture of the types of courses on offer, the common themes or distinctive features. It does not contribute to the central question of how knowledge in the subject has been constructed.

Another less interpretive feature is the definition of topics to be addressed in the interviews. While the schedule (see pp.133-4) was used flexibly to allow the interviewee the opportunity to expand or to introduce topics out of sequence, the researcher always ensured that the list of topics had been addressed.

Another sense in which the study departs from the ethnographic is that it is not restricted to reporting the separate individual accounts. There is an attempt to identify patterns across the set. So the number of instances of a particular factor are noted, where an instance occurs in a majority or minority of cases, and comparisons are made between the institutions. There are also generalisations about the national picture of the development of Education Studies. This is necessarily both limited and tentative because of the small number in the sample. The sample was selected to be representative of different types of institutions and course histories, but the selection

was also affected by opportunity factors and cannot be said to be a fully representative set.

Habermas (1987) criticises interpretative research for failing to acknowledge the ‘macro-social effects of capitalism’ on people’s lives (Hammersley, 1992). This study, although from an ethnographic perspective, does address this by reference to the institutional role in the higher education market. It might be argued, then, that the study falls outside the ethnographic framework to this extent. However, it could also be argued that Habermas’s criticism might apply simply to the particular examples of interpretative study, rather than as a critique of the method itself. As Hammersley suggests, interpretative research can engage not just in description, but in explanation. This study attempts to give not just a description of different formulations of Education Studies, but an explanatory account of how they have arrived. The aim is to explain, not just what is, but how it has come about in a sociological sense in a world in which, in Mannheim’s (1952) sense, meaning is problematical. To this end, the interviewees’ accounts are placed in historical, social and political contexts, particularly those of the development of teacher training and the marketisation of higher education.

Pring’s (2000) position described above, then, depicts the ontology of this study in that, while it is essentially interpretative in the analysis of respondents’ statements, it takes a positivist stance in making comparisons between different institutions drawing some generalised conclusions. How interviewees describe their courses and their ideas are taken as described and comparisons are made, for example, in the extent to which the subject in the different institutions draws upon the foundation disciplines, or the ways in which the disciplines are treated as separate entities, or integrated. The unit of analysis is the institution, so institutions are compared with each other. The separate interviews with subject leaders and managers should be seen as contributory data to the unit of the institution. However, there are occasions in which differences and contradictions between the two interviewees within the institution are noted. This, however, does not detract from the institution as the unit of analysis. For example, in one case where there was a discrepancy in the perceptions of the subject leader and the senior manager, this was taken to infer a conflictual situation in the institution which itself was a construct of the data.



The theoretical perspective for the analysis falls approximately within Hammersley's (1992) framework of 'subtle realism' (see above). The interviewees define their own terms, but the accounts are used to make comparisons with other institutions and to triangulate. In this sense, the research is ethnographic in the contemporary modified sense described by Hammersley and Pring.

### **Field relations**

The role of the researcher in this study is complex and highly material. At the time of the study he was the subject leader for a large Education Studies course which was known to most of the interviewees. He was, therefore, known to the interviewees, either personally, or in an institutional role. In addition, he was either currently, or previously, an external examiner or consultant in a review panel for the subject in some of the institutions. These details are all noted in the initial analyses of data in Appendix 1. During the period of time of the interviews he was a leading figure in the foundation of a new scholarly association to create a network for academics teaching undergraduate Education Studies. Some interviewees were members of the new network. Some of the interviews are against the background of previous discussion of the nature of the subject between the same parties in other contexts.

The data was collected within a growing network of relationships in the field of undergraduate Education Studies and the researcher's identity was critical in the research paradigm and in the nature of the data. It is argued here that the emerging field relations are overall beneficial with some disadvantages, which are here discussed.

First, the role of the researcher enabled access to the individuals and institutions. The first access was usually made through the subject leader, who then introduced the senior manager. In all cases except one, where there were some communication difficulties, the response to the request for interviews was met with an enthusiastic response. Respondents, including senior managers, were always very willing to cooperate with the interviews.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) point out, ‘people in the field will seek to place or locate the ethnographer within their experience’ (p.80). They note the particular difficulties which can be involved when the people in the field are themselves researchers, or even sociologists. The interviews in this study are all with those who have some awareness of the methods and nature of educational research, and some, indeed, are sociologists. All the interviewees would readily be able to locate the researcher within their experience. In this respect, then, the researcher’s role is transparent and can be viewed as unproblematic. Interviewees indicated that they welcomed the opportunity to recount their experiences of developing the subject. It can be seen from the interview transcripts that several found that the questions gave them occasion to reflect on matters which had not previously occurred to them. It is argued, then, that the interview process itself, in a minor way, contributed both to the discussion and decision-making about the subject.

Snape and Spencer (2003) refer to ‘empathic neutrality’ (p.13) to describe a possible relationship between the researcher and the researched. In cases where the researcher cannot be independent of the subjects of the research, the relationship is seen to be interactive and findings are either mediated through the researcher (‘value-mediated’) or negotiated and agreed between the researcher and research participants. ‘Empathic neutrality’ describes a point between these two positions that recognises that the researcher cannot be value-free, but the values are open and transparent. This suitably describes the role of the researcher in this study, where his position is well known to the interviewees through his role in relationship to the Bath Spa course. The researcher’s ideas and values, then, are an agreed element in the interviews.

Another effect of the field relations is that there is a shared understanding of the substance of the discourse. Interviewees rarely feel the need to explain terminology or to explain the political nature of the background. In this sense, the work falls into the ethnographic paradigm for meanings are immediately shared between interviewer and interviewee. An example of this is the way both understand, without discussion or explanation, the government control of the teacher-training curriculum under the TDA standards and its effects upon individual staff involved in teacher training.

A critical effect of the researcher's relationship with the interviewees is the extent to which it encouraged them to be frank and open in their responses, or to be guarded. The assumption is that interviewees' awareness that the interviewer is familiar with the context of the subject encourages them not to attempt to conceal matters. This did, it is assumed, ensure a high level of openness and honesty in the responses.

The negative effect of the researcher's relationship was the tendency for interviewees to be occasionally rather diffident and modest about their own programme in relation to the Bath Spa programme and there is some tendency to describe the subject in relation to the Bath Spa course. On occasions, interviewees were perhaps cautious in their responses about teacher training because they were aware that the Bath Spa programme is a 3+1 course with a strong teacher-training dimension; they may not have wished to appear critical of that approach. Others, though, had no inhibitions about criticising it.

### **Ethical matters**

At the end of this section is a point-by-point response to the University's Ethical Principles for Research. The following is a discussion of some ethical matters.

Consideration was given to whether the interview data should be anonymous. It is possible to imagine a study in which the data are identified by the individuals and institutions. This would provide individuals with an opportunity to discuss and 'celebrate' their work and provision with others. However, it was judged that data of this kind would produce a different effect from an anonymous study. If individuals and institutions are identifiable, then interviewees are likely to provide a different form of discourse. They would tend to emphasise the positive elements of the programme and gloss the nature of decision-making. An anonymous context allows respondents to reveal information about the background context, the history of decision-making and the actual, rather than contrived, rationales for curriculum decisions. In the pilot interviews in Section 2, two interviewees referred specifically to the disclosure of data about the micropolitics of the institution, which they would not have made had the process not been anonymous. For example:

As to where the numbers come from, that has been *extremely* difficult and, in fact, where they've come from – and I'm glad this is confidential – is that the numbers have actually come from the other faculties (SM1:3).

The purpose of the study is in the processes of decision-making, as well as the outcomes of the decisions. This requires the disclosure of individuals' thoughts, intentions and perspectives which may always be sensitive. One reason for the preservation of anonymity, then, was the quality of the data to be obtained. Anonymous data would be more likely to fulfil the requirements of the research.

The second reason to maintain the anonymity was to avoid possible 'harm' to the participants (Fontana and Frey, 1998). In the context of the higher education market detailed revelations about practice and ideas could have affected the individuals as well as the institutions involved. Individuals made comments about their line managers which could conceivably have been damaging.

The pilot interviews revealed the difficulty of maintaining the anonymity of the institutions and the individuals concerned with a relatively small number of institutions in the field. The interview data was therefore edited by deleting reference to location, type of institution and gender of interviewee. The generic term 'institution' is used to conceal the type and they are simply labelled 'Case #'. Gender is concealed with the pronouns s/he, him/her.

This necessarily has the effect of degrading the data. For example, it is not possible to make comparisons between pre- and post-1992 universities. However, it does allow the preservation of the sensitive data which is essential to the sociological analysis. The study is not designed to celebrate institutional or individuals' success in developing Education Studies, it is to uncover the underlying thinking and politics in the definitions of knowledge.

One case (9) is given an approximate location in Wales. This is because there are features which appear which distinguish it from the English institutions and are important to the analysis. The case is otherwise disguised and should not be identifiable among the eight Welsh teacher education institutions.

### **Survey of university websites**

The survey was carried out by making a trawl of all university websites which advertised Education Studies and of their QAA reports from the 2000-01 Reviews of the subject. The QAA data was used in a limited way to identify student numbers types of degree course. It was restricted, of course, to those institutions which had been reviewed. One of the findings was that a considerable number of courses had appeared in the sector during the three years since the time of the reviews.

A set of headings was selected for the analysis and the findings tabulated on a spreadsheet. The instances of occurrences are totalled in order to calculate the percentage of occurrences across all sectors.

The sample was stratified using the following dimensions which are tabulated by institution in the spreadsheet (Table 1):

- Size of intake
- Origins and antecedents: ITT and others
- Aims and objectives
- Reference to relevance to initial teacher training
- Curriculum content
- Undergraduate/postgraduate
- Course structure: choice of modules
- Age phase
- Explicit references to the contributory disciplines Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy
- International perspectives
- Placements in educational settings

The courses were designated into a series of approximate types.

The procedure was largely successful in identifying the different aspects of current courses. Difficulties were caused by the different quantity and type of information

provided by different universities. This varied from a brief outline sketch to week-by-week details of the content of modules. The differences meant that in some cases some interpretation of text was needed. In other cases the texts were explicit.

### **The sample of institutions for interviews**

The sample comprises a pilot study of two plus an additional sample of seven. This was intended to give an indicative picture of the nature of provision among the approximately 45 extant undergraduate courses.

The survey of websites and QAA reports provided a source for the selection of the interview sample. The intention was to gather data from a representative sample of universities in order to provide a picture of the overall provision.

The categories used to select the cases were to ensure that the sample included each of the following variables:

- New and long-established courses
- Pre- and post-1992 universities
- Differential subject content
- Suggested links with postgraduate teacher training or no suggested link with teacher training
- An institution in Wales

The selection of the sample was also affected by opportunities presented by contacts with certain institutions.

### **Interview method**

Interviews were each of 30 to 60 minutes duration. They were voice-recorded and transcribed by the author. The interviewing style was informal to elicit uninhibited

responses and interviewees were assured that the data were anonymous. Transcripts were then anonymised by deleting references to names of individuals and institutions.

Seidman (2006) cites Gage (1989) in making the case for the in-depth interview as a means of resisting the ‘violence’ of experimental quantitative and positivist research methods. The interview allows the individual to tell the story of his or her experiences and to present life experiences. What was required in this research was in all cases an account of the development of the subject. The in-depth interview, then, is the ideal means to achieve this. What also was required was, not simply the facts, but the individuals’ interpretations of events, their personal intentions and goals, their role in the action. The autobiographical perspective is, therefore, essential. This could have been achieved through written responses. However, the length and detail required would have been difficult to elicit.

As noted above, the aim of the research was to identify the influences on the development of knowledge in undergraduate Education Studies courses. The rationale for the interviews both with the subject leader and faculty senior manager is as follows. The subject leader is normally nominally responsible for the curriculum and its rationale. In many cases, particularly where the subject is newly created, the subject leader is likely to have been responsible for its original inception. It was expected, then, that these people would be able to provide an account of the thinking behind the curriculum and to explain how it was derived. They should also be aware of the factors such as staffing constraints and the expertise of staff. The senior manager, usually a head of school, department or faculty was expected to be able to articulate the rationale for the existence of the general content of the curriculum. In addition, s/he should be aware of the institutional factors in the rationale for the existence of Education Studies and for decisions about its funding and staffing. The combination of the two sets of data was intended to provide an appropriate range of background knowledge and current perspectives on all aspects of the decision-making.

Consideration was given to the possibility of interviewing Education Studies students in the selected institutions. However, it was decided that they would offer a different perspective which, however interesting, would properly constitute a separate study.

They would not contribute to understanding the ways in which decisions were made in the institution.

### **Discussion of the interview method**

The interview style was deliberately relaxed and informal in order to encourage openness and honesty. A schedule of questions was used only to guide the discussion. The sequence of questions was not maintained in all cases and the schedule was adapted to the way the interviewee responded. For example, where an individual addressed the content of one item in response to another question, this was acknowledged and the question not put. Follow-up questions encouraged discursive and in-depth responses. The schedule was designed to be as open as possible, allowing for respondents to make original responses.

A problem in the interviews was to gather authentic views from the interviewee and to avoid leading questions (Cohen and Manion, 2000, Seidman, 2006). For example, to ask whether the curriculum prepares students for teacher training tends to evoke a positive response, because that might well be judged to be desirable. Asking about the role of the subject disciplines will tend to make the interviewee search for examples. To mention the higher education market is bound to introduce the concept in the respondent's thinking when it may not have been a genuine issue. There is always a tension between leading the respondent towards inauthentic replies and the failure to gain the information sought. It will be noted that in this study some of the questions tend towards the leading: there is a direct question about the market and about the contributory disciplines, for example. It was judged that the researcher's field relation with the interviewees would mitigate this in that it made it less likely that they would exaggerate or construct false response.

The interview style is also consensual in that, while individuals are pressed for explanation and further detail, the attempt is to respond positively to ideas and suggestions and to avoid any sense that a particular response is challenged or not approved. This is a particular issue in this data because, as noted above, the interviewer's own role in the undergraduate Education Studies world means that interviewees tended to have some foreknowledge of his perceptions, and the danger



might be that they shaped their answers accordingly. For example, it is well known that the Bath Spa Education Studies Degree is strongly linked to teacher training and there is a tendency for respondents to describe their programme in those terms. See the section on the pilot interviews for further discussion.

### **Selection of the interview questions**

The questions were chosen to explore the themes of the study:

1. Relationship to antecedent and concurrent ITT courses
2. Institutional factors and the higher education market
3. Staffing effects
4. Theoretical frameworks and the contributory disciplines

They were designed to ensure that the themes were covered, while leaving space for the interviewees to offer their own perspectives. For example, the question about the theoretical framework is posed before the question about the contributory disciplines. This was intended to allow a response to the first question which may have included a reference to the discipline, but without prompting it in the question. So those for whom the disciplines were a prominent feature of the theoretical framework might respond in this way, whereas the others would not be led to that response.

### ***Interview schedule with subject leaders***

1. How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?
2. What do you see as the aims of the programme?
3. How were the aims and objectives for the programme derived?
4. What are the distinctive features of the curriculum?
5. What role do the subject disciplines play?
6. How would you describe the theoretical framework for the programme?
7. How far does students' choice of modules determine the curriculum content?
8. How far does staff interest and expertise determine the curriculum content?
9. How do you see the programme in relation to teacher training?
10. Do the teacher training standards have any influence over the choice of content?

11. What vocational outcomes are intended?
12. Did the QAA Benchmark and review play a part in determining the curriculum?
13. Do market forces play a role in the content of the curriculum?
14. How do you see the programme developing?

***Interview schedule with senior managers***

1. How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents? Where do the student numbers come from?
2. How does it fit into the university's overall mission?
3. How was the curriculum for Education developed?
4. What is the theoretical basis for Education Studies?
5. How is Education Studies perceived within the institution? What are the micropolitics?
6. Are there links with any other subjects?
7. How does Education Studies relate to teacher training?
8. How does the subject and its curriculum relate to government policy for universities?
9. Was the growth of Education Studies intended to avoid state intervention?
10. What is the role of the market in the development of Education Studies?
11. What is the policy for staff appointments to Education?
12. How do you see the programme developing?

An analysis of the questions is offered in the evaluation of the pilot interviews (Section 2).

**Recording and transcription**

The interviews were recorded with a small and unobtrusive digital recorder which proved to be effective in that interviewees appeared to be indifferent to its presence. All had previous experience of a similar interview. The recordings were transcribed by the author. This was time-consuming, four to six hours for each interview, and might have been carried out by a secretarial assistant. However, it was found that the process of listening in order to transcribe the surface text was helpful in constructing

the meaning. In practice, additional data were obtained from listening to the recordings than would be represented purely through a typescript. For example, on several occasions, Senior Manager 2 intones irritation or annoyance when referring to one of the subject leaders. This reveals the strength of his/her emotional response and, thereby, the extent of the dynamic between him/her and the subject leader concerned. This meaning would not have been fully transmitted in a transcript and it proved to be significant in constructing the meaning of the surface text.

### **Analysis of texts of the interview transcriptions**

It is important to note that, while the questions were all intended to address the topic, there is a great deal of data in the interviews, some of which is not directly related to the topic. In this sense the data is rich and multifarious and it became necessary to be highly selective in the choice of text for the analyses. This very choice of text is, of course, a feature of the interpretive status of the research. The text which has been ignored may well be a source of interest and other interpretations may, of course, be constructed from it. The rationale for the choice of text is that it was judged to address the research question of how the subject was originated and developed.

Computer-assisted analysis was not used because it was not necessary and, it was judged, may tend to select irrelevant material. The researcher became very familiar with the data by spending 4-6 hours on each of the transcriptions and by carrying out the analysis of each data set immediately after the interviews. The researcher therefore developed an intimate knowledge of the data, not simply from the texts, but from recall of the context and the repeated playing of the speech files. It is argued that his knowledge of the texts and the background enabled him to find and select the items required.

Transcripts are given in Appendix 2. As noted above, the voice files for each interview set were transcribed directly after the interviews had taken place and a first analysis was made of each data set. These analyses are included as Appendix 3. The initial analysis of each set was made by searching for relevant information under the headings:

- The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework
- Relationship to teacher training
- The contributory disciplines
- Staffing effects

The fifth theme, ‘vocational outcomes’, emerged at a later point when the analyses were collated.

At the end of the interview sequence, the initial analyses, together with the original transcripts of the texts, were used to make the overall analysis under the five headings of Chapter 7.

The technique used for the interpretation of the texts is a form of discourse analysis. Stubbs (1983) explains that the term refers

.... mainly to the linguistic analysis of naturally occurring connected speech or written discourse. Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers (p.1).

Discourse analysis allows for an interpretation of the text in such a way that meaning is treated problematically and in a multi-level way. Fairclough (1995) describes three elements of discourse analysis: the text, either spoken or written, the discourse practice and the social context in which the text is located. In the case of the interviews here, the text is controlled mutually by the interviewer and interviewee. The discourse practice refers to the variability in possible interpretations of text between speaker and listener during the course of the interview. It does not refer to the secondary interpretation of the text in the discourse analysis itself. So it means how the interviewee understands the question and how the interviewer interprets the response in forming a follow-up question or comment. In the analysis of the texts it is shown how the interviewee has interpreted the questions and how the interviewer has interpreted the responses at the time. The social context, in this case, is that of the

interviewer and interviewee face to face and this is a complex matter in the case of these interviews.

As noted above, in some cases the interviewee was previously known to the interviewer and this is shown to have effect upon the interviewee's willingness to impart information. In other cases the interviewee was more guarded. The social context is, to some extent, defined by the nature of the activity and the relative roles of the participants. All participants are members of university schools of education and so there is a high level of shared experience and meaning between peers. There are some differences in the interviews, however. The first is the level of personal familiarity with between the interviewer and interviewee. The second is the professional/social context. The interviews with the subject leaders are between peers, whereas those with some senior managers were slightly more formal in tone because of the status difference between the interviewer and interviewee.

As well as being defined by the formal roles of the participants, the social context is to some extent defined by the participants' actions on a local and immediate basis. This is the manner which the participants choose to adapt to the interview event. The intention was to make the interview informal and collegial, and to make positive comments in response, in order to encourage the interviewee to be relaxed and uninhibited. This appeared to be effective, in particular in the case of the second subject leader in case 2 (SL2B) who began the interview in a slightly hostile and guarded manner, but gradually became more relaxed.

As noted above, the transcription process required a careful and thorough analysis of the recordings. This, in itself, forced a succession of interpretation and re-interpretation of the meaning and significance of the discourse: *living with the data* during the period of the analysis.

### **Critique of the methods**

A number of concerns about the method require further discussion and resolution. The first is the ontological one of the relationship of the nature of the question to the methodology. The main finding is that Education Studies is under-theorised and

determined by individual and institutional interests. It can be argued that the way the questions are designed and the way the data is analysed led necessarily to this conclusion. In particular, the ‘difficult’ direct question about the theoretical framework for the subject is the culprit. Perhaps a more open-ended interrogation - a question of participants such as ‘Tell me anything about your Education Studies subject’ - would have produced different results.

The second is in the nature of the analysis of the texts. The process is for the researcher to select significant items, while ignoring, or editing out, others. The danger here is in the interpretation of that which is significant and the tendency to select those ‘interesting’, and frequently negative, items: those which signal the morally and professionally reprehensible or the naïve and foolish. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) point to the danger in manual analysis of selecting only the most memorable items of text. To mitigate this, the questions in the interviews provided a structure which enabled systematic analysis and each data set was analysed immediately after the interview date to ensure that the analyst was fully aware of the content in each case.

The third is the context in which the investigation has been carried out. As noted above, the use of subjects who were previously known to the researcher enabled access, making it to some extent an opportunity sample. A second advantage has been the frank and uninhibited data which has emerged in the ‘shared perspective’ approach to the interviews. However, there is a concern that the objective quality of the data is damaged by this context of two subject leaders, interviewer and interviewee, sharing their concerns and interests. The interviewer has a strong perspective, and the interviewee may be aware of what that perspective is and this affects the response.

A fourth is simply the number of cases examined. Some additional cases would, of course, have strengthened the findings. In particular, it would have been most interesting to have heard from more institutions which undertook a full 3+1 conversion. These would have provided more data on the way in which the subject replaced, rather than ran alongside, current undergraduate QTS courses. This seems in some institutions to be regarded as a high risk strategy and it would have been helpful

to know how that was handled. It would certainly have given the author more direct comparison with the Bath Spa Programme.

### **Originality of the research**

A similar method is used by Becher (1989) in his work on academic disciplines, interviewing academics about their perspectives. Nothing similar has been carried out in the educational field and the findings are thought to be unique.

### **Statement on ethical principles (Higher Degrees Handbook 3.1)**

#### ***The value of the research***

The outcomes of the research provide the general readership with an overview of the types of Education Studies curriculum offered in higher education institutions in England and Wales. In particular it provides a discussion of the theoretical models from which course providers are able to draw in constructing and modifying programmes. It also indicates the relationships of Education Studies to teacher training programmes and includes a discussion of the nature of educational theory in relation to teacher training. This should be of interest to those concerned with teacher training. An aim of the research is to facilitate the development of Education Studies through communication between programme leaders.

#### ***Informed consent***

Data was gathered from a number of individuals in higher education institutions. The consent of all individuals was obtained. The consent of each institution was obtained through the agreement of a senior member of the faculty.

#### ***Openness and honesty***

The theoretical framework and the nature of the methodology was explained to all individuals involved.

#### ***Right to withdraw without penalty***

This principle is acknowledged. If individuals or institutions had withdrawn their consent, then the material would not have been included.

***Confidentiality and anonymity***

Individuals' names are excluded from the account; they will be referred to by their role or designation in an institution. The names of institutions are also concealed. Every effort has been made to conceal identity, gender and location in the transcripts and analysis of interviews.

Names of institutions in website search are concealed to avoid their use in identifying the institutions in the interview data.

***Protection from harm***

The work is written in such a way that any criticism cannot be damaging to the people or institutions concerned.

***Briefing and debriefing***

A statement of the methods and their implications was given to all participants, including the representatives of institutions. Debriefing was given by the provision of a copy of the transcribed interview, together with a brief summary of the findings of the research. In an accompanying letter, it was explained that the full study may be obtained from Bath Spa University Library and that interviewees would be supplied with a copy of any later-published paper which draws upon the data. A copy of the letter and responses are retained confidentially by the author.

Of those who replied, the responses to the transcripts are generally positive. A small number requested minor changes to wording, sometimes to preserve anonymity. One, Subject Leader 8B, asked for the transcript to be excluded from the document because s/he felt that the institution was too easily identifiable from the description of the course.

***Reimbursements, payments and rewards***

None was given to any participants.



***Suitability/experience of research***

The researcher has engaged in two decades of programme construction and management and is familiar with all aspects and issues involved in the subject of the research. As a manager in higher education, the researcher was equipped with the experience and knowledge to manage interviews with the senior faculty managers.

***Ethics and standards of external bodies and institutions***

No other external body is involved.

***Reporting on ethical issues throughout***

Ethical issues are part of the subject of the research and are discussed in this chapter.

***Research for clients/consultants***

No other clients were involved.

***Dissemination***

During the course of the research, papers have been presented at the following:  
The British Educational Research Association (BERA) Conference (2004)  
The British Education Studies Association (BESA) Conferences (2005, 2006)

A paper will be published in the journal *Educational Futures*, the journal of the British Education Studies Association during 2006-07.

## Section 2 – Analysis of the pilot interviews

### Aims for the pilot

The pilot study comprised interviews with the subject leaders and senior managers in two institutions. The aims for the pilot interviews were as follows.

- 1 *To determine whether the interview method adopted is fit for the purpose and provides the data required to test the hypothesis*

The pilot interviews were intended to determine whether the interviews would provide the required data to support the investigation or whether additional or alternative data were required from other sources, such as the close scrutiny of course documents. They were also to test the suitability of each of the questions to supply the data required: whether each of the questions elicited the required data, whether there was repetition and whether the format and wording of the questions was suited to the social context of the interviews.

- 2 *To ensure that the selected interviewees were able to provide the data required*

The interviews of the subject leader and the faculty or school senior manager were initially chosen as the main source of data for the dissertation. Again, it was necessary to determine whether these two positions would have sufficient information and offer the perspective required. Additional possibilities were interviews with senior managers at the institutional level, or students.

- 3 *To evaluate the interview method and style*

A variety of interview styles are possible. The method initially selected was an informal and ‘collegial’ one which was intended to encourage respondents to be uninhibited. However, it was to evaluate the effects of this, in particular to determine whether the approach meant that data provided was insufficiently detailed.

### To evaluate the quality of data obtained

The pilot was designed to test whether the data was sufficiently rich in content to contribute to a full understanding of the nature of the courses being provided.

### Choice of institutions and interviewees

The interviews were carried out in two universities where the author had had previous contact with two of the interviewees. This was in order to facilitate access to the interviewees in the first instance. A second reason for choosing sympathetic subjects was the possibly challenging nature of some of the questions. The questions about the origins and antecedents of the programme, for example, ask for an account of the interrelationship between academic development and individuals' career trajectories. The question about staffing in relation to the staffing for teacher training courses was also thought to be potentially sensitive. Grills (1998) refers to the notion of *trust* in ethnographic research and the intention. The use of sympathetic respondents was intended to allow the initial exploration of these matters and to discover the kinds of issues which may emerge.

On both counts this strategy was successful in that it was possible to gain access to the subject leaders and to the subject leaders in each institution. Both the known subject leaders were co-operative and there was no difficulty in acquiring data from them as they both adopted an open and non-defensive manner. The questions about academic origins and staffing did, indeed, reveal some sensitive matters which the interviewees felt able to discuss openly. The interviews provided a foreknowledge of the types of issues to emerge which provided good experience for managing the interviews with less familiar respondents. It was possible to experience an example of a less sympathetic response in the case of the second subject leader in the second institution (SL2B) who initially adopted a rather defensive posture, although his/her manner softened during the course of the interview. The two senior managers were relatively sympathetic and open as the researcher had been introduced as the associate of a colleague.

In neither of the cases was it possible to gain an interview with a member of the university's directorate and so direct data about the institutional perspective of the university is missing. Both contacts at the universities were reluctant to try to arrange such an interview, and furthermore found the request difficult to comprehend. The reason for this reluctance became evident during the interviews with the two senior

managers at the faculty level and the subject leaders. All interviewees were able to comment on the institutional view of Education Studies and they reported a lack of any interest in the academic nature of the subject itself in the university. The suggestion was that they were concerned only with student numbers and staffing and it was implied that discussion of the epistemology of Education Studies with directorate members would have limited outcomes. It would appear, then, that a considered perspective on the epistemology of Education Studies goes no higher than the school or faculty level within the institution. This is consistent with description of the current role of the university: to be concerned with marketing and funding, rather than with the nature or definition of knowledge (Readings, 1996, Barnett, 2000, Delanty, 2001).

It was evident, then, that interviews with the universities' directorate members were unlikely to add significantly to the data. Such interviews could have been conducted to confirm this lack of interest. However, it was judged that the difficulties that would have been incurred in securing such an interview in each institution would have exceeded their potential value. Furthermore, it was judged that it would be disingenuous, or even unethical, to engage the time of individuals in pursuit of what might be described as 'negative data' – finding there was nothing to say.

This finding helped to focus the study on the school or faculty in which the decisions about the nature and content of the subject were made and the data was therefore restricted to subject leaders and their direct managers, the faculty deans. It helped to sharpen the focus of the dissertation to the investigation of the nature of knowledge in Education Studies. It became clear that to engage with issues in university management would be a distraction from main intentions in the project.

All the interviewees in the pilots proffered data which they took to be confidential and sensitive. For example, Senior Manager 2 reveals his/her personal thinking behind the decision to retain the four-year QTS course:

If I'm very honest, and I shall be, because I know this isn't going to be attributed, when I came I did wonder about whether we should retain the three-year undergraduate ITT programme, or whether we should move to - not formally a three-plus-one, because I think there has to be an opt-out possibility

at the plus-one stage - and recruit to Education Studies and encourage people to go on to do a PGCE (SM2:9).

S/he later speaks openly of the subject leaders:

They've got a chip on their shoulder, actually, I think. No, I'm beginning to think that (SL2B) has got a chip on his/her shoulder about this. I'll have to have a word with him/her..... (SM2: 43).

Subject Leader 1 speaks openly about the micro-politics of student numbers:

Well I was told by the director of that school that they saw Education Studies as a Trojan horse that was actually going to see the end of Consumer Studies because we're taking their numbers and, yes we can recruit, but they were having problems in certain areas, so their course becomes unviable. Then as a *school* they'll become unviable.... (SL1:15).

Senior Manager 1, at an early point in the interview, is similarly unguarded about the acquisition of student numbers from other faculties:

As to where the numbers come from, that has been *extremely* difficult and, in fact, where they've come from – and I'm glad this is confidential – is that the numbers have actually come from the other faculties. Because, unlike a lot of universities..... I'm used to the context where, if you develop a new programme which is a good recruiter, everybody claps their hands and says go away and get on with it. But here, very firmly, numbers are sitting in faculties (SM1:03).

S/he goes on graphically to characterise the university's approach:

... here, it's the difference with other universities. Here it's because we have, if you like, six robber barons. We sit very firmly on our numbers. If anybody wants any of my numbers it's away with you, off with your head! (SM1:09)

This familiarity, while being effective in acquiring data, did present some problems and some interesting points. One problem was the interviewees' familiarity with me and the course at Bath Spa. There was a sense, which is difficult to demonstrate from the transcripts themselves, that the interviewees tended to assume comparisons between the courses. At one point, Senior Manager 1 moved to interview the researcher about the course and its origins at Bath Spa. The familiarity with the

subject leaders tended to make them almost *too* honest in their statements. For example, SL2A, when asked about the subject disciplines in the programme replies:

.....And I give them a quick and dirt..... well certainly a fairly intensive introduction to sociology – (SL2A:43).

This self-correction seems to indicate the sense that s/he had become too informal and too open and wished to defend the quality of the course. There is, then, perhaps some ambiguity in his/her mind about the relationship with the researcher colleague and the role as an interviewee.

### **Analysis of the selection of questions**

The experience of the interviews indicated that the list of questions could not be strictly adhered to. It was found that the interviewees frequently strayed into the topic of a later question and, in order to preserve the informal and conversational style, it was necessary to follow up the matter there and then, rather than asking to return to it later. The process was that the question 1 would be asked and followed by prompt questions. For example:

How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents? (SL1:01)  
*So you initiated it as policy, but then you were ... .. (SL1:04)*  
 So it depended on individuals, really. You had an individual here – a Head of Faculty – who wasn't interested, so it didn't happen? SL1:08)

So the use of follow-up questions tended to elicit data from the other topics. In practice it was necessary to keep the list of questions in mind and to use the follow-up questions to gather the data which was required. It was necessary on occasions to turn back to the list to check whether anything had been missed.

Questions 2 and 6 were problematical in that they tended to overlap.

- 1 What do you see as the aims of the programme?
- 6 How would you describe the theoretical framework for the programme?

In answering question 1, interviewees tended to discuss the theoretical framework. Returning to question 6, then, would have been to ask for similar information to that which had already been given. However, in the case of SL1, question 6 *was* revealing

in his/her response, ‘What do you mean by that?’ This was taken to indicate that s/he was uncertain about the theory. So this question was left in to ensure that formal response is given, despite the possibility of repetition.

Question 4, *What are the distinctive features of the programme* again was a repetition of information already given in the first general questions. Other questions similarly proved to be too specific and asked for information already given. For example:

- 7 How far does students’ choice of modules determine the curriculum content?  
and
- 8 How far does staff interest and expertise determine the curriculum content?

These tended to be answered in response to other questions about the origins and aims of the programme. Matters concerning the TTA standards emerged in response to the general question about the relationship to teacher training. The question about market forces appeared to be too leading. It planted the notion of commercial considerations in the interviewee’s mind and it was decided that it better elicited more indirectly in order to show whether it is a genuine factor in the respondent’s thinking. The direct question was, therefore, dropped from the subsequent interviews with a prompt about the market used where nothing was forthcoming.

With this minor change, it was judged that the initial list of questions was appropriate.

### **Interview style**

As noted above, the interviews were conducted with individuals who were known to, sympathetic to, the intentions of the researcher. This was effective in making the interview style relaxed and informal. The intention was to employ a style which resembled a natural conversation between academics with a shared interest in the subject. It appears to have been effective in encouraging the interviewees to be open. The questions can be interpreted as, on occasions, challenging the academic status of the programme and there is a danger of interviewees becoming defensive, as in the case noted above where SL2A changed the statement from ‘quick and dirty’ to ‘intensive’. It was decided, therefore, to replicate the style with the subsequent interviewees in order to avoid the interview resembling a quality review. This

collegial, ‘shared perspective’ approach had its problems, however. In the first interviews it was found that the interviewer tended to reveal too much of his own thinking, and therefore to lead the respondent in a particular way. For example, with Subject Leader 1, the researcher says:

So students see it as a route into teaching, which it can be (SL1:24)

This last phrase is unnecessary and leads the interviewee to agree. On reflection, this appeared to be a natural part of the discourse between the two. In the second pilot the researcher endeavoured to be more guarded in revealing his own position. However, this was not easy in the context of the informal style of interview where revealing one's thinking can make the interviewee less guarded. So there is a balance to be struck here.

The ‘shared perspective’ approach in practice pointed to the need for a less structured interview schedule. Respondents tended to be discursive in their replies and to anticipate much of the content of the specific questions. Some features, though, do appear to require a direct and specific question and that is the topic of the subject disciplines and their contribution to Education Studies and the role of the QAA or Ofsted in the definition of Education Studies. Reflecting on the role of the interviewer it appeared that much was determined by the researcher's own role as a subject leader. This complex intertwining of roles, it was judged, is a necessary function of the ethnographic process.

A question arose as to how to interpret some statements. A particular example is senior Manager 2 who states that the Education Studies course is of equal status in the institution to the teacher training courses. S/he says,

(Angrily) I don't see it as a Cinderella. I don't know how many times I've got to say it. Nor do I see the foundation degrees as Cinderella subjects. I regard them very, very highly (SM2:42).

There is no hierarchy of courses in this school. I keep saying that ..... (laughs).... I keep saying it: there is no hierarchy. A foundation degree student is as important as someone doing a doctorate (SM2:52).



The strength of the protest indicates that there might indeed be a perception of status between courses, and this is why s/he finds the need to make these unsolicited statements. The discourse was interpreted, then, as contradictory to the explicit meaning expressed by the speaker. This raises the ethical question as to whether it is legitimate to attribute to an interviewee's statements a meaning other than that explicitly expressed. However, in the interests of expressing the reality, it would seem necessary to adopt this alternative interpretation. Foddy (1993) warns of the weak relationship between what respondents say they do and what they actually do. This appeared to be such a case where the professed action is different from the reality.

### **Summary of conclusions from the pilots and reformulation of the research design**

The preliminary findings from the pilot study led to a refinement of the original scope of the thesis: a limitation of the search to the epistemological origins of the programmes within the school or faculty of education. The original intention had been to explore the view of the institution in the development of the subject and to explore the views of students. Because of the wealth of data gathered from the two institutions in the pilot, it appeared necessary to focus the study upon the perspectives of the subject leaders and the deans. The view of the institution now appeared to be marginal, and the views of the students required another range of data which was beyond the scope of the investigation and in answer to questions of a different order. Such a study would be one of students' *perceptions* of the epistemology of Education Studies. In this thesis, the intention is to determine the nature of the subject as it is conceived and taught by the universities, rather than what are its effects upon students.

A significant finding from the interviews was the powerful effect of the micro-politics of the university on the development of the Education Studies programmes. These included inter-faculty disputes over student numbers and staff allocation. In the cases studied both programmes had been largely derived by a single tutor according to his/her academic background, interests and career trajectory. In both cases, also, there was a critical relationship between the subject leader and the dean. In Case 1 the subject leader had been waiting for some years for the arrival of a dean who would sanction the development of Education Studies. Their relationship in this case was collaborative, almost conspiratorial, in the moves to develop Education Studies. In

Case 2, the relationship between the former dean and the first subject leader had been similar in allowing him/her free rein to develop the subject. However, the new dean was more critical and did not appear to support Education Studies in the same way.

The status of Education Studies in the university, or more precisely, within the faculty or school, was problematical in both cases. In both institutions the relationship between Education Studies and initial teacher training was difficult. Education Studies was viewed as a low-status programme in relation to the TTA-funded ITT courses. In Case 2 this view was endorsed by the two subject leaders who were both critical of the quality of their students and of the students' motivation for taking Education Studies. The Education Studies students were seen as the ones who had failed to make it onto the ITT course and who were just taking it as a 'back-door' route to teacher training. This view was shared by the dean, although s/he professed no status differentials between the programmes. In Case 2, the dean and the subject leader's collusion was intended to raise the numbers and status of the Education Studies programme. This was to be achieved by 'poaching' student numbers from other faculties and by deploying staff to Education Studies at the expense of teacher training. The strategy was reinforced, though, by the dean's imaginative perspective on the theoretical perspective for Education Studies.

This is most interesting data. It is recognised, though, that there is a danger that a fascination with university politics might dominate the findings. A problem is that such matters tend to preoccupy the interviewees and a great deal of the discourse is spent on these topics, with attempts to explain the historical background and the current issues. This is probably because such matters tend to be high in the attention of the interviewees themselves. The matter is also, of course, of interest to the researcher, and there is a consequent danger of the focus of the thesis being distorted by the over-use of these data.

### **Ethical matters**

One point which the pilot interviews revealed was the difficulty of maintaining the anonymity of the institutions and the individuals concerned. The interview data

revealed explicit details of the content and format of courses. There is a relatively small number of institutions in Education Studies provision and the discerning reader could probably identify the course, and therefore the institution and individuals, involved. The pilot interviews, then, revealed the need to conceal the identity of the individuals and institutions more systematically with the methods detailed above.

### **Summary of findings from the pilot interviews**

After the pilot interviews the following were concluded:

- 1 The interviews with senior faculty manager and subject leader produced rich data which were sufficient to pursue the aims of the study.
- 2 To interview senior managers above the faculty level was redundant.
- 3 The list of interview questions was suitable, with the deletion of a direct question about the market.
- 4 The informal interview style was appropriate, although it was necessary to strike a balance between offering shared perspectives and leading the interviewee's responses.
- 5 A high level of interpretation of the interviewees' responses is required.
- 6 The micro-politics of the situations were significant features of the data and it was necessary to introduce further measures to anonymise cases.
- 7 The minimal changes to the questions and to the approach meant that the data secured from the pilots were suitable for use in the main body of data for analysis.

## Chapter 6

### Education Studies curricula on university websites

#### Introduction

This chapter reports on the exploration of the Education Studies courses on offer by analysing the websites of 42 higher education institutions in England and Wales. The aim is to explore the overall range of current provision for undergraduate Education Studies in the institutions and to map the landscape of curriculum content. A particular focus is the extent to which courses prepare students for subsequent teacher training or other vocational outcomes and to note the theoretical framework for Education Studies. The data were used to identify a sample of institutions for the interview data.

The analysis was carried out in June 2004 and was intended to provide a brief overview of the extant curriculum for Education Studies at that point in time. It should be noted that since this date new courses have commenced and that the data is now partly outdated.

The findings are that courses vary across the following main dimensions: the extent to which there is preparation for initial teacher training or other vocational outcomes; reference to the subject disciplines of education. Most universities appear to be attempting to distinguish Education Studies from teacher training provision and a number of 'new' areas of study are noted, such as international education and the study of ecological issues. It was found that in many cases the theoretical frameworks for courses is unclear. 23 dimensions of Education Studies in courses are identified and ten emerging themes are noted and discussed.

#### Method

Data are drawn from the websites of 42 HEI offering degree courses in Education Studies in England and Wales. The selection of sites was identified from two sources: the QAA websites for the review of Education between 2000 and 2001 (qaa.ac.uk)

and the UCAS website which lists Education Studies as a degree course ([ucas.ac.uk](http://ucas.ac.uk)). The sites were accessed during the period April to June 2004. In one case, King Alfred's College, Winchester, there is reference to a paper about the course written by the course leader and which is accessible from the website (Tubbs and Grimes, 1999).

A list of possible dimensions for Education Studies was drawn up and the sites were searched to find the incidence of occurrence for each institution. These were recorded on a spreadsheet and the occurrences for each dimension were then totalled to give the overall incidence as a percentage of the total number of institutions (Table 1, page 168-9).

The rationale for this method was to gather a rapid overview of provision; the websites are useful in that they offer a condensed version of each course and are easily accessible and verifiable. The case for using them as data is that they are a likely first point of access for intending students and, presumably, play a role in students' selection of a course. They are written by the institutions themselves and offer, thereby, a first-hand account of what a course comprises.

The weaknesses of the websites as the source of data is that they are written at a high level of summary and many of the complex nuances of provision in each institution are missed. In fact, they vary in the level of detail offered. Some give a brief overview of a course, some give a year-by-year description of module titles; others include quite detailed descriptions of the content of individual modules. It should also be remembered that the websites are written as a marketing enterprise and this might lead to particular emphasis being placed on certain aspects of a course to make it appeal to applicants. The data are likely to be partial in that some dimensions may be included in a course, but not referred to in the website. The figures listed should, then, be seen as estimates, and necessarily *under*-estimates.

In the interpretation of the data, the omission of certain items by some institutions is taken as a significant finding. For example, where an institution does not mention other vocational outcomes for graduating students, but only refers to progression to teacher training, it is assumed that the focus of the course is on the preparation for

teacher training, rather than for other vocations. Such conclusions, though, must be tentative.

For simplicity and manageability, data are restricted to the institutions currently offering Education Studies as either single honours degree or as a subject in a combined honours degrees. This is by no means a comprehensive picture of Education Studies in England and Wales. Not included are institutions such as the London Institute and the University of Bath which offer Education Studies only at masters' level and the Open University which offers mainly masters' level with a small number of undergraduate Education modules. Foundation Degrees in Education Studies are now growing rapidly and there are various combinations of Education in certificate and diploma courses in FE colleges; these are all excluded.

The names of the HEI are identified in this search because all the data used is in the public domain.

The selection of the 24 dimensions of Education Studies was made to be consistent with the focus of the research. They were selected to reflect the aim of tracking the relationship of courses to teacher training or other vocational outcomes and to attempt to identify patterns in the theoretical frameworks for Education Studies. The particular selection reflects the author's understanding and experience, together with the identification of items which appeared through the examination of the websites. So, for example, Dimension 24, *Placement in a setting*, was among the original list, whereas Dimension 14, *Law*, was discovered during the website search. It is acknowledged that there is an arbitrary quality to the selection of these dimensions and additional or alternative ones are possible.

In the discussion of the findings there is the occasional use of some information about the origins and antecedents of courses that has been gathered informally from discussions with colleagues in different universities.

Findings

Of the 42 courses most have the title ‘Education’ or ‘Education Studies’. However, a other titles are to be found:

- ‘Education and Employment’ (St Marys College, Strawberry Hill)
- ‘Education, Culture and Society’ (Goldsmith’s College)
- ‘Human Development and Education’ (Oxford Brookes)
- ‘Education and Childhood Studies’ (Edge Hill College)

Every website emphasises that the course does not offer qualified teacher status and a number describe the subject as ‘academic’, in contrast to teacher training.

The data on the different courses are summarised in the form of a Spreadsheet (Table 1, pp.171-2) listing the 42 institutions against a series of Dimensions of Education Studies. The dimensions for the analysis are as follows and their occurrence is indicated by the number 1 in the table. Totals and percentages for each dimension are given at the bottom of each column. (See Table 2, page 170.)

The following is a summary of the data for each of the dimensions, with the total occurrences as a percentage in brackets.

- 1. *Single or combined honours degree* (Single 24%, Combined only 76%)

In Table 1, S denotes single honours, C denotes combined honours, SC denotes both available. Combined honours is the most common form, with 76% offering Education Studies in combined honours only. Only 24% offer a single honours award, with just one institution offering it as single honours only.

- 2. *QAA review 2001-02* (57%)

This shows the number of courses in existence at that date. No record indicates that the course has commenced since 2000. 57% were in existence for review in 2000-01, meaning that 43% have started since that date. (The University of Cardiff was not reviewed as Welsh Universities were not subject to review, but the course

was in existence at that time.)

3. *Link to PGCE* (62%)

This records where an institution signals that there is expected progression to a PGCE course which is provided by the institution. Most institutions mention teacher training as a possible vocational outcome and the majority (62%) offer progression to a PGCE course, but a significant proportion do not make this provision. A small number make no mention of teacher training as a career outcome.

4. *Guaranteed PGCE* (7%)

This records where an institution offers its Education Studies graduates a guaranteed place, or a guaranteed interview for a place, on its PGCE course. It is taken to indicate a commitment to the teacher-training model of Education Studies and is perhaps the strongest evidence that the course is designed to prepare students for teacher training. Only 7% make this offer, two offering a guaranteed place and one offering a guaranteed interview.

5. *Accredited in PGCE* (5%)

This indicates that modules in the Education Studies course may be accredited in the institution's PGCE course for teacher training. Again, it is taken to assume a strong commitment to teacher training. Only two institutions claim to offer this; one is Bishop Grosseteste College which also offers a guaranteed Primary PGCE place.

6. *Other vocational* (79%)

This denotes the reference to vocational outcomes for graduates other than teaching. A high proportion offer this, although there is variation in how specific the career suggestions are. Some make only generalised allusions to other careers, while others provide a list of specific possibilities and give examples of alumni.

7. *Childhood Studies or Early Years Studies integrated* (33%)

Childhood Studies or Early Years Studies focus on human development and are sometimes seen as part of Education Studies. This dimension, and the next one, is



an attempt to distinguish those courses which include Childhood Studies and Early Years as part of Education Studies and those which treat it as a separate subject. One third of the courses claim to include substantial aspects of human development or early years content. In some cases this element is substantial, as in the case of Oxford Brookes where the subject is actually entitled 'Human Development and Education'.

8. *Childhood Studies or Early Years Studies discrete.* (26%)

This is where Childhood Studies or Early Years are offered as a separate subject course to be taken in combination with Education Studies. In these cases, for example at Anglia Polytechnic University, the Education Studies course includes little development work and has a stronger sociological bias.

The next four items indicate the inclusion of the traditional Education Studies subject disciplines. It seems likely that the disciplines might be included in many of the other courses as actually taught. However, for the purposes of this survey, it is only recorded where it is explicitly referred to in the website.

9. *Psychology* (40%)

Only 40% specifically mention psychology, or psychological approaches. There are few modules which are specifically psychological. Usually the reference is to 'psychological approaches'.

10. *Sociology* (43%)

A similar proportion refer to sociology as a discipline. Very few institutions actually run modules called 'the Sociology of Education'. Again, usually the reference is to 'sociological approaches'.

11. *Philosophy* (21%)

Far fewer refer to philosophy as a discipline. The item was included only where philosophy as an actual subject discipline was mentioned and was not included where the term is used in the sense of 'a philosophy': an approach or collection of views.

*12. History of Education* (17%)

An even smaller number refer to the history of education, and these references tend to be ‘historical perspectives’, rather than to a substantive module on history.

*13. Economics* (17%)

Economics is a discipline which has recently entered Education Studies. Again, it is recorded only where there is an explicit reference to economics as a theoretical discipline. The proportion is small at 17%, but it is equal to the number referring to history.

*14. Law* (5%)

Law is not one of the traditional areas of knowledge in Education Studies, but is explicitly referred to in two cases.

*15. Research methods* (55%)

This is recorded where there is an explicit reference to a research methods module or where students are required to carry out an empirical research investigation. It is a surprisingly low figure considering that educational research might be considered to be a major feature of educational theory.

*16. School curriculum* (36%)

This records where there is specific reference to the study of school curriculum subjects, such as English or mathematics. It does not include references to the general study of the curriculum policy or structure. The proportion of 36% is small, considering that Education Studies might be a subject for future teachers.

*17. Learning and development* (69%)

This reports any mention of learning or human development, although not necessarily within a psychological framework. It is also distinguished from references to Childhood Studies or Early Years Studies. There is a high incidence of it. Courses with a strong socio-cultural emphasis tend not to refer to it.

18. *Issues and critique* (79%)

This dimension records the critique of policy and practice and any reference to the discussion of educational questions and issues. It has the highest incidence and almost all courses refer to discussion of issues in some form.

19. *International and global* (40%)

This indicates whether there is reference either to education in other countries or to general global issues in education, such as international human rights in education or global patterns of government policy. The proportion of occurrences is quite substantial at 40%.

20. *Socio-cultural* (38%)

This indicates reference to social or cultural policy or issues, such as multicultural or intercultural education, or the specific reference to socio-cultural analysis. It is a strong occurrence at 38% and is particularly strong in some institutions; for example, the course at Goldsmith's College is entitled 'Education, Culture and Society'.

21. *Special needs* (21%)

This records the explicit reference to special educational needs or disabilities. It is one of the popular specific topics for study in the Education Studies curriculum.

22. *Education management* (12%)

These are specific reference to courses or modules with this title. It is a low-occurrence, despite the high number of courses which refer to various forms of management as a possible career outcome.

23. *Futures education* (10%)

This is recorded where a website mentions education as a means of affecting the future, or describes educational innovation, such as Design and Technology for a Sustainable Future' at Goldsmith's College.

24. *Setting placement* (31%)

A course may offer a placement in a school, a nursery, a training centre or other

educational setting. Usually it does not require the student to teach, although in one case (Bishop Grosseteste College) it refers to an assessed primary teaching placement which counts towards the standards in the subsequent Primary PGCE course.

### **Analysis of the data**

#### **Variety of courses**

The survey gives an overall picture of wide variation in the form and content of the Education Studies curriculum. The fact that over 40% have been started during the last three years since the QAA reviews (2001-04) indicates something of an explosion in the subject. The variance is indicative of a range of different views of Education Studies and of some of the different origins and antecedents. A feature of most courses is to provide a contrast with the compliance culture and competence model of undergraduate teacher training courses and to offer a broad perspective on education with analysis of social and cultural issues, education policy and global perspectives. However, there are contrasts and contradictions between and within different courses. In order to try to impose some order on the range described, a number of emerging themes in Education Studies are here identified. Some institutions have a course in which one of the themes is particularly salient and might constitute a course ‘type’. However, most display a few or more themes and the themes should be seen as threads which run through the overall tapestry. The suggested themes are described and discussed here.

#### **Theme 1 – Education in combined studies**

The high proportion (76%) of institutions offering Education Studies only in combined honours indicates that, at present, the subject is often seen as one which is taken alongside another subject. In some cases, where there is strong ‘theory for teachers’ theme (see below), it must be taken with a school National Curriculum subject. Other institutions strongly recommend the study of a National Curriculum subject for those intending to teach. This is, presumably, in order to provide subject knowledge for teaching in secondary schools and to meet the former TTA regulation

for entry to primary PGCE courses of degree-level study in a National Curriculum subject.

In some institutions a course of Education Studies with another specific school curriculum subject is offered. For example, Oxford Brookes offers 'Education Studies and Literacy'. In these cases, Education Studies seems to be seen to complement the other subject to make a coherent package to prepare for teaching. At Leeds University Education Studies is taken alongside MFL and TESOL programmes.

It is also common for it to be taken alongside Childhood Studies or Early Years, as at Anglia Polytechnic University, Leeds University, Edge Hill and Liverpool John Moore's University. This reflects the popularity of these subjects and the current market demand, particularly for Early Years courses. Here there is a sense that Education Studies exists sometimes as a second subject to be taken with the more popular subject. In 33% of cases the childhood and early years element is incorporated into Education Studies itself, but 26% of cases were found where Childhood Studies and Early Years are discrete subjects to be taken alongside, but separate from, Education Studies.

## **Theme 2 – Education in its own right**

Despite the preponderance of combined honours courses, the single honours model in which Education Studies is studied as a subject on its own is growing, with several institutions stating that it will become available in the future. This is a sign of the popularity of the subject and, perhaps, a growing confidence among institutions of the academic credibility of the subject. The removal in 2002 of the National Curriculum subject requirement for primary teacher trainees will also add to this effect. In cases where single honours degrees are offered there is considerable stress on the idea that Education Studies is an academic study in its own right, and not just an adjunct to teacher training. In some such courses there is a strong commitment to the traditional disciplines as the theoretical framework. For example, the University of Hertfordshire, the one institution which offers only single honours, states:

Elements of the programme will explore contemporary issues in education and society; historical perspectives on education; the psychology of education; learning theory; education in popular culture and literature. This degree combines the traditional study of the disciplines of education with innovative approaches to study and your own learning (University of Hertfordshire, 2004).

There is a sense, then, of the subject ‘coming of age’ in its own right.

### **Theme 3 –Theory for teachers**

A recurrent feature of courses is the preparation of students for entry to teacher training. Most websites mention that Education Studies is a good precursor to a PGCE course and many stress that a high proportion of their students go on to teaching. 62% of institutions offer a PGCE course which is linked to the undergraduate course and emphasise the benefits of Education Studies for teacher training. 36% offer modules related to the school curriculum which provide subject knowledge and an understanding of teaching and which might help students to meet the training standards in a PGCE course. An example is mathematics education at Exeter University.

In some cases where the Education Studies course has come into being by converting a TDA-funded QTS degree into HEFCE-funded Education Studies followed by a PGCE there is a particularly strong orientation towards primary teacher training and a guaranteed place, or a guaranteed interview, on the institution’s PGCE course is offered. Such courses include a high level of content on the school curriculum and on child development and learning. Two institutions offer a guaranteed place and one offers a guaranteed interview. Of these, Bishop Grosseteste College offers a guaranteed place and a strong curriculum and teaching orientation with teaching practice placements which are credited in the PGCE course. This model is the closest to the teacher training standards model. Bath Spa University College includes a guaranteed PGCE place but also offers alternative routes with choices of modules which are less related to teacher training. Homerton College Cambridge offers a similar dual route,

but without a guaranteed place. These strong teacher-training models exist where Education Studies replaces an undergraduate QTS degree.

Another feature in the descriptions is the suggestion that Education Studies will be suitable for those who are considering teaching, but have not yet finally decided on a career option. So the provisional element is designed to appeal. De Montfort University stresses that its staff are also teacher trainers and this seems to be an attempt to ensure the credibility of Education Studies as a preparation for teacher training.

#### **Theme 4 – Anything but teaching**

There are other ways in which the antecedents of Education Studies courses have a bearing on the way in which they have developed. ‘Education and Employment’ at St Mary’s College Strawberry Hill began as provision for students who had failed or withdrawn from the college’s QTS degree course. It was devised to offer students Education Studies as an *alternative* to teacher training, with an emphasis on employment in careers other than teaching. Greenwich and Hertfordshire courses also announce themselves as for those who are not interested in teaching as a career. These courses offer a curriculum which is remote from teacher training, but there is no unity of aims within these. For example, the St Mary’s course contains modules on aspects of employment, while the Hertfordshire course relates more to learning and human development. ‘Anything-but-teaching’ courses tend to run in institutions where an undergraduate QTS still exists, so that students who wish to take an undergraduate teaching degree can do so and Education Studies is clearly distinct from the teacher training model.

#### **Theme 5 – Issues and critiques**

*Issues and Critiques* is one of the two strongest dimensions of Education Studies in the data. 79% of the institutions explain that students will be able to debate key issues in education or analyse and critique government policy and professional practice. This is, of course, the feature that distinguishes Education Studies most strongly from teacher training degrees where the emphasis is on competence and compliance with

the national standards for teaching. In Education Studies, education can be treated as problematic to which a range of theoretical frames can be applied. The University of Brighton, for example, mentions a strong critique of government policy.

### **Theme 6 – Education as social policy**

In some courses education appears to be treated as the study of social policy. 38% of courses refer to some social or cultural aspect of education. In some this element is strong with a predominance of social theory at the expense of psychological aspects and the study of individual development and learning. There is a strong emphasis on multicultural education. An example of this is Goldsmith's College where the course is entitled 'Education, Culture and Society'. Keele University describes Education Studies as 'social policy'. Social justice also figures in the descriptions, at the University of Leeds, for example. The University of Brighton puts strong emphasis on equality in education.

### **Theme 7 – Education saves the world**

A theme that runs through many courses is the attempt to widen the scope of concepts of Education Studies by presenting education as a force for global change and human emancipation. 40% of institutions include international education with the study of education systems and processes in different countries and global perspectives on matters such as poverty and human rights. Some institutions introduce the study of ecological issues and the idea of education as a solution to world problems. Some of these topics can be quite idiosyncratic, such as 'eco-education' at Plymouth University, 'Education for the environment' and 'Futures education', both at Bath Spa. The futures idea occurs in several instances, for example in a module called 'Design for a sustainable future' at Goldsmith's College. Derby University refers to education as a key subject of study in 'changing times'.

### **Theme 8 – New disciplines**

The traditional disciplines for the study of education have been, of course, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History. Some had introduced the study of



economics in the discussion of the aims of education and in education policy, particularly in the analysis of market forces in education and schooling. This is part of the process of broadening Education Studies. However, it should be recalled that there was in the 1960s a proposal to include the study of economics in Education Studies, as mentioned in Chapter 4 (Richardson, 2002). Reference to the study of law also occurs in two institutions, York and Middlesex.

### **Theme 9 – Education as human development**

Not surprisingly, *Learning and development* is a strong dimension with 69% indicating it in their content. Linked to this is the dimension of Childhood Studies and Early years with 26% including one of them within Education Studies. This, then, is the view of Education Studies as individual development, sometimes, though not necessarily, with a psychological emphasis. It is easily portrayed as suitable for teaching, but it has now a strong market appeal for those going into general childcare and early years work. A particular example of this is at Oxford Brookes where the degree is entitled ‘Education and Human Development’.

### **Theme 10 – Education as an academic discipline**

All courses emphasise the study of Education as an academic subject in contrast to its former role in teacher training. However, there is considerable variation in the extent to which Education is portrayed as an academic subject. Some give just general statements about the content of study and the idea of ‘looking at issues’ and there is an impression of Education Studies as being under-theorised. Others set out a particularly strong theoretical framework, often based on the traditional subject disciplines. Lancaster and Cardiff Universities describe Education Studies as ‘social science’. Cardiff has a programme within a strong Psychology framework; most of the modules in the course are described as psychology modules and the British Psychological Society (BPS) recognition of the Psychology courses is stressed. There is a linked PGCE course for the teaching of Psychology in HE/FE.

King Alfred’s College Winchester offers an ambitious model of Education Studies as the relationship between theory and practice and ‘the philosophy of cultural critique’

in ‘a Kantian rationalist model rejecting postmodernism’ (Tubbs and Grimes, 1999). Two pathways are offered, one for intending teachers whose interests are in ‘understanding and evaluating the current education system’, the other with a stronger academic quality:

for students who wish to study education at a more theoretical and philosophical level. Modules in this pathway look at issues in the wider context of education and culture and in relation to history, philosophy and social and political thought. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the importance of education within the themes of modernity, postmodernity, identity and marginality (King Alfred’s College, Winchester, 2004).

A matter for more discussion is the extent to which Education Studies might be under-theorised. What is interesting here is that the academic model is seen as not to be for those who are intending to teach and we still have a deficit model of teachers.

## **Conclusions**

The main finding is the diverse range of curriculum content which goes under the heading of ‘Education Studies’ and the wide range of aims, some directed at teacher training, others at alternative careers, but many with no defined vocational outcomes.

The subject is variously seen as social policy, childhood studies, environmental education, comparative international education, educational research, with varying layers of emphasis in different courses. The strongest feature of the curriculum appears to be ‘issues and critique’ with another strong emphasis on ‘learning and development’.

Also evident is the multiple and ambiguous role of the contributory disciplines. It has been shown that there is a wide range of approaches and that many institutions seem to be anxious to define Education Studies differently from the competence teacher-training model of Education Studies. At the same time there seems to be an attempt in some institutions to abandon, or at least to minimise, the traditional subject disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History that provided the theoretical framework for the old pre-TTA undergraduate teacher training courses.

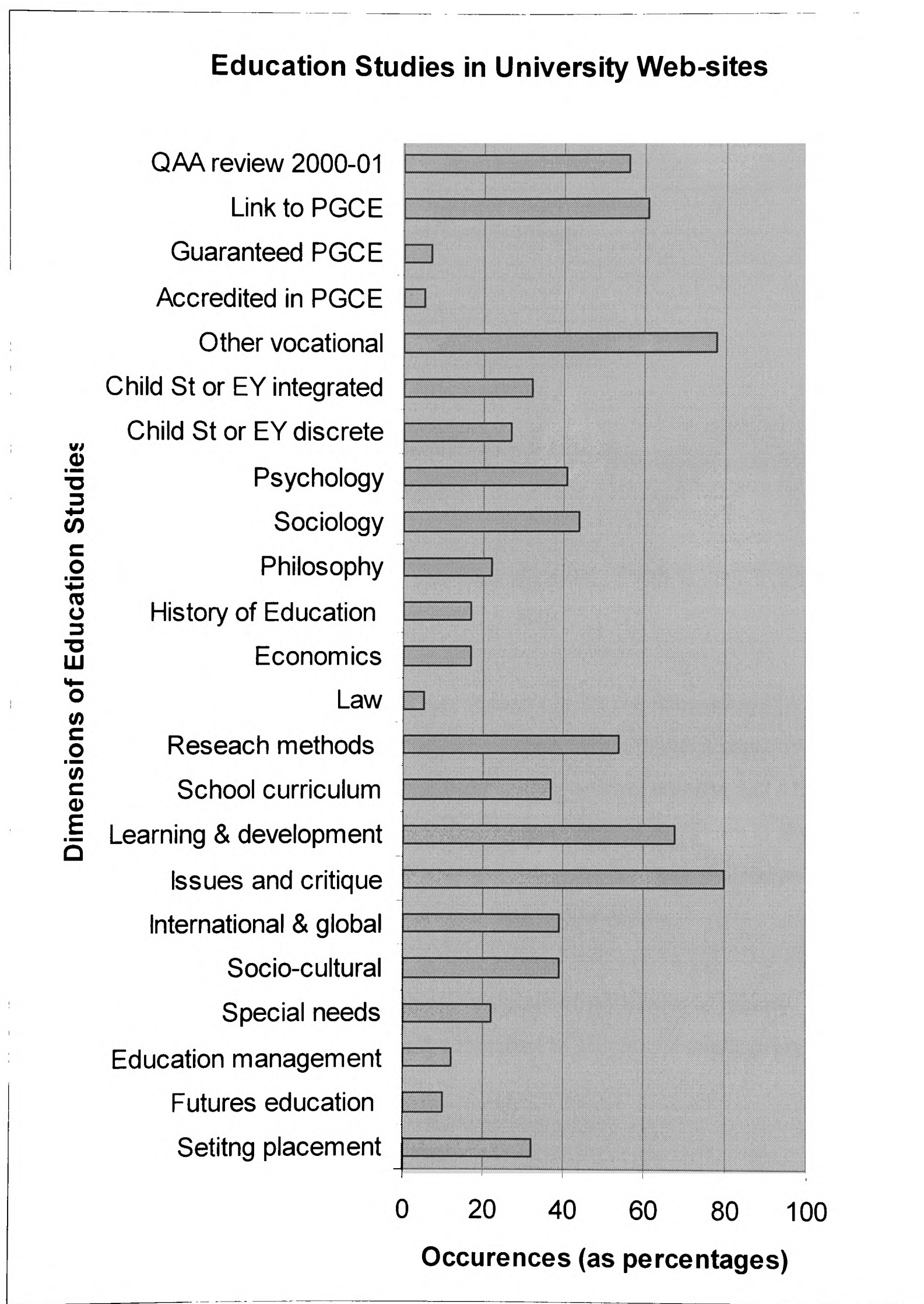
Most state that Education Studies is a good subject for teachers, although few explain why, and there is a relatively little content on the school curriculum. This appears to be because most institutions are emphasising the distinctiveness of the subject from teacher training.

These features are all explored further in the interviews with Senior Managers and Subject Leaders. It will be found that the final point, the attempt to distinguish the subject from teacher training, which is interpreted from the website data, is strongly emphasised and articulated by subject leaders and senior managers. The ambiguity about the employment outcomes for graduates suggested here is also confirmed.

Table 1: Dimensions of Education Studies in University Websites																									
		Single/combined honours	QA review 2000-01	Link to PGCE	Guaranteed PGCE	Accredited in PGCE	Other vocational	Child St or EY integrated	Child St or EY discrete	Psychology	Sociology	Philosophy	History of Education	Economics	Law	Research methods	School curriculum	Learning & development	Issues and critique	International & global	Socio-cultural	Special needs	Education management	Futures education	Setting placement
	Institutions																								
1	Anglia Polytechnic University	C	1				1		1		1							1	1	1	1			23	24
2	Bath Spa University College	S/C	1	1	1		1	1						1		1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
3	Bishop Grosseteste College	C		1	1	1											1								1
4	Bradford College	C	1	1		1	1	1	1								1	1	1			1		1	1
5	Brighton University	C		1			1									1			1		1				1
6	Cambridge (Homerton)	C		1			1							1					1						1
7	Central Lancashire University	C								1	1	1	1						1						
8	Chester University College	C					1											1	1						
9	De Montfort University	C	1	1			1	1	1								1	1	1	1	1		1		
10	Derby University	C	1				1											1	1						
11	Edge Hill College of HE	C		1			1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1				
12	Exeter University	S/C		1			1		1	1	1					1	1	1	1		1				
13	Goldsmiths College	S/C		1	1		1					1				1	1	1		1	1			1	
14	Greenwich University	C		1				1											1			1	1		
15	Hertfordshire University	S					1			1			1					1	1						
16	Keele University	S/C	1					1		1	1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1		1		
17	Lancaster University	C	1				1		1	1	1					1		1	1						
18	Leeds Metropolitan	S/C	1	1				1									1	1	1		1				
19	Leeds University	C	1						1		1			1		1		1	1	1	1				
20	Liverpool Hope University Coll	C		1			1												1	1	1				
21	Liverpool John Moores	C					1		1		1			1					1	1	1				
22	London Metropolitan	S/C	1	1				1									1	1	1		1				
23	Manchester Metropolitan	C					1												1						
24	Middlesex University	S/C	1	1			1			1	1		1		1	1			1	1					
25	Newman College of HE	C		1			1			1	1					1		1	1		1				1



Table 2 Frequency table



## **Chapter 7**

### **Thematic Analysis of the Interview Data**

#### **Introduction**

The data is analysed under the following section headings:

- 1 Relationship to antecedent and concurrent ITT courses;
- 2 Institutional factors and the higher education market;
- 3 Staffing effects;
- 4 Theoretical frameworks and the contributory disciplines;
- 5 Vocational aims for Education Studies.

Each section concludes with a numbered summary of points. A concluding section provides an overall summary and discussion of the data.

The themes were selected as the most relevant framework for the discussion of a large number of variables. The themes are not mutually exclusive and there is some overlap between them, in particular between Theme 1 concerning teacher training and Theme 5 which analyses the vocational outcomes including teacher training. There is also some continuity between Themes 3 and 4 which examine the theoretical underpinning and the effects of individual staff on the decision-making processes.

For the sake of clarity, the analysis contains a minimum of references to literary sources. The Conclusion (Chapter 8) uses the literature to provide an explanatory analysis of the findings.

#### **Theme 1: Antecedent and concurrent teacher training courses: Continuity and discontinuity**

Some of the new courses in Education Studies have been derived from four-year undergraduate QTS courses. One of the features is the extent to which the new subject has been created to be continuous or discontinuous with the former programme. The

simplest example is Case 7 where, in 2000, a four-year QTS course had been converted to a degree course with a guaranteed place on a primary PGCE teacher training year, giving a four-year programme designed for trainee teachers. The result of this is that the subject varied little from content of the original QTS degree with a high level of primary school curriculum content and an assessed teaching practice placement:

... a decision I think had already been made to divide it into a three-year undergraduate programme and postgraduate that was, in fact, very closely linked to it and, in fact, I think the division was more originally just a structural... thing er really. It was not really reflected in any real sense in a change of content (SM7: 2).

It was essentially a teacher-training programme without qualified teacher status. At the time of the interviews, the institution was reviewing and changing the programme, but the Subject Leader explains of the 2000 course:

.... students came onto an Education Studies subject undergraduate degree that was HEFCE funded and then anyone that decided to teach they could go on to do a PGCE.... When it became a *three* plus the primary focus – the primary education focus – sort of stayed with the three, so it never really became.... what you might call a fully-fledged, or fully emergent, Education Studies Degree. It would be too cruel to call it a HEFCE-funded ITT programme, but it was close (SL7:2).

Funding is a significant factor here. The TTA funded the original programme and the degree element of the new programme was funded by HEFCE, but by retaining the assessed teaching placements from the QTS degree it could attract ‘Band C’ funding, making a difference of some £1500 per student against ‘Band D’. As the Senior Manager explains, this was one of the factors in keeping the teacher-training content and, even in the revised programme, the teaching placement would be retained for funding purposes:

And it would be difficult for us for that reason.... I mean if we wanted to make it a purely academic programme it would be difficult for us in the sense that it's, you know, clearly it would be Band D, and the implications of that would be.... oh they would be serious, clearly. So we have to preserve, I think, that clear sense that it is classroom-based, to a degree (SM7:34).



So there is strong continuity in this case. The maintenance of the degree as a form of teacher training programme is determined partly by the funding mechanism, but also by the lack of any alternative perception among the staff of Education Studies as a discrete subject. The Senior Manager says:

... my impression when I arrived was that people were carrying on much as before.... you know seeing themselves as teacher trainers (SM7:42).

The Subject Leader interview was with the new appointment, made in order to revise the programme from its teacher-training curriculum to a more academically differentiated one. The main reason for this change was the need to differentiate it from a newly-introduced three-year BEd course with QTS which was TTA-funded:

Well there are clearly tensions there because the (institution) also then introduced the three-year BA QTS very recently....it seemed like we had two completely different courses on different funding streams that were very, very similar.... (SL7:2).

Courses with a different funding stream but similar curriculum appear to be an unacceptable scenario in the context of the market realities. So the discontinuity from the original degree in the form of a distinctly Education Studies subject in Case 7, then, was driven by the need to distinguish two existing courses with different funding, rather than with a different academic vision. The Subject Leader explains the ways in which s/he is trying to move the new programme away from teacher training, albeit with the retention of the classroom placement for funding purposes:

.... we've tried to go for something which has pulled us further and further away from training, although we've retained classroom-based experience in there and we've.... Significantly, fifteen weeks, which is quite a lot.... We've done a number of things, so that if we start where we used to be, which is a primary QTS course, we've started to make some changes to the modules themselves; so the modules themselves are nowhere near as ITT-based as they used to be (SM7:20).

So the 'academic' thinking about the subject follows, rather than precedes, the perceived need to change the programme. The interesting point is that the need to make the change to Education Studies came only with the arrival of a concurrent teacher-training course from which it needed to be differentiated. While there was no

parallel QTS course in the institution, the Education Studies Degree was allowed to continue to include a strong teacher-training element.

The strong discontinuity with concurrent teacher training courses in the same institution is seen in other cases where there is a perceived need to differentiate Education Studies from teacher training. When asked whether the Education Studies programme was designed to include reference to the TTA Standards for Teaching, all other cases replied negatively. Case 2 is typical:

No, no, we steered clear of it (SL2A:73).

In Case 1 there is a similar tension with the teacher-training staff. The Subject Leader sees his/her role as broadening their outlook to enable them to teach a more diverse and critical form of Education Studies:

I'm trying to drag people away from..... dare I say it... a lot of the modules that were written for the Early Years but I've changed (SL1:47)

I mean they were so ITT; I've opened them up. I mean some of them are still a bit ITT-ish, but I think we've got to.... I wanted them to fit into the widest possible context (SL1:49).

... it's making the intellectual jump out of it and actually looking at education, looking at the sociology of education ..... (indistinct) and philosophy, there's an absolute absence of it ..... (pause, indistinct) Montessori, Steiner, all these different traditions that developed over the years. What goes on is what makes a good numeracy lesson for a Reception class, a literacy lesson for whatever..... (SL1:53)

This is typical of the view that teacher training is non-academic and Education Studies is a 'leap' into the academic and is central to the differentiation between the two. The matter of the effect of staff on the curriculum is further discussed in Theme 3.

In Case 4 a single-honours Education Studies degree was originated to be radically different from the extant teacher training degree in the same institution. In this case the aim is to make Education Studies about the broad study of education in the local community:

It's the interpretation of education in its absolutely broadest sense: a process of living, not just a preparation for future life. And also the (institution) is very keen to be a community partner and so we've built in placements in Year 1 and in Year 2, because we do want to try to get these students to be part of the community, rather than just coming for three years, disappearing again and not actually contributing to the community. So *that's* an underlying principle as well (SL4A:24).

The emphasis is strongly away from schools. Education Studies is intended to have a separate 'identity' defined by the need to have students in placements other than schools, and a part of the motive is to avoid encroaching upon the teacher-training placements in schools:

No, definitely *not* in schools, definitely not in schools, because we don't want to encroach on any of the placements that are used by QTS students. It's meant to be seen as a separate ID.... they're meant to have a separate ID (SL4A:26).

And the need for a different identity, driven by the fear of encroachment on the body of the QTS degree is seen in the way the course is marketed:

... it didn't mention teaching at all in our original documentation, because we weren't looking to tread on anybody's toes within the School of Education. It was meant to be completely separate and distinct from..... (SL4A:96).

So this is an example of the pragmatic or contingent reasoning for the subject. Because there were not sufficient school places to allow for Education Studies students to be placed there, the subject was defined to be about education in places other than schools.

Case 4 is an example of the subject being defined so far distant from teacher training that, in its first form, preparation for teacher training was excluded completely from its aims. So strongly was this conceived that when recruiting the first cohort, those applying who signalled their intention to teach were rejected. However, it was realised that this was a misconception when insufficient were recruited and so the policy was forced to change:

I've made offers to people I wouldn't have made offers to last year who definitely say I've always wanted to teach; I want to do an education degree and a PGCE. You know people who thought about it, and giving them more

credence in terms of knowing what they're applying for, because one does assume that they've read the documentation and know what they've applied for. And I think we were a bit narrow and exclusive last year... .... we've had to revise our thinking on that, because we recruited so poorly last year we think we may have been a bit narrow in terms of..... or a bit exclusive in terms of the type of students we were looking for (SL4A:92).

Interestingly, the Subject Leader believes that a 3+1 model is the better mode for teacher education and agrees that there could be a danger of Education Studies and the PGCE taking students from the undergraduate QTS:

Erm....possibly. I think there was a feeling that there might be, because it's a three-plus-one. Why are people still applying for four-year undergraduate courses? (SL4A:98)

Again, ideology of the subject appears to be defined by its structural context of being differentiated from teacher training because of the lack of placements for them in schools. This is interesting because, while the Subject Leader has defined Education Studies to be disconnected from schools and teacher training – a study of 'the process of living' - in fact the students are taking it because they intended to be teachers and had originally applied for the teacher training courses. In Case 4, the low recruitment to the first cohort meant that, in order to have a viable group, a number of students who were part of the over-recruitment to the QTS Degree were persuaded to transfer to the Education Studies course, with the promise of a place on the PGCE course. This has made difficulties for the course tutors because the students see themselves as future teachers and query the relevance of the programme to this vocational outcome.

Well, obviously, it's looking at education in absolutely its widest interpretation, which I think has been one of the hardest things to get over to the students, especially as some of them were hi-jacked from a teacher-training course, and some of the things that we've been doing with them they think, well what's this got to do with teacher education, you know (SL4A:16).

Case 4 is an interesting example of zealous attempts to define the subject other than teacher training making the institution misread the market badly. As will be noted later, where institutions define Education Studies as not a preparation for teaching, students on the other hand often perceive it to be so. This disjunction between the institutional perception of Education Studies as highly distinct from teacher training

and students' perceptions is also seen in Case 5, where the Subject Leader acknowledges that teacher training is the student's interest:

I think many of them see it as actually a kind of..... not QTS, but as emblematic that they've studied this subject and therefore they're in some way qualified to run with it. I can't quite phrase it properly.... But the sense is that their degree would bestow on them..... a qualification that they would somehow see as being like a QTS (SL5A:22).

The same point is made more explicitly in Case 2:

... we recognise that a number of our students come into this programme because they've failed to get onto the, particularly primary, teacher training. They're taking this with a view to doing the PGCE. So *their* motivation is more towards teacher training, but ours isn't (SL2B:6).

In fact the antecedent course at Case 5 is a programme for those students who had failed the QTS course:

... its true antecedents, were probably the BA Ed, which was a programme I set up to salvage the degrees of students who'd failed their teaching practices. Because we had a four-year degree programme and if they got to the end of their third year and they didn't.... they blew their teaching practice, then they were lost, they didn't have anything; so I had this thing where they could get through the fourth year doing a set of dissertations (SL5A:2).

While some, such as Case 3, give a defiant negative to the question about the influence of the TTA standards on the curriculum:

No. Absolutely not (SM3:56),

the subject leader in Case 5 is more equivocal and is uncertain about Education Studies and its relationship to teacher training; asked whether the TTA standards have any influence of the choice of the curriculum content the reply is:

No, but maybe they *ought* to (SL5A:119).

Case 5 perceives a link with teacher training, but that teacher training should not govern the nature of the curriculum:

... it is linked to teacher training in that students are interested in teaching, erm, obviously Level C, the first year, has a very strong element of looking at schools, how children learn and develop, and we would see it as a good foundation for a student who want to go on to a PGCE, but we don't see it as being governed by teacher training (SM5B:64)

And the notion of 'liberation' is inherent:

and in that sense, I suppose, year on year it becomes more liberating as we're able to diversify..... away from the sort of perhaps strict focus in the beginning. I think it gives us new opportunities, new opportunities to staff and the (Faculty) colleagues elsewhere. It's not taking us away from teacher training, but it's not governed by teacher training (SM5B:64).

In Case 1 there is an insistence that Education Studies must move away from teaching:

I keep on saying Education Studies has to move out of the classroom and when you say it to people they look at you quite askance, but I think it has to have some sort of status and if you start to say it's a sort of ITT route, then that's not good (SL1:27).

This is another case of Education Studies being seen as increasing its status by being distinct from teacher training. This is, of course, based on the traditional academic view of teacher training as low status.

The search for the distinction from teacher training is also borne of an inherent antipathy to government-controlled teacher training. The negative perspective on teacher training and the view of Education Studies as 'liberation' is seen in Case 1 where the Senior Manager, when asked whether the programme was derived from a teacher training course, replies:

Oh, God, no..... I mean, in fact, that's the beauty of having (name of Subject Leader): s/he doesn't bring all that teacher education baggage with him/her in the same way. S/he has a much more liberated conception... (SM1:19).

This notion of liberation is a significant one, because it signals the notion that teacher training, because of its government-controlled curriculum, is of a contrasting order of knowledge: that which is enclosed and predetermined. Teacher training brings 'baggage', whereas Education Studies provides its tutors and students with the

freedom to explore issues. A strong factor in the discontinuity from teacher training is the ambition to escape the regulatory effect of the TTA Standards for Qualified Teacher Status. For example, in Case 4 the aim was to free knowledge from the constraints of government control:

...to move it forward and to get away from the confines really of Ofsted and TTA. Those two authorities are so restrictive, aren't they? (SL4A:2).

And there is a sense of liberation in the descriptions of it. For one member of staff it allows freedom to adopt a particular form of sociological analysis in the form of Marxism:

The Marxist (tutor) that I mentioned earlier, I mean s/he just thinks it's fantastic: this is wonderful, you know; at last I'm doing something that I want to do. It's been a revelation for him/her; s/he'd like to be even more involved, I think. So that's been very good. And some people who weren't involved to start with have become involved because they've realised that there is more freedom in this kind of degree and have come on board subsequently (SL4A:74).

And in Case 3:

People thought it was quite exciting to be freed from ITT.... (SM3:34)

Another rationale for the liberation from teacher training is the idea that the study of education as a subject was being progressively eliminated in the TTA Standards and that a rationale for Education Studies is to preserve the academic study. As the Subject Leader in Case 2 explains:

Then the foundation studies of education were eliminated... So I thought, well what is going to happen to the study of education? And so I thought there must be a way of retaining that, or bringing it back in. So that was one strand in my thinking (SL2A:2).

And in Case 3

... as professional studies got squeezed out of ITT, we were in a sense putting the stuff back in (SM3:36).

So there is a tendency to see subject knowledge in Education Studies in terms of its relationships with government-controlled teacher training: either that it is materially distinct from it, or that it contains the type of disciplinary academic content which was included prior to government controls.

Also in Case 3, asked about the relationship of Education Studies to teacher training, the Subject Leader's reply suggests an aloof distance from it. There is an acknowledgement here that teaching is the preferred outcome for half the students, but it is depicted as something that students might mistakenly stray into without first considering its full implications:

I think it has a complex relationship. (SM3) has a sign outside his/her door which says, 'Thinking of teaching? Think first.' And that's our primary objective. For those of our students who want to be teachers, and that's about half of them, we want them to spend three years thinking about educational processes, thinking about the role of the teacher, thinking about the significance of both good and bad experiences of school for the student, so that when they learn the technical skills of being a teacher, and learn the subject knowledge they need on their PGCE, they're always placing that within a much broader perspective of the role they are stepping into: What is education: What's it for? (SL3:48).

This is in contrast with Case 6 where there is no undergraduate QTS course in the institution, and there never has been and where Education Studies was created as a free-standing subject, not derived from any antecedent in the institution. Interestingly, the relationship with teacher training in the subject is described in much more equivocal terms. There are said to be links to the content and pedagogy of ITT:

There's a number of connections, I think, because the students themselves, some of them at least, want to go on to primary teacher training.... So there's one connection. Another one would be they do, I think – and maybe I'm just saying this because I was a teacher for ten years in different parts of England, so maybe that's just how I do it when I work with the undergraduates. But I think they do want bit of insight into what's going on in schools. So that's a connection (SM6:24).

This simple, but significant notion, that students may want to know about what goes on in schools, is missing from many of the other accounts. Education Studies is still an 'academic course', but there is a rather more balanced discourse here, with none of the



emotive expressions of the other cases: ‘liberation’, ‘constraint’, ‘baggage’. There is no claim that the subject is going to prepare students for teaching particularly well. But on the other hand there is no attempt to seal off Education Studies from teacher training:

*But.... we can't say anything else other than it's an academic course. Anything else would be misleading. If we were to say to people, Look, you can come here and you can get a real insight and preparation... into teacher training, they'd be unhappy. I think it's the other way round, really. I think we say, Look this is an academic course, and as we explore this academic course we'll give you insights into professional issues and that could well be useful for you, if you want to go and do a whole range of careers, including primary teacher training (SM6:24).*

Case 6 highlights the main feature of the other cases which leads to the proposition that the presence of an existing undergraduate QTS course leads to a strongly defined non-teacher training perspective, expressed through a strongly marked discourse.

There are two cases in which relationship to teacher training is of a particular nature. Cases 2 and 5 each have a student population in Education Studies, many of whom have been unsuccessful in applying for an undergraduate QTS course, or who do not have the qualifications to apply, but would still like to be teachers. As the Subject Leader in Case 5 explains, most of the students in the institution are interested in becoming teachers:

*I was speaking to the Senior Careers Adviser about this whole thing. He was saying that teaching defines everybody's choice at (institution). Doesn't matter what programme you're on; they either want to teach or they don't want to teach. ....So it's either a positive or a negative so that everybody's career choice is chosen.... is affected by that. So Education Studies is almost replicates that tension in a smaller, more contained pathway. So quite a lot of our students don't want to become teachers, but they want some sense of how education affects the world. ... teacher training is an influence on everybody's career choice in that sort of a(n institution) and that erm.... I think that probably you'd find about 90% of our Education Studies students, if they were offered a PGCE place on a plate, they would take it... you know I think that in many cases that those at the end of the third year that don't want to go into teacher training are..... you know, could be persuaded if that were part of our mission, which it isn't, but erm.... (SL5: 102-106)*

In Case 2 some of the students are seen as those who have failed to access QTS courses:

We, the course team – such as it is – do not see ourselves in any way as being quasi or ersatz or surrogate teacher training; we're a discipline. Yet we recognise that a number of our students come into this programme because they've failed to get onto the, particularly primary, teacher training. They're taking this with a view to doing the PGCE. So *their* motivation is more towards teacher training, but ours isn't (SL2B11).

We have, then, a perception of students as being academically weak and frustrated teacher-trainees. From this perspective it is possible to see Education Studies, rather than as a high status academic subject, as a weaker relation to its sister QTS course in the same institution. In Case 2 they were those who had failed to enter QTS courses:

... we took from two broad groups of students: students who failed for one reason or another to get onto the initial teacher training programme, either because they weren't competitive compared with other students, or they didn't get their GCSE maths or science, and that wasn't needed for this particular programme. That was one group. The other group of students was from clearing: those who were routing around for something to do – and so on and so forth. So I guess the initial cohort consisted of ..... students with.... relatively low A-level grades, compared with those in the initial teacher training programme. (Hesitant and nervous tone about this.) And so we swept up, and we swept up sufficient to enable us to have about 30 or 40 (SL2A:6).

And this extends to a negative perception of the students as parochial and limited:

...our students, the 18 year-olds – huge, sweeping generalisation coming up here – are immensely parochial. Most are (place name) .... (place name) people... and they tend not to think much beyond (place name) (SL2B:11).

The low status of the Education Studies course is confirmed indirectly by the Senior Manager who feels the need to emphasise the status of the course, which indicates that there is a view of it as low status which has to be repudiated:

I think it is fulfilling a real need and, therefore, we have not done that. So it's another degree of equal value with all our other degree programmes (SM2:10).

Referring to the course tutors she says:

Their history goes before mine, and what I have heard, from them, is that the first cohort of students was not particularly strong because I think the programme was validated during the year and they recruited onto it in the September without any marketing and things like that. So I think that they felt that they'd picked up most of their students from clearing. So that's perhaps coloured them in a way that my impression hasn't been (SM2:18).

I don't see it as a Cinderella. I don't know how many times I've got to say it. Nor do I see the foundation degrees as Cinderella subjects. I regard them very, very highly. I've done some teaching on that, as well.

They've got a chip on their shoulder, actually, I think. No, I'm beginning to think that (SL2B) has got a chip on his shoulder about this. I'll have to have a word with him..... (SM2:42-44).

And in relation to the demands of Ofsted inspection, ITT courses are seen to have priority over Education Studies:

During this year we have had Ofsted inspectors crawling all over us..... and (SL:2B) agreed with me that where there was conflict..... if there were conflicts of interest, for this year ITT should have priority (SM2:40).

In Case 5, there is also recognition that students are academically weak, but there is an optimistic vision of their potential:

We're not getting students of the first water, but I think we're all surprised at how.... what wonderful students they turn out to be (SL5:36).

The point here is that the students, in both cases, are judged in terms of their potential to be in the QTS course or not. Education Studies, then, is to some extent, defined as a subject for those who do not access QTS courses. It seems likely that this effect is to be heightened by institutions in which there is a concurrent QTS course, although it should be noted that in Case 3 where there is also a concurrent QTS course, the subject is perceived as a high status course, relative to the QTS programme, through the efforts of the tutors to gain academic success:

The reputation's very high. There are three things that measure that. The external examiner's reports every year are quite fantastic. The QAA inspection got 24 and we were the first in the (institution) who had ever got 24. And the student satisfaction survey, which the (institution) carries out every year, we haven't yet lost a mark on anything, which, again, nobody else has done. So because of those three external measures I think our reputation is very high

(SM3:64).

In Case 6 where there is no concurrent undergraduate QTS course there is reference to students having lower qualifications than in other subjects in the institution, but there is no comparison with the relative status of QTS courses.

I think that, compared with other main subjects at the University, we're probably at the lower end in terms of our intake and I think it's not so competitive to get onto our degree as it would be to get onto some of the other main subjects. I mean like English and History and Psychology at (Institution name) are *really* competitive, you know, really hard to get in. The 'A' Level grades they ask for are very, very tough and they're quite elite places to get into, and I think we're probably on a par with more the sociology, social policy-type ones, the second tier, if you like of subject areas (SL6:72).

In Case 8 Education Studies replaced an undergraduate QTS course, but with a lapse of time between the end of the QTS and the beginning of Education Studies. Again, there was only a question of the status of the subject in relation to others in the institution. In fact this is seen in terms of the status of staff, and there is an attempt to increase the entry profile of Education Studies students, rather than the simple acceptance of low qualifications:

We don't have quite the same status as our colleagues. When you go to meetings on the (place) Campus, you know, Physics and English rather look down their noses at the moment, which is another reason to push up our profile on entry qualifications (SL8:84).

Another interesting dynamic in Case 8 is the relative status of Education Studies and postgraduate teacher training in the institution. As noted in Theme 2, Case 8 sees Education Studies as giving the School of Education additional academic status within the institution because it is able to attract research-active staff, in contrast with teacher-training staff who are perceived within the institution as lower status because they are less research active. In those cases where Education Studies is seen as lower status, it appears to be that research activity does not provide such a strong measure of status as in Case 8. So the status of Education Studies can be said to be determined by the overall mission of the institution:

We were more likely to recruit bright, young post-doctoral candidates into lectureships under the age of 35 through this form of provision than we were to

replenish the next generation of research-intensive ITT tutors (SM8:6).

Case 9 is the Welsh institution and it provides an interesting contrast to the English pattern. Here the Education Studies course has been created alongside a large undergraduate QTS programme. Against the English data, it would be expected that the subject would be seen to be defined as highly distinct from teacher training. However, while it has distinctive qualities, it is not described in the same terms as the English cases. Instead, it is seen explicitly as a precursor to teacher training:

.... we do try to prepare those students who are interested in the teaching profession. We advocate they have an opportunity to study some modules which will directly link then to your PGCE Primary course (SM9:38).

The Subject Leader affirms that students see the institution and the course in a teacher training context:

I think it's because it was initially built in (date) I think as a teacher training (institution). We've got that element of an education base....

Yes, they know that it's (teacher training) there and we've got this wealth of experience; the staff are there and we use them. And we're in a lovely position here in this school. We're an academic school, but we've also got the practitioner element and we're collaborative as well (SL9:56-58).

Again, there is no reference to emancipation, freedom or identity here and the measured tone serves to highlight the discourse of the English interviewees. An explanation for this may be twofold. First, the relatively weak control of teacher training in Wales (see Chapter 4) so that there is less animosity towards teacher training as a knowledge base. Second, as shown in the section below on Institutional Factors and HE markets, the Welsh institution appears to have a strong commitment to government policy and the priorities of the Welsh Assembly. With just one Welsh institution here, it is impossible to generalise, but the differences between this Case and the English ones does emphasise the strong opposition to teacher training as a knowledge base and highlights the fact that the rhetoric of Education Studies in England is the flight from teacher training, or emancipation from dictatorial control.

The strong differentiation between Education Studies and teacher training means that the relationship between Education Studies and PGCE courses is not always warm,

with some resistance by PGCE course leaders to Education Studies students. In Case 3 there is a hint that the transition from Education Studies to the institutions PGCE is not easy. Asked about whether the PGCE tutors welcome the Education Studies students, the Senior Manager is uncertain, and the number accepted is small:

Hm, they're good questions. At a personal level, I think there's no problem with relations between any of the staff in the School of Ed at all, one department or the other. That's good. Do they like our students on the PGCE? Sometimes I think that they do. I think they like the critical spirit that they bring into the seminars. At times I think that one or two have perhaps not understood that the professional requirements probably outweigh the critical requirements. But I think they've learned that lesson in the end. They certainly don't hold anything against our students; they leave them along with anybody else, and I guess they've taken about four or five a year (SM312).

In Case 1, the Senior Manager ensures that Education Studies students are interviewed for the PGCE, although this is not the same in other institutions:

... what we do have is guaranteed interviews for our Early Years PGCE and I know (Tutor name) at (another institution); I've talked to him/her and PGCE people there won't touch it. I know the same problem occurred at (another institution); the PGCE people won't look at Education Studies. It's a huge problem; but here, again with (Dean's name) backing - there's an issue of power politics here and it had to be fought for and I still think we've got battles further on down the road.

An obvious role for Education Studies would be as a precursor to PGCE teacher training. The national picture is much more fragmented than this with few instances of a direct relationship with PGCE courses and a strong resistance in a number of institutions to the role. The picture overall, then, is a long way from Education Studies providing what might be its most obvious role as a precursor to teacher training. Instead it is much more fragmented.

In the institutions which also ran a QTS undergraduate course, the Senior Manager was asked whether a change to the 3+1 module of undergraduate Education Studies plus Primary PGCE had been considered. Case 1 replies that s/he would have preferred to do that, but being newly appointed it wasn't the time and staff would be reluctant. S/he recognises the flexibility in staffing which it would provide in the event of likely reductions in teacher training numbers:

I would, I would, actually, but we haven't got to this point in our thinking yet. It's very interesting at the moment, because, when you think about the demographic change, the fact that reducing numbers in primary and all that, it's going to have to.... and of course you've got staff saying to you, 'We need more staff on the....' (indistinct...ITT course?) and I say, Yes, but.....in three years time we won't. Whereas if we converted then we could... (SM1:53).

S/he goes on to explain that the time when there was a weak Ofsted inspection would have been the time to do it, but it was not envisioned:

What surprises me is that four or five years ago the management of the university nearly pulled the plug on primary education here because they'd got a very bad Ofsted. Now if they'd had the foresight to do what you've done then, that would have been the time to do it. Instead of which, what they did was to give them extra funding to improve themselves, and of course they've done that now. But to keep primary courses going you've got to have so many specialists and this and that and the other (SM1:55).

Case 2 had considered it, but felt that there should be one undergraduate QTS course in the region:

I came I did wonder about whether we should retain the three-year undergraduate ITT programme, or whether we should move to - not formally a three-plus-one, because I think there has to be an opt-out possibility at the plus-one stage - and recruit to Education Studies and encourage people to go on to do a PGCE. Because we're the only undergraduate ITT programme in the (Local) Region (SM2:10).

Case 4 was forthright in the rejection of the concept:

Absolutely not, no.... Because I believe that that is not what all undergraduate teachers need and I would really not want to do that at all. It wouldn't be a direction in which I'd want to go, not with the model of Education Studies that we've got here. I mean, I would have to reconceptualise what that means if it were to be relevant to ITE students (SM4:62-64).

Here is the idea that the undergraduate QTS must be preserved for its own sake, and because there is demand from certain students from it. Also, the four years is needed to cover the curriculum:

It would be, and I do believe that, because we've got such a big undergraduate primary programme, I do believe that they need to be able to articulate with the curriculum and what lies beneath their teaching, their understanding of the curriculum. It's very important and I don't think that marries very well... (SM466).

Case 5 hasn't strongly considered the idea, but believes they wouldn't because recruitment to undergraduate ITT is easy:

I don't think we would at the moment, because we don't have any trouble filling our TTA places; we do have some trouble with the HEFCE places. So we'd be using those numbers.... (SM4A:89)

Of the four cases, the strongest feature seems to be the desire to retain what works and not to take risks.

### Summary

- 1 There are strong and complex motives for differentiating Education Studies from a curriculum which is described as a precursor to teacher training.
- 2 The history and/or concurrent role of undergraduate teacher training, either as an antecedent course, or as concurrent provision in the institution plays a strong role in the way the subject is defined.
- 3 The one case derived from an undergraduate teacher-training course has a strongly teacher-training curriculum, and because of the introduction of a consecutive QTS course, the model is to be changed to move away from teacher training.
- 4 Where there is a concurrent undergraduate teacher-training course in the same institution, the tendency is to differentiate Education Studies curriculum strongly from teacher training and not to cite employability in teaching among its aims.
- 5 Reasons for the dissociation of Education Studies from teacher training are:
  - i. an institutional need to distinguish the two courses;
  - ii. the pragmatic need to avoid impinging on QTS school placements;



- iii. the view of teacher training as being of academically low status;
  - iv. an ideological interest in creating Education Studies as the resistance to government-controlled teacher training.
- 6 There are variations in the perceived status of Education Studies in relation to undergraduate QTS courses.
- 7 The Welsh institution sees Education Studies as of equal status to teacher training because it formed a part of the institution's response to Welsh government policy and priorities.
- 8 Of the four institutions which had retained an undergraduate QTS course, the reasons for not changing to a 3+1 model were largely desire to preserve the successful *status quo*, not to take risks and to keep the provision for the element of the market that wished for it.

## **Theme 2 - Institutional factors and the higher education market**

This theme explores the ways in which the subject has been determined by the higher education institutions at the managerial level as a matter of policy. The context for this is the theoretical background in Chapter 2 of the expansion of mass higher education in the market place, competition between institutions and the need to ensure a rise in student numbers. The discussion focuses on the ways in which the development of the subject is consistent with, or in conflict with, institution financial and business interests. It also examines the extent to which the student market shapes the content of the subject in different institutions.

This theme operates at two levels. The first is how the subject came to be recognised as a suitable one to be included in the institution's profile of courses. Of course, because the sample selected is only of those institutions actually running Education Studies courses, the data offered here cannot trace the thinking behind those institutions which decided to reject it, or did not even consider it, as a viable subject. The second level is the extent to which the content of the subject is determined by the choice in the student market. The two levels of analysis will be treated alongside each other in the review of the different cases.

In some cases there appears to have been initial uncertainty about the nature of the market for Education Studies and its possible market role. In Case 3 the Subject Leader was given the role without a clear view of what the subject and the market was, and whether it would have a role in the market. Both the nature of the market and the motives for applicants was uncertain:

The Head of Department had marched me up to the (Member of institution's directorate) and said, 'We've put this on; I don't know if anyone will come, and, if they do, I don't know why they'd come!' But they thought it was important to have Education represented in the modular programme (SM3:42).

There was, then, apparently no academic rationale and no market analysis. The rationale appears simply to be that others are doing it so it must be important and

therefore it must be included. This can be characterised as the response to ‘market impetus’.

In Case 5 the subject was derived from a small programme designed for those who had withdrawn from an undergraduate QTS course, allowing them to study Education without any particular vocational outcome. There was a view that a limited number would also want to study it who were only marginally interested in teaching, or who had been unsuccessful in gaining entry to a QTS course:

It originated out of a desire to give opportunities to students who were not successful on entry to a BA QTS programme, or who wanted a different route into education professions, or into the PGCE (SM5B:4).

There were some people who were dropping out, but there were others for who it was not appropriate at that time, although they may have had an interest in teaching; they hadn’t confirmed in their minds that was what they wanted to do (SM5B:6).

It was, then, designed to meet a perceived market demand, although the size of the market was grossly under-estimated. Education Studies was first offered as a limited route for a student number of 25, but the response was overwhelming and the number in the first year was raised to 170:

.... in the very, very first year we were first to get 25 students, but we actually recruited nearer 200, well 170, so it was just like a huge demand we uncovered (SL5A:11).

I think that we anticipated them being small, but from the very beginning they’ve been much larger than we anticipated (SM5B:6).

The institution urgently needed an increase in undergraduate student numbers to meet its HEFCE allocated student number at the time, and the over-recruitment to Education Studies was a welcome surprise, to the extent of making the whole institution viable. The policy is explained by the Senior Manager in terms of the overall recruitment:

Well because we recruit right across the (institution), we don’t have targets for particular areas. There’re not targets that we stick to..... so what’s happened, to be honest, is that in Education Studies they’ve taken more students because

we haven't been able to recruit in other areas. So that - dare I say it? - has contributed hugely towards, you know, saving the (institution) (SM5A:10).

This is a very particular case of the subject coming into existence in a very rapid and relatively unplanned manner in response to market demand. It is a good example of Delanty's (2001) and Lyotard's (1997) description of the university's loss of its control of knowledge to the market. It is also a demonstration of the lack of government control of higher education knowledge in the sense that it allows an institution to use its HEFCE numbers freely across any of its designated subjects. So this is an illustration of the power of the market in higher education. In this instance, the market might be said to have created the subject, driving it from a small provision for students who had withdrawn from an undergraduate QTS course into a fully-fledged subject and one of the institution's largest.

In Case 7 the move to a 3+1 programme with Education Studies and PGCE was seen as financially attractive, as the Senior Manager explains:

... one of the things clearly was.... was the funding issue. I mean, I think clearly there was the HEFCE funding for the three years, but I don't think it was *primarily* driven by financial incentives, even so.

But again there is the perception that a market is growing which needs to be captured:

I think there was probably a sense that the three-year programme was kind of growing – and indeed it had grown very rapidly and continues to do that (SM76).

As shown above, Case 3 went blindfold into the subject at an early point in the 1990s, with only limited notions about the nature of the market. Case 8 was more cautious and, having converted its undergraduate QTS numbers into HEFCE numbers in 1999, did not elect to introduce Education Studies as a subject until the initial uncertainty about the market was resolved. Only when it saw other institutions of different types recruiting to Education Studies did it note the need to begin:

I think we didn't know very much about the emergent student markets.... but had noted that they were developing quite rapidly in the country in both peer institutions and in institutions with which we don't normally compare ourselves for sort of bench-marking purposes (SM8:10).

And the Senior Manager is explicit that the origin of the subject was driven by income generation in the market. The Education Studies students are seen as more profitable than teacher training numbers:

In this particular (institution) because it's very keen to.... strengthen the budget for running all their Education programmes and HEFCE Band D students actually make some money. They're more profitable than TTA students.... So part of the motivation was to provide more resources for a school that ran a very tightly-budgeted PGCE programme (SM8:6).

In this case Education Studies is selected to enhance the institutional reputation, and this involves the subject being depicted as a social science:

The (institution) then said, we want you to use this quota to grow strong high-reputation undergraduate studies; you will know your markets better than we do, but it'll obviously broadly be – well I don't know about 'obviously' – but it will be broadly seen by us as set within Social Sciences and, as a result, there may well be combined honours options later, or modular degree options, but we can't do everything at once; maybe they will emerge (SM8:32).

However, this institution is interested not only in income from HEFCE-funded students, but in research income. Education Studies, in contrast to teacher-training, offers the opportunity to employ staff who are research active and able to generate research income. In addition they are able to elevate the academic status of the School of Education with the institution:

... but also .... this was the way to replenish the staffing. We were more likely to recruit bright, young post-doctoral candidates into lectureships under the age of 35 through this form of provision than we were to replenish the next generation of research-intensive ITT tutors (SM8:6).

The motive here is similar to the other institutions in perceiving Education Studies as attracting student numbers, but with the additional dynamic of the attraction of research-active staff, both to generate income and to improve the reputational status of the School within the institution.

In Case 1, the move to Education Studies is driven by the Faculty where it was seen as a strongly recruiting subject which would help the Faculty to retain its student

numbers, and even gain numbers from others in the inter-faculty competition for students:

I'm used to the context where, if you develop a new programme which is a good recruiter, everybody claps their hands and says go away and get on with it.... here, very firmly, numbers are sitting in faculties. And that's because we have a devolved resource model and so each dean is responsible for his or her salvation and ultimately the jobs of their staff. So you don't relinquish numbers to another.... it's because we have, if you like, six robber barons. We sit very firmly on our numbers. If anybody wants any of my numbers, it's away with you, off with your head! (SM1:9)

At the institutional level, it would appear that the interest in the subject does not extend beyond its financial viability to recruit students. Again in Case 1 this is explicitly described, but with some regret about the institutional indifference:

There's a level of disinterest... And what we do here is we balance our budgets, deliver on a multitude of objectives; we draw a line under the objectives. Nobody bothers you; it's wonderful! But in some senses you want them... to care (SM1:31).

And in Case 2:

... you know the accountants run this place as they run every other place, so we always have to show..... There were spare HEFCE numbers and so they were allowed, through juggling about..... Numbers have been lost elsewhere in the university so I think we took up spare capacity..... (SL2A:21)

And of the institutional perception of the subject:

.... it's benign indifference (SL:2B:46).

This picture of a lack of interest at the institution level in the knowledge which is taught reflects the critical literature on the postmodern university, and Readings's (1996) comparison of the university to an airline business. Knowledge, or flight destinations, are not significant in any other sense than that they generate income. The success of Education Studies appears, then, in these cases to be almost entirely determined by the student market.

On the other hand, in Case 6 Education Studies is seen to be at the core of the institution's existence. Case 6 is unusual because Education Studies, without teacher training, was introduced as an initial subject in the founding of the institution. It was given a degree of status and seen as an important subject in the development of knowledge in the institution:

...the first (head of the institution) was a former headteacher, (Name), and his notion of Education was that it should be at the heart of everything, the (institution) should be concerned with it and so .... Education is right there, literally, at the heart of the campus. But also educationally, erm, things were set up so about a dozen Departments had joint programmes .... all Departments should *think about* Education as a separate entity, as well as the educational process that each Department itself was concerned with (SM6:2).

This ideological and epistemological view is in contrast with other cases in which Education Studies is either derived from teacher training, or is seen as a market necessity. However, even these ideologically pure origins do not insulate Case 6 from the market. It is now market responsive and sees choice of modules as important in attracting students:

Part of the problem with the first system that we allowed which was absolute free choice is that you could have some modules that recruit a large number of people, perhaps..... I mean the most that did any one module was probably about forty. And at the other extreme you could have some modules that didn't recruit and, consequently, didn't run (SL6A:42).

I would say erm....that... student choice is really driven by their own personal interests. I think they just look at the course description and they think, ooh, I'm interested in that and I'll go for it (SL6A:60).

However, the response to student demand is depicted not simply as a means of retaining numbers, but also as a way of empowering students' learning. Asked whether market forces play a role, the second Subject Leader replies:

Well I think it would be fair to say they would do, yes, because I mean we want our students to have enriching empowering modules which they enjoy and which they're engaged with and they learn from (SL6B:62).

This responsiveness to student demands is made by others. In Case 5:

... if we have modules that are not proving as popular, then they don't run. So in that sense the students do have a direct impact on the thing and we will then... we will continue to look at what the market needs out there – the bigger market in education.... (SL5B66).

and the idea of 'student appeal' is inherent:

... when I offered them the electives this Autumn, a lot of them went for the English options that were in the School of Ed. They couldn't all do English because the groups would have been too large. But I thought, there's a market here and therefore it looks as though it's something that would appeal (SL4A:110).

So it is possible to say here that the selection of knowledge is determined by students in the market.

However, there are different responses to the student market. Above it was noted that Case 3 took an institutional decision to introduce Education Studies because of an anticipated market. However, the current course leaders in Case 3 offer no choices of modules and make no concessions to the market. Asked whether the market plays a role in the content of the subject, the reply is an unqualified:

No (SL3:62).

This is first because they can recruit sufficiently to the content offered:

Now, enough people come so we don't have really to think too hard about it (SM3:100).

And second because there is a strong academic commitment to the current provision:

.... our message to them at open days is, look, you might like what you've seen, but you need to go on the website and see if you can see yourself in that; and if you can't, don't come (SM3:104).

It is necessary, then, to see the market factor operating at the two levels: at the institutional level the subject may exist because of the market demand for it. At the subject level, the influence of the market on the content of the subject varies from a high level of student choice from a range of offerings and a high level of sensitivity to



what students want, to a case where there are no choices of modules and the content is entirely determined by those who have constructed the course.

There are perceptions of different types of market. As noted above, Case 8 perceived Education Studies as a means of raising its academic and research reputation. Others see it as a subject for the ‘lower’, or less qualified, end of the student market. In Case 2 students on the first intake were those not strong enough to take the undergraduate QTS programme:

... we took from two broad groups of students: students who failed for one reason or another to get onto the initial teacher training programme, either because they weren’t competitive compared with other students, or they didn’t get their GCSE maths or science, and that wasn’t needed for this particular programme. That was one group. The other group of students was from clearing: those who were rooting around for something to do – and so on and so forth. So I guess the initial cohort consisted of ..... students with.... relatively low A-level grades, compared with those in the initial teacher training programme (SL2A:6).

And Education Studies is a response to the excessive demand for teacher training:

We felt there was, and I think initially there was... extra demand for a programme in education, even if it wasn’t teacher training. So you took up that slack... (SL2A:79).

This is a perception of students as low-achieving and with limited perception:

And particularly for our students, the 18 year-olds.... are immensely parochial. Most are .... (local place name) people... and they tend not to think much beyond (local place name) (SL2B:11).

This view of Education Studies and students is shared in Case 5, although there is a more optimistic view of the process as ‘widening participation’:

We’re not getting students of the first water, but I think we’re all surprised at .... what wonderful students they turn out to be. So I think that fits into the notion of what I think the aims are: the notion of widening participation. We are bringing students in - you know part of that 50% thing – I think we’re at the cutting edge of that in many ways. We’re bringing students in and we’re giving them an academic sense and we’re actually... we’re projecting them

towards possibilities within the education industry. I definitely think we're doing that, doing it quite well (SL5A:36).

The Subject Leader only regrets that the students' perception of success is measured in terms of their admission to teacher training, whereas s/he would like to see a broader range of vocational outcomes for successful students:

But the only issue with that is that the ones you see as being most successful tend to be the ones who go on to Postgrad. It's almost like a badge of their success to get onto the PGCE, which is a bit unfortunate, but you know.... It's a miracle for us when we meet students in the yard who are getting towards the end of their PGCE. This is the first lot going through and it's kind of a skew of what we're trying to avoid – the notion that we're just a pathway onto the teacher factory.... (SL5A:36).

So strong is this commitment to widening participation and that Education Studies is seen almost as a means of human redemption:

... but at the same time we have rescued people from a life of oblivion really (SL5A:36).

There is a similar view of Education Studies as widening participation in Case 4:

There's also, I think, a very strong commitment from the (institution) for widening participation..... and we also felt it would provide opportunities for those individuals who are... especially those who are local, those on the access courses, who want to do a traditional undergraduate programme but who need to see some kind of career potential at the end of it (SM4:24).

The widening participation view is shared in Case 6, as a response to government initiatives; the difference here, though, is that Education Studies is perceived as the way in which a high status institution can contribute to the good of the community:

I think the (institution) has always had to adapt to pressures that come from the fashion of the time. And I think at that point in the (institution's) career in the mid-1990s I think there had been statements coming from the Government much more to do with... the beginnings of widening access and so on. What are you doing for your local community? What are your links with the local community?..... the (institution) has established a reputation for itself as it were as an elite (institution) with a very, very good intake, and I think our initiative was seen to be slightly at the margins; in other words, it was contributing to these other things the (institution) ought to be trying to do. But

it wasn't going to be doing that at such a significant level that, for example, the (institution's) average intake 'A' level was going to start to drop, because we were just making a small contribution (SL6A:8).

Widening participation for mature students is reinforced by the second Subject Leader:

I think one of the key principles as I see it is the idea that students could work across a series of disciplines and also the other principle of extending access, I think, too, throughout the community and bringing more mature returners into education into the course (SL6B:4).

While for Case 5 the widening participation issue may be one of necessity because of the low qualifications of students received. For Case 6 there is an ideological view of attracting mature students:

I don't think it's a question of *needing* to; I think it's the principle of *wanting* to extend participation (SL6B:8).

.... every year we do get a number of mature returners into Education who come on. of course, and do make a success of it. That's something, I think, we would feel particularly pleased about (SL6B:10).

The status of the subject in relation to the QTS degrees is discussed in Theme 1. The issue returns here as a matter of concern in some institutions. In Case 2 where Education Studies students tend to be those who could not achieve the QTS degree, the perception of the subject is low:

.... in terms of recruiting undergraduates, it's not a sexy subject.... If you think about it, I struggled to find a natural career from Ed Studies, so we're unlikely to find a 15 year-old saying, what I really want to be is... (SL2B:26).

and inferior to teacher training:

We struggle to recruit. We do. And for most of our students it is a second best. (SL2B:28).

This low status is vehemently denied by the Senior Manager, although perhaps s/he protests too much:

I don't see it as a Cinderella. I don't know how many times I've got to say it (SM4:42).

And in Case 5 there is a similar sense about Education Studies:

... well nobody really articulates the sense that we're in any way inferior to any other programme, but I think there may be a touch of that (SL5:28).

But the perception of lower status for Education extends to the departments in the institution because of the lack of research among teaching staff in Education Studies:

.... but you have this other dynamic going on in the(institution), which is that you have the Education (Department) , and then you have the other (departments), and there quite definitely is a sense in which the.... other (departments) think of us as being the Pioneer Core, as it were: because we can't cut it as academics: we teach (SL5:28).

This is interestingly in contrast to Case 8 where Education Studies was seen as a means of elevating the research activity of the School. However, in Case 8 there is still a similar perception of the role of Education staff in relation to other subjects:

We don't have quite the same status as our colleagues. When you go to meetings on the (name) Campus, you know, Physics and English rather look down their noses at the moment, which is another reason to push up our profile on entry qualifications (SL8A:84).

The difference is that, as shown above, Case 8 treats it as an academic subject - a member of the social sciences - and sees Education Studies as the means to raise the research status of the School.

Case 6 also suffers from the low status end of the student market, at least in terms of applications:

.... we'd just love to have as many applicants as they do for History. And it confuses me really, and I think, Why? because we're obviously more important than they are. So why aren't we being flooded out, and it's all because of status and if we can only get over that status issue then I think it's really possible to push up (SM6:62).

This low-status theme is, perhaps, symptomatic of a new subject in the higher education context where newcomers have to prove themselves, where, in Becher's (1989) terms, a 'closed community of discourse' has not yet been fully established. It is also derived from the low status which teacher training has had in higher education because, as Cook (2002) explains, its untheorised training was judged unfit for degree-level awards and was traditionally taught in the low-status training colleges and colleges of higher education. This is expressed in Case 6:

Education essentially is the old teacher training college down the road. We took over them with some discontent a few years ago (SM6:6).

None of the English institutions refers to declining ITT numbers as a principal reason for introducing Education Studies, although it is mentioned by some as a secondary factor. In Wales (Case 9) the decision to diversify from teacher training to Education Studies appears to be strategic in the anticipation of decline in ITT numbers:

The (institution) decided in the early 90s to diversify.... And I think that the Management at the time were concerned that there was a strong possibility that teacher training would be – well the numbers would be reduced in future years. So strategically the (institution) decided to apply for the BA Education Studies course to offset any cutbacks in teacher training (SM9:14).

The proposal had been a strong initiative in so far as it had been resisted by other subjects in the institution:

... and there was great animosity towards this development by your traditionalists: the Head of English, the Head of History, the Head of Geography at the time. Quite simply, they felt threatened by a BA in Education (SM9:2).

This is the only case in which animosity to the development of Education Studies is mentioned and is perhaps symptomatic of the relative vulnerability of the non-education subjects. The initiative proved to be justified as the Furlong Report (2006) recommends the termination of undergraduate teacher training in Wales and the merging of the institutions into three regional teacher-training centres. This is confirmed by the Senior Manager:

I think the development of Education Studies and the other non-QTS programmes – let's be honest - has actually saved this institution. I'd go as far as to say that, I would (SM9:92).

So this is an example, like Case 5, of Education Studies providing the required student numbers. But it is interesting that the strategy is has had to be strongly argued within the institution, as against the English cases where the subject was allowed to grow in a context of 'benign indifference', or was simply seen as a harmless adjunct to teacher training. In fact, the Welsh instance is the only case in which there is mention of an institutional debate or decision-making process. In the English cases, the subject seems to have emerged largely because of the interests or initiatives of individuals. Even in Case 8 where there is a highly strategic view of the financial advantages of Education Studies, this is retrospective construct after the course had already been initiated by an individual. Case 3 does acknowledge an institutional decision to run Education Studies, but again there is little information on how the decision was taken: the Subject Leader was simply 'marched in' and told he would be doing it.

This particularly considered strategy in Case 9 appears to be another function of the Welsh institution's awareness of government priorities within the principality, and in its commitment to compliance with them, rather than resistance to them. Whereas the English institutions tend to express the rationale for Education Studies as the avoidance of, or subversion of, government-controlled teacher training, for the Welsh institution the rationale is to comply with the government agenda:

We've also tried to respond to some of the national agenda, if you like, that's come from the National Assembly in Cardiff.... the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Minister in particular, had published the paving document, *Wales, the Learning Country*, back in 2001, and Early Years Education was very, very high on that agenda. So we started by developing an MA in Early Years Education and then we went back to a BA in Early Years Education.... (SM9:18).

As the Senior Manager demonstrates an unabashed loyalty to the Welsh government agenda:

Yes, well, actually I have a copy here of *The Learning Country* paving document. This was published in 2001 and it's basically a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales. So what we did,

we looked at this, and we highlighted some major issues here and we addressed these then through the new programmes we were developing.....(SM9:56).

So the growth of Education Studies might have been predicted in Wales through expressed government policy to reduce teacher training and to recommend such programmes, whereas in England it might be said to have grown through default or resistance. This contrast between the Welsh and English response to government policy recurs in the following theme.

### **Summary**

The factors in the market affecting Education Studies as a subject appear to be as follows.

1. There has been uncertainty about the market for Education Studies, but its popularity is increasing and institutions are responding to the market,
2. In some cases it has had a major effect upon the institution's ability to meet its allocated HEFCE number, in one case assuring the institution's survival.
3. Institutions and faculties appear to have a limited perception of, or interest in, the academic nature of the subject and see it mainly as a means of attracting student numbers and income.
4. There are differing perceptions of the subject as academically high or low status.
5. In one case it is seen as a means of enhancing the academic reputation of the faculty by attracting young research-active staff.
6. In other cases Education Studies is seen as a subject for low-qualified students and a means of widening participation.

7. In the English institutions decision-making about introducing the subject appears to be highly influenced by individuals and rarely is there any account of a debate or the outcome of a decision-making process.
8. In the Welsh institution Education Studies had been developed strategically to counter the reductions in teacher training, in compliance with Welsh government policy.
9. The cases vary in the extent to which they respond to the student market in terms of the choice of modules and student influence on the curriculum content.



### Theme 3 – Effects of staffing on the Education Studies curriculum

This theme examines the ways in which the particular interests and career trajectories of individual members of staff contribute to definitions of the subject. The intensity of this effect is variable across the nine cases. In some instances the subject is almost entirely determined by the interests of a single tutor. In others, the effect of an individual is mitigated by other factors such as an institutional or faculty policy on the curriculum, derivation from an antecedent course as outlined in Theme 1, or by the contribution of a team of tutors to the definition. It will be shown that the effect can operate at two levels: the existence of the subject in the institution and the definition of the curriculum content can each, or both, be influenced by an individual or individuals.

Case 2 is a strong instance of the subject being allowed into the institutional profile at the request of an individual. The first Subject Leader explains that non-teacher-training Education Studies has always been a personal interest:

In my own mind I had always wanted to have an undergraduate Education Studies programme, I think probably for a number of reasons.... (SL2A:2).

Asked whether Education Studies was his/her initiative, s/he replies:

It *was* from me. I was.... I suppose that erm.... Just from a personal standpoint I've always.... (SL2A:11)

And the reason for this interest in developing Education Studies was an interest in the sociological theory of education:

...I've always worn the hat of sociologist and, more broadly speaking, a social scientist (SL2A11).

Of course, a single academic cannot introduce a new subject to a university without the consent of the management of the institution and this came in the form of a new Dean who approved the interest. The Subject Leader moved quickly and strategically to establish the rationale for the subject:

... it coincided with the appointment of a new dean here; s/he came in the September of '98 and, I thought, well I'm going to get in there very quickly and I had one of the first meetings with him/her. Basically I introduced myself and said, well what are your ideas as far as the school is concerned? ... well s/he came from (another institution name) and s/he said, well actually I'm very interested in having undergraduate Education Studies. And I said, so am I! So, to cut a long story short s/he said, 'Right, yours to develop'. And so I spent the greater part from September through to May developing it and getting it ..... (tentatively) well with help and as a team.... But I drove it... I drove the programme (SL2A:13).

So the two individuals' interests appear to be crucial in the initiation of the subject, and it would not have occurred without their combination:

Oh it wouldn't have happened without him/her. Er, possibly it wouldn't have happened without me, but I don't know that. I couldn't have done it without that positive proactive approach from the new Dean... (SL2A:15).

The significant point here is that, having agreed the rationale for the subject, the Dean was prepared simply to hand over the content of the subject to the individual and, at least by the account of the Subject Leader, not to have exercised any influence on the content of the curriculum. This does appear to signify the lack of any institutional, or even any faculty-level, interest in the curriculum content of Education Studies.

Case 1 demonstrates a similar relationship between Subject Leader and Dean in the initiation of the subject in the institution. There had been an initiative ten years previously which had failed because an individual had not been interested. The current Subject Leader had individually developed the notion of Education Studies through his/her experience in a validation panel, although his/her ambitions were frustrated:

About ten years ago the Director of the School asked a colleague, who's still here, to set up a department of Education Studies and nothing happened. I got interested in a department of education studies about five years ago. The original idea I had – because I'd been at a validation in the School of Health, and they'd been doing a degree on health and public policy, or something like that, I can't remember the exact title – and it just seemed to me there was a possibility of doing education and public policy, aimed at professionals, and other people, who needed to have an idea about public policy and education, but also how public policy was developed, how policy was generated, and so on.... I thought that was a good idea, but it wasn't allowed to progress for a number of reasons, namely that the (person) who was Director of School then left (SL1:2).

But with the coming of a new Dean, the position changed:

So it was really that the present initiative was (Dean's name's). S/he felt, and I agreed, that we should go over to Education Studies: first to increase the portfolio of degrees that we have in the School of Education, also to increase the number of degrees not dominated by Ofsted and the rigours of ITT. Also looking at the workforce agreements and all the rest of it, looking at the demographics there's a good chance that the number of teachers is going to be reduced. So there's all sorts of issues and last year, the first year that s/he was here, s/he said 'Who's interested in doing Education Studies?' and I put my hand up, along with other colleagues, and so it came out of that (SL1:3).

This is different from Case 2 in that, while the subject occurs because of a juxtaposition of the two individuals, there is an academic and logistical rationale for the subject concerning the envisaged reduction in ITT numbers. However, the effect of individuals, both negatively and positively, is still evident. One management initiative had not been successful because of a non-response by another individual. It later succeeded because of the individual response of the Subject Leader to the new Dean. The Subject Leader has strong views about the political perspective in Education Studies which derive from his/her experiences as a Sociology student and he sees his/her role as diverting staff from their teacher training orientation and increasing their political awareness:

I mean some of them are still a bit ITT-ish, but I think we've got to.... I wanted them to fit into the widest possible context. So I think there are tensions there. I think part of those tensions arise because A) well I'm 50, so that means that when I was educated, when I did my PGCE 28 years ago I went into teaching when I was 27 and I'd also done a sociology degree and that knowledge and background means that you are a different sort of animal from colleagues who are now in their 30s. And I think that they have a very narrow focus on what education is.... What amazes me is when I was a student I was always politically active to some degree and that was always fed into things like what I discussed. But a lot of colleagues there's an absence of politics, and absence of the sociology and understanding; there's an absence of a critique of what they're doing (SL1:49).

Yes, and it's making the intellectual jump out of it and actually looking at education, looking at the sociology of education ..... (indistinct) and philosophy, there's an absolute absence of it ..... (pause, indistinct) Montessori, Steiner, all these different traditions that developed over the years. What goes on is what makes a good numeracy lesson for a Reception class, a literacy lesson for whatever... (SL1:53).

Here the individual Subject Leader's perspective defines the subject in this way, although s/he appears to have more difficulty in asserting his/her definition because of the resistance, or inertia, of other staff who don't share his/her knowledge or background. S/he is not to be deterred, though, and has taken action to ensure that his/her definition prevails in the curriculum content of modules:

... dare I say it... a lot of the modules that were written for the Early Years bit I've changed (SL1:47).

In Case 8 an individual member of staff appears to have been responsible both for the initiation of the subject and for the first definition of the content. The current subject leader describes the actions of the original leader three years previously:

It was really led by (Name). When s/he arrived at the (institution) .... s/he wanted to set up an Education Studies degree. So s/he actually talked to staff at the School of Education and found people that felt that they could contribute to an Education Studies degree (SL8A:2).

The content of the curriculum was determined by this individual:

EDU1001 which was (Tutor name)'s Contemporary Policies and Issues and that was very much based on his/her *own* work in Education on School Effectiveness; s/he drew a lot on that and s/he examined the New Labour Government's policies since 1997 (SM8A:6),

but also by the knowledge that happened to be available among a group of tutors willing to cooperate:

And I think to start with it was very much of a hotch-potch actually in the first year, because s/he was literally drawing on what people's strengths were, rather than – and this sounds critical – rather than actually having a plan for the actual shape of it. My impression is that it was, well what can people do, well let's have a module on it. That's how it started (SL8A:2).

What is interesting here is the readiness to admit that the course began with no proper academic framework other than the contingent knowledge available in a particular group. The effects of this are further analysed in Theme 4.

Case 4 is a strong example of the individual subject leader's subject knowledge and background defining the curriculum content. S/he was also a Secondary Geography teacher-training tutor; the aims of the course which were to give students a sense of place of the location of the institution and to study education in the community. This is first described by Subject Leader 2:

... what (Subject Leader 1) has done in this semester in terms of the sense of place: looking at (place name), for example, and so I'll be picking up on some of those themes, taking (place name) Museum and using that within a module for creativity. So there's a thread through our Education degree about the implications of new technologies on this business of learning within a context of (place name) within the wider view of our society (SL4B:8).

This translates into a substantial effect on the curriculum in that one of its major features is a one-term placement in a community location. As Subject Leader 1 explains, it is necessary for students to find out the community context of the institution and this defines the nature of Education Studies:

The placement is very distinctive, trying to set it in the context of the urban environment in which the university is situated. Because, although the students are at the (institution), they don't all necessarily come from (institution place name). And they don't all necessarily *live* in (institution place name), but we're trying to give it a focus of being part of what's going on within the city (SL:4A:38).

So here a Geography tutor's interest in locality and place defines Education Studies as analysis of education in the community. As a Geography tutor it might have led to a definition as international education; however, this particular individual's interest lay elsewhere and the local community becomes the definition.

In Case 9 in Wales, even though the decision to introduce the subject was an institutional one following debate and a vote at the Academic Board, the curriculum content is given over to an individual:

To be perfectly honest, erm, it was developed by one individual who was then a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education. Erm, s/he was asked to develop this; s/he did so and the modules reflected his/her own interests, to be perfectly honest. Over the next two years – by 2001-2002 – with the establishment of a School of Education Studies and the appointment of two or three members of

staff then you had a far more varied curriculum, if you like, which includes modules in Psychology.... erm the National Curriculum.... the collection of modules you would find in any Education Studies degree (SM9:32).

As noted in Theme 1, in Case 7 the Education Studies programme was strongly determined by its antecedent QTS course and the effect on the Education Studies programme is a strong primary teacher training element, including an assessed teaching practice with little of the broader context of Education. While this is a function of the antecedent course, it is also a function of the staff who are seen to be academically limited. As the new Subject Leader explains:

The staff here were, to a person, all ex-primary teachers and that significantly closed down the flavour of the Degree, and it significantly closed down the options that were available ... (SL7:48).

Education Studies is essentially buried in ITT... (SL7:54)

Like Case 1, the new Subject Leader who has been appointed to revise the programme laments the lack of breadth in the team:

We need people who've got the breadth and background. And also, because of its history, it was essentially – I mean up until now – it has been essentially HEFCE-funded ITT (SL7:50).

So here there is an effect of general staff knowledge or interest which has defined the curriculum as teacher training, rather than the perspectives or interests of individuals.

In other cases it is not always easy to find staff who are able to transfer from the confines of teacher training to the wider demands of Education Studies, and here the notion of 'liberation from TDA standards' is replaced by the struggle to prise staff away from them. As the Subject Leader in Case 1 explains:

Oh yes, well most people, like (tutor name) next door, come straight out of school and they see it as an opportunity to do something different. And most of the people are..... positive about it. Erm the problems about it are the sheer amount of demand on people's workload, so getting people together is difficult. I think some people feel they don't have the knowledge. They're good at coming out as teachers and doing effective literacy lessons, but beyond that there isn't a great deal... the one thing that's here is *not* running away from Ofsted. I had a *battle* to get it, right, and I think for some people when

people were involved in it in the very early stages of this new round it was a way of getting away from Ofsted, but it's not seen as that (SL1:67).

In other cases, and more frequently, the reverse was true in that the Education Studies curriculum was defined by staff who felt unwilling or unable to engage in teaching the TDA QTS Standards.

In Case 3 the subject was devised by those who were disaffected with education in schools:

The core staff from Education Studies are former schoolteachers, so myself, (SM3), (tutor name), who are the longest-serving members, all came out of education, as many teachers did, in the early nineties, with our discomfort with the changes in education. (Tutor name) and I were primary teachers; (SM3) was a secondary teacher (SL3:6).

In Case 2 it is the disaffection with teacher education which creates the subject. This is a strong instance of the knowledge and skills as a sociologist are no longer being required in the new framework for teacher training following the TTA (1988) publication of Standards for Qualifications to Teach. This saw the demise of the subject disciplines and leaves no role for the sociologist:

... by the time we got to 1998 the old QTS course with the foundation studies in education had already gone and there were a number of people like me who had trained as sociologists and who, in a sense, felt a little empty, as it were (SL:2A4).

This is a highly significant element in the data. Government policy, by deleting theoretical study of the subject discipline from teacher training, has simply removed the role for which such individuals were previously employed. In effect, the TTA Standards of 1998 and 2002 made sociologists of education redundant. To continue in teacher education, such staff would need to re-constitute themselves as practical teacher trainers. So in this case, Education Studies was created in order to provide a vehicle for the continuance of the individual's career in teaching the Sociology of Education and s/he does emphasise that it was an individual initiative:

Just from a personal standpoint I've always.... I guess I've worn two hats..... since I've been in higher education, what, for twenty-five years, and the two

hats have been: one as, yes, an educationalist, because I've always worked in schools of education wherever I've been, but I've always worn the hat of sociologist and, more broadly speaking, a social scientist. And so I've always had, if you like, those twin interests, and they came together when I was involved in, you know, the old-style four-year BEd courses where I could indulge my own interests, sociology and so on and so forth (SL2A:11).

There is a strong element of the individual's personal identity as a sociologist, rather than a practical teacher-trainer, that needed to be preserved:

But once that all went then I was left with, as far as teacher training was concerned, left with all the practice-oriented stuff, which I was always involved with when I became involved with teacher training, but that wasn't me and wasn't what I came in to do. And, therefore, this allowed me personally to get back, not only to some of the old things I was doing, but also to develop new ideas... (SL2A:11).

So Education Studies is defined as the Sociology of Education in order to assist the individual tutor's career plan. It is significant that the rationale for the subject is expressed in such individual terms, rather than as an academic rationale in itself. There is no reference to an institutional strategy or rationale. Asked about whether it was difficult to get institutional approval for the new Education Studies programme, the Subject Leader has no recall of any strategy:

I don't think it was. I don't know, I'm trying to remember (SL2A:19).

The absence of staff with other disciplinary expertise, again, originally defined the subject as sociological, rather than psychological:

Not so much psychological, because we didn't have any..... We seem to have lost our psychologists... So we didn't have too many..... We had to look at who could contribute... We had - and we still have – a relatively narrow staff base, because most of the staff are tied up with teacher training. Erm, so it took up most of my time, erm, and I guess I tended to teach across the disciplines .....I did the psychological stuff....(indistinct)... although it isn't my bag.... (SL2A:45).

On the other hand in Case 8 there is a strong Psychology staff and that determines the content of the subject. Replying to the question about the disciplines in general, the Subject Leader replies:



Mm. Well, they're not very strong. I mean, Psychology is probably the strongest discipline that runs through. Erm.... we don't really do much on Philosophy at all; that really just comes up in the Year 1 module.... (SL:8A:26).

And there is an absence of Sociology:

Sociology comes up I would say in a rather *ad hoc* way in different sorts of modules. But, again, this is something I'm not sure we're providing the students with a clear pathway through sociological theory, and I think we need to (SL8A:28).

This is particularly interesting in that Case 8 is the one which the Senior Manager described as instituting Education Studies as a social science to give the Faculty and the institution additional reputational status. It would appear, then, that a single discipline, at least in the first instance, is seen as sufficient to achieve that.

In Case 4 redundant social scientists are also part of the definition of the subject. In reply to the first question about the reason for developing Education Studies, the Subject Leader describes the rationale as the deployment of redundant staff:

It was really the previous head of department's baby. S/he was at a point of realising s/he had a lot of staff who had expertise that wasn't being used appropriately because of the changes in teacher education – moving to the competence-based and school-based stuff and all the sociology and psychology of education all went out of the window. And the number of people who were experienced in terms of psychology, sociology..... S/he thought that this would be *a* way of using the expertise.... (SL4A:2).

Here, again, it is a group, rather than a single individual, whose career needs form the rationale for the introduction of the subject. But in the same institution Education Studies provides an escape from the TTA standards for a Marxist tutor and others who yearn for freedom from government constraint:

The Marxist (person) that I mentioned earlier, I mean s/he just thinks it's fantastic: this is wonderful, you know; at last I'm doing something that I want to do. It's been a revelation for him/her; he'd like to be even more involved, I think. So that's been very good. And some people who weren't involved to start with have become involved because they've realised that there is more

freedom in this kind of degree and have come on board subsequently (SL4A:74).

The sociological content of the course is determined by the staff involved:

... our external scrutineer and s/he.... when s/he read the documentation s/he felt it had a heavy sociological bias and I think that is a true reflection of the people that are working on the course (SL4A:50).

In Case 3, as shown in Theme 2, the decision to include Education Studies was taken at an institutional level. In the words of the then Subject Leader, later Senior Manager:

I was marched in front of the (Member of institution's directorate) and told, 'You will lead this' (SM3:4)

However, the curriculum was left entirely to the discretion of the Single Subject Leader.

.... which I thought was great because it gave me the scope to put my vision of Education into the degree, not only into a module, but a whole degree experience. And from that moment I set about trying to transform what they had done, but not yet run, into what we've got now (SM3:4).

Case 3 is a highly individualised definition of the subject where the Subject Leader had constructed a theoretical framework for Education Studies upon his interests in Philosophy; the first person discourse is notable:

It's grounded in a vision of learning that comes from the Philosophy I did. The Philosophy I read is in the speculative tradition from Plato right through now, I suppose to, to Deleuze, Derrida, people like that. It's very much in a continental tradition. I believe they have a vision of the significance of learning as an end in itself and I've tried to build a course that makes that, not only the subject of the modules, but also the content of some of the students' experience. If it's names – where do I find the philosophy of education – it's Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, those kind of... (SM3:60).

Here Education Studies is defined as a philosophical activity, a form of reflective analysis:

One of the key sentences, I suppose, is that – and this would be true for anyone, I'm sure – but we've got to write this down: we don't just want people

to study education, we want them to know they're doing it at the same time. And that, perhaps, has underpinned most of the reforms we've made over the years: not just to study it, but to be doing it, and to recognise that you're doing it, to recognise how difficult education is when you're doing it, to try and understand more of what those difficulties might mean for you while you're doing it, and even to turn the content of the difficulty into modules. Now that, I think, is the really distinctive thing (SM3:20).

And Education Studies is defined to be as far as possible from the TDA Standards. The reply to the question about relevance to the Standards is unequivocal:

No. Absolutely not (SL3:56).

Furthermore, the Senior Manager displays a particular view of the progression from Education Studies to teaching, as the Subject Leader explains:

(SM3) has a sign outside his/her door which says, 'Thinking of teaching? Think first.' And that's our primary objective (SL3:48).

So individually distinctive is this approach to Education Studies that, with expanding student numbers, there are difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff with the required knowledge for the programme and it is necessary to recruit from former students:

We put our adverts in the Guardian and the Times Higher: *wanted, Ed Studies lecturer*. and last time we tried to appoint we got two people, neither of whom were suitable. Now, if we weren't breeding our own subject tutors, I think we'd be in trouble. I'm not sure how we would keep our staffing levels up (SM3:114).

The fact that a subject can develop so uniquely as this within the context of the national market for Education Studies is symptomatic of the powerful effect of individuals on the subject.

The most significant feature of this aspect of the analysis is the frequently unmitigated influence of individuals upon the knowledge that constitutes Education Studies, and that knowledge so defined can be quite idiosyncratic. What is also significant is that this is treated as relatively unproblematic by the interviewees, apart from the Subject

Leader in Case 8 who expresses the view that what s/he said might ‘sound critical’. In Case 3, the most uniquely and personally defined of all the programmes, there is no attempt to conceal the individualised origins of the programme; it is in fact almost celebrated with the individual seen as founding hero:

(SM3) was the driving force..... And s/he was primarily responsible for that – guiding it and leading it (SL3:2)  
(SM3) has a very clear vision for the programme (SL3:60).

Only the Senior Manager in Case 6, one of the oldest programmes, seem to recognise the problematic nature of the subject being defined by contingent expertise and the debate about the nature of knowledge which is required:

Well, to be honest with you I think that’s a constant debate, OK? And actually we’re having it now, again, have we got a course that’s dependent on the expertise of the staff? So you say, What can we do? And let’s put that in. There you go, you’ve got a programme. *Or*...has it been worked out in some more fundamental way? (SM6:26).

And in fact it was the impending QAA subject review in 2001 which forced the debate about the nature of the subject to take place:

Now..... I don’t know really about this, OK, but I.... was Director of the Programme after (SL6A). Can’t remember exactly when that was really, but anyway.... I took over at the time that we were running up to Subject Review and I think (SL6A) had started it, but I, with others, continued saying let’s get a clear rationale for this. So it is not just, or doesn’t appear, to some people to be based strongly around academic interests of particular members of staff. So we got going and a working party was set up... (SM6:26).

Apart from this, the effect of the contingent knowledge of staff available seems not to be seen as a deficient model for devising the knowledge of a curriculum. It is suggested here that the over-riding ambition to create a subject of some kind, which is differentiated from teacher training and which fulfils the ideology of critique of government policy is so strong that the more prosaic notion of devising a thought-through curriculum rationale is marginal. The effect of this is apparent in the following theme on theoretical frameworks.

## Summary

- 1 Individual staff interests or career intentions can determine the existence of undergraduate Education Studies as a subject in the institution.
- 2 Individual staff interests or subject expertise can determine its curriculum content.
- 3 Government controls and the reduction in the theoretical content in teacher training has created staff who are reluctant, or unable, to teach the TDA standards. This has created a need for Education Studies as an alternative career for such staff.
- 4 Where Education Studies is created by staff who are disaffected by the government education policy or the TDA standards, it tends to be depicted ideologically as critique of government policy.
- 5 In most cases, the influence of individuals on the existence of the subject, or its content, is viewed as relatively non-problematical, as though it was to be expected.

#### **Theme 4 - Theoretical frameworks for Education Studies**

This theme examines the types of theoretical framework which are proposed for Education Studies courses. No possible frameworks are suggested to interviewees and the data is elicited through the direct question to both Senior Managers and Subject Leaders, ‘What is the theoretical framework for Education Studies?’ This allows them to cite any possible structure, including one based upon the subject disciplines. Information also emerges from questions about the aims, the distinctive qualities of the course and from the question about the role of the subject disciplines. The theme also includes analysis of interviewees’ perceptions of the nature of Education Studies: whether it is a subject or a discipline in its own right.

The first feature to emerge is a high level of uncertainty about the theoretical framework for Education Studies and that few were readily able to answer the question about the theoretical framework for the subject. Some even had difficulty with the whole notion of a theory. Case 1 replied,

What do you mean by that? (SL1:41)

and offered no further direct explanation, other than that it is not teacher training:

I mean I’m trying to drag people away from (teacher training) ..... (SL1:47),

although theoretical considerations appeared later in the interview.

Case 5 replied to the question:

Mm, I think that’s one we’d have to give a written answer to..... I’d have to have it in front of me, I think, to look at all the modules, to see what that was..... Erm..... (SL5A:75)

And

I don’t know, Steve, give us a ..... Pass! (SL5A:77)

It is interesting that, while these interviewees are responsible for the subject, they appear not to have to hand a ready description of what it is about. Others avoid attempting a theoretical framework by suggesting that the theory will later emerge. In Case 4 the subject has only been recently approved and is in its first cohort. The Subject Leader, asked whether there is a theory for the subject, replies that it has not yet emerged:

Erm..... well I think we would like to have and I think it would probably be organic as it moves forward. But you know, when you're sort of writing modules, that have to go in the validation, but you know you're not going to be teaching until 2008, it's really difficult (SL4A:60).

What is suggested here is that modules are written for validation and theory will emerge *post hoc*. This notion is reinforced with:

.... Come back to me in three years! (SL4A:62).

It is interesting that, although the course took two years in preparation, a theoretical framework appears not to form a part of the validation process. A course can be produced with its content in terms of modules, but without an analysis of its theoretical basis.

As noted in Theme 3, in Case 6 there has been extensive discussion of theory, but again there is the notion that it should emerge after the content has been determined, and the content is seen simply to depend on the particular expertise of staff:

Well, to be honest with you I think that's a constant debate, OK? And actually we're having it now, again, have we got a course that's dependent on the expertise of the staff? So you say, What can we do? And let's put that in. There you go, you've got a programme. *Or...* has it been worked out in some more fundamental way? .... I took over at the time that we were running up to Subject Review and I think (name of first Subject Leader) had started it, but I, with others, continued saying let's get a clear rationale for this. So it is not just, or doesn't appear, to some people to be based strongly around academic interests of particular members of staff. So we got going and a working party was set up.... (SM6:26).

So the position here seems to be that staff expertise determines the content, and when that is decided, a theoretical framework can be derived. This idea of meta-theory is also expressed by the Senior Manager in Case 8 when asked about the theoretical framework:

Well, I think what I'm saying probably by implication is that it is a question that is up for grabs (SM8:38)

And asked about the aims for the programme, the Subject Leader replies:

Yes, that's a very interesting one, because it should be in the prospectus....  
Erm, how do we express them? ..... I don't actually think that at any point at the moment at the beginning we set out the aims of the degree programme, I really don't. .... So it's something else we need to bring in. We tend to plunge straight in.... (SL8A:46).

In fact the aims for the programme are not included on the institution's website, and again 'plunging in' seems to be the process, later to be followed by discussion of the aims:

And I don't think that we've actually – because I wasn't involved with the programme right at the beginning – certainly we haven't actually sat down and articulated what we think our aims for the programme are in the last year or two. And I think that maybe we've got to the point where it's time to do that (SL8A:50).

In Case 7, as though the question about the theoretical framework is a trap waiting to be sprung, the Subject Leader's first response is to expostulate:

Pah! (SL:7:24)

When pressed, the reply is that the whole business is difficult and that there are multiple possibilities, with suggestions about the contributory disciplines:

Well, I mean, that's the big question, isn't it? Do you know, I pondered this one because, when you read all the papers.... and you look at this stuff, I mean there's a huge historical element to this. So, you know, you've got the evolution of it all from whenever – the fifties... Well, I mean it goes back obviously a lot further than that, but, you know, through the fifties, sixties,



seventies. Some people will say that Education Studies is underpinned by - its theoretical underpinning – is..... er... or has its roots in erm History, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology – the different disciplines. Other people say it *is* actually more about vocational training and all sorts of things. Some people feel that it should be atomised: you know, that you should do modules in the Sociology of Education; some people feel it might be erm more holistic, integrated and so on (SL:7A:26).

As to Case 7's own approach there is still no commitment to any position and the whole process is just too difficult to determine because of competing theories:

What's *our* underpinning for it? I think our underpinning for it is somewhere in the middle there.... Trying to articulate the theoretical underpinning is quite hard because.... and the reason I say that is because I have difficulties with it as discipline-based, but also I have difficulties with it in all the other senses. And I often.... I have given a lot of thought as to why it should be considered in those terms: why can't Education Studies be considered a..... You know, where is its own *pure* theoretical underpinning.... as a subject in its own right. In the same way that, you know, I was a geologist. Could I articulate Geology's underlying theoretical...? (SL:7A:26).

Again, there is a recognition that there ought to be a theoretical framework, and that it will later emerge:

Yes, and I know that's not good enough, but er..... No, at the moment, because we're revalidating and we're bringing about such sweeping change, I think we've got a sense that it's underpinned by all the above.... And as it unfolds over the next year or two I think we'll have a clearer sense of what drives it (SL7:30).

What is remarkable here is not just the lack of a well-articulated answer to the question, but the respondents surprise that the question is asked, or the resignation to an almost completely atheoretical position. The meta-theory idea – that theory will emerge *post hoc* is equally remarkable in that it seems to provide respondents with a means to simply 'park' the theoretical question for another time; meanwhile they 'plunge in' and teach the content.

Not all evaded the question about the theoretical framework. While in all but one case there is a high level of uncertainty about the theory for Education Studies, there were some attempts to articulate one. In Case 2 the aims for the subject are expressed in terms of factual knowledge about education and childhood:

Well the aims as I see them are very simple: to erm..... to equip.... graduates from this programme with knowledge and understanding of education in all its different guises, in the same way as they might have an understanding of any other area of.... Knowledge and understanding of, broadly within the context of England..... broadly knowledge and understanding of process, of institutions, of philosophies, ideologies..... conventional notions of child development etc etc (SL:2A:29).

In Wales, Case 9 determines the theory as vocational outcomes and employability. Again, as shown in previous themes, this is consistent with the Welsh institution's commitment to government-policy which views higher education as the preparation for employment:

Well, one of the priorities for this (institution) when the (Head of institution) came into post was the employability of students. So I think the majority of the modules developed within Education Studies is linked to the employability of students at the end of their course. I think we look at the number of students from this particular course who either go on to a PGCE or are successful in gaining a post outside teaching (SM9:34).

And again, the subject leader sees the aims in terms of compliance with the Welsh legislative frameworks:

Coming from a social policy background myself..... You see, we're constrained by legislative frameworks all the time and these theoretical frameworks creep in in our everyday life.... you've got the National Curriculum; we're all supposed to be doing this. So there you've got your formal framework there; so that's statutory, isn't it? (SL9:10).

While this is a theoretically simple notion, at least it is a considered rationale. It stands in contrast with the English institutions in its emphasis is on legislative constraints:

... we're constrained by what we do, what we deliver and how we deliver it and value for many of the students... I've got the QAA guidelines, the code of practice is on my desk all the time. And you've got the 'threshold' the 'modal' and the 'best' (SL9:14).

Well Education Studies has got its own standards, hasn't it? The Benchmarks (SL9:16).

And, as the Senior Manager had with him the Welsh policy document, the QAA Benchmark for Education (QAA (2001) is on the desk:

It's just there (pointing to desk)... (SL9:18).

So in the Welsh institution the theoretical framework is seen in terms of government policy, rather than in any academic formulation.

Only one of the nine cases proposes a coherent theoretical framework which accounts for content and progression across the programme. The Subject Leader for Case 3 replies to the question about theory in terms of students' progressive development towards analytic critique:

.... arguments about false consciousness and philosophical consciousness I think work as the philosophical argument and framework for the course, which is then translated into a much more – in prosaic terms – theory of critique (SL3:24).

This is then translated into a year-on-year progression of students' theoretical constructs:

In the first year we're expecting students to reflect on their own experience which, as you said earlier, everyone has an experience of education, maybe not in school maybe not in this system, but we've all had an experience of education, and we all have an opinion. And for the vast majority that has to be worked through, and the limitations of their experience as a basis for understanding education has to be identified. So that they leave the first year realising that their understanding and experience are a wonderful starting point, but they can't call themselves informed about education, because that's all they do (SL3:24).

This is a highly considered and well-articulated framework which is consistent with the strongly philosophical and the particularly individualistic definition of the subject. It is in contrast to the approaches described above where the subject is seen as a collection of different staff contributions. This model has the feel of an individual's concept, rather than something which has been agreed among a team. It was noted in Theme 3 that in Case 3 the Senior Manager, the former Subject Leader, had played a

singular role in the definition of the subject.

Another example of a theoretical overview is from the Senior Manager in Case 1 who gives a well-articulated account of the nature of Education Studies. The subject employs a range of theories and knowledge in order to critique education, and the fact that it draws differently on such a range means that it cannot have a defined set of theories or knowledge in itself:

... rather than being a body of knowledge, rather than being a body of theories... what it does is to *draw* on the body of theory, but it actually is itself a tool which facilitates discourse, and it facilitates analysis. So, if you like, my theoretical basis for it would be a sort of meta-analysis of educational issues and developments in what is a very fast-changing scene; and that, I think, is its undeniable strength, because somebody could come to me to learn Education Studies and I wouldn't necessarily need them to have a whole raft of previous knowledge; what I would want them to go away with is the ability to question or critique education in all of its many forms. In a sense I think that's quite liberating, because it means that one isn't harnessed into sets of theories and bodies of knowledge that have got to be learnt. Clearly they are illustrated, they are also (hesitates)... I mean if you want to enable somebody to analyse education then obviously you have to equip them with a range of analytical discourses that do that (SM1:27).

The notion of 'liberation' for students is significant here. However, while this is a well argued formulation, it cannot be said directly to have informed the development of the subject in the institution, for, as noted above, the Subject Leader in Case 1, who had devised the programme, had difficulty in answering the question about the theoretical framework and made little reference to the points made here. It appears, then, to be a case of the kind of *post hoc* or a meta-analysis, of the kind alluded to by, for example Senior Manager 6 and Senior Manager 8. It is another good example of the way in which the theory for Education Studies is emerging after the curriculum for the subject is in place.

### **The role of the contributory disciplines**

Educational theory in teacher training drew heavily upon the contributory disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History (Richardson, 2002, Cook, 2002, McCulloch, 2002) and one of the possible ways of theorising Education Studies is in

terms of such disciplines. In some cases respondents turned to the disciplines to answer the question about the theoretical framework for Education Studies. At the same time there are wide variations in the extent to which the disciplines are articulated in the nine cases and some only refer to them when asked directly in the question, ‘What is the role of the contributory disciplines?’ There are also variations in the extent to which the disciplines are made explicit to students and there is both ambiguity and contradiction in the ways in which the role of disciplines is discussed. In Theme 3 it was shown that in some cases the role of the disciplines is determined by the expertise of staff who happened to be involved and there is further evidence here that contingency of staff expertise defines the curriculum.

This section analyses the perceived role of the contributory discipline and uses Bernstein’s (1971) model of collection and integrated codes to classify the different cases in terms of the explicit identification of the disciplines within the subject. Bernstein notes two forms of curricula: ‘the collection code’ of discrete and separate taught subjects, and the ‘integrated code’ where subjects are less explicitly identifiable and knowledge is seen to be thematically integrated and overlapping. This theory is used to characterise the explicit reference to the disciplines in Education Studies as a collection code, and the inexplicit or permeating model of the disciplines as an integrated code.

Case 5 is an example of being at a loss to identify an explicit theoretical framework and there is no attempt to offer the disciplines in answer to the question. As noted above, when asked about the theoretical framework Subject Leader A seems baffled by the question. However, when asked about the disciplines directly the Subject Leaders explain that they are basing the content upon a range of disciplines:

So, I mean, in the first year we’re touching on Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, the history of... Economics *in*... politics and so and so forth (SL5B:47).

We’re dealing with the theory of education through a number of perspectives, whether it’s Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, History, whatever it may be (SL5A:80)

And the disciplines are made explicit to students through the titles of modules:

...in Year 1 their lectures will be entitled ‘the sociology of....the philosophy of .....the history of..... (SL5B:88).

Here, being able to revert to the traditional disciplines which have been squeezed out of current teacher-training programmes, is seen as a virtue of the new Education Studies programme:

And they can’t get that through the QTS, or any other programme, I think, in the institution (SL5B:47).

It is interesting that, while there is explicit reference to a collection code of the disciplines, they are not seen as a theoretical framework for the subject.

In Case 8 there is a view that the disciplines are important and should be explicit to students. Psychology is the prevalent discipline and the others are seen to be weak because the main staffing is in Psychology.

Well, they’re not very strong. I mean, Psychology is probably the strongest discipline that runs through. Erm.... we don’t really do much on Philosophy at all.... Sociology comes up I would say in a rather *ad hoc* way in different sorts of modules (SL8A:26-28).

However, the important point here is at the end of the next quote, which implies that there is an ideal of Education Studies founded on the full range of disciplines, and the lack of staff expertise is seen as a weakness:

But, again, this is something I’m not sure we’re providing the students with a clear pathway through sociological theory, and I think we need to (SL8A:26-28).

From this it is inferred that Case 8 views the disciplines as a defining characteristic of Education Studies and would aim to have a collection code of disciplines if only they had the staff expertise.

Case 5 celebrates the return of the disciplines from the former teacher-training courses and Case 8 sees the explicit identification of the disciplines as central to Education

Studies. Others seem to want to distance themselves from the traditional disciplinary model and, while none can deny the need for the disciplines as a theoretical basis, they prefer to keep it implicit from the students, using such terms as ‘underpinning’, ‘permeating’ and ‘integrated’.

Case 4 uses the disciplines, but they are not identified as such.

Well, they’re not identified as subjects, so the disciplines and the modules are underpinned with..... Yes, I’d say that the modules are underpinned by those disciplines, but we don’t..... the modules are not identified as Psychology or Socio..... (SM4:44).

The disciplines are intended to contribute to a theoretical base, but again, they are not made explicit to students and there is a bias towards Sociology because of staffing:

They don’t appear strongly, and deliberately, but they’re meant to, as I say, permeate everything..... but when we had the validation, the (person) from (name of institution) .... was our external scrutineer and .... when s/he read the documentation s/he felt it had a heavy sociological bias and I think that is a true reflection of the people that are working on the course. The other disciplines are there, but I think it does lean towards being sociologically-based (SK4A:40).

In Case 4 the rationale for this approach appears to be to distance the new Education Studies course from the old apparently discredited disciplinary model. The Subject Leader describes their experiences in beginning to draw up the new course:

Well we weren’t really sure, because to us it was all new. Obviously, we looked at people’s web-sites to see what was going on out there and many of the courses seemed to be the old ‘ologies, you know. And we tried to.... and I suppose to keep away..... it took a while to.... multi-dimensional..... all the way through it’s multi-dimensional, rather than trying to put things into pockets. That was what we tried to do (SL4A:46).

There is an interesting contradiction here which is borne of the historical conflicts in teacher training. On the one hand there is a need to preserve the disciplines as a theoretical framework and because there are staff who wish to teach Sociology. On the other hand, the disciplinary basis is kept from students because it might be judged to be like the old and discredited ‘theory’ of teacher training courses.

Similarly in Case 1 the disciplines are not identified through modules and the rationale is a more deliberative notion of an integrated curriculum, rather than ‘compartmentalisation’ of the subject, or ‘discrete blocks’ through modules labelled as disciplines:

You either have subject-discrete modules or you have integrated modules. Subject-discrete modules means the ghetto-isation of the subject, to some extent, and putting the subject into separate compartments. An integrated approach, which is what we’ve opted for, is it doesn’t get taught, but, as we’ve tried to do, for example, in the first year modules is Education, Values and Society where there are discrete blocks of teaching about the history of education, about philosophy of education and so on. So within the modules there are blocks which make links to the different subjects, but modules on the history of education, no we don’t do that (SL1:35).

This would appear to be an attempt to create an integrated code, according to Bernstein’s model, and here there is no reference to missing elements: all the disciplines are said to be included. There is a weaker form of identification: ‘flagging’:

Yes, we flag it. We have a psychology.... in the first-year modules we do philosophy, history and sociology and psychology’s down in the second module called ‘How people learn’... And it’s flagged as sociology of education and history. I do history, for example, and we do look at – it’s quite clearly indicated – from the Renaissance period to the present day and we’re trying to make the links between curriculum development; the philosophy’s there, but this is what it was like on the ground (SL1:37).

In Theme 2 it was shown that Case 2 found itself with students with limited qualifications and there was a deficit view of student achievement. Here the disciplines, particularly Sociology, are included, but kept inexplicit from students in the early years of the course for fear that they might be deterred by the perceived academic demands:

Well we decided that we wouldn’t go down that route totally in the sense that we’d have something called ‘psychology of education’..... no we didn’t. So we did that, I think, for a number of reasons. One, not to frighten the horses too much, but it was a kind of compromise (SL:2:41).



Again, like Case 4, there is a similar conflict that the staffing expertise and interest are Sociological and define the course that way, but that students may be deterred because Sociology or Psychology may appear too difficult. The name of the discipline is kept until the second year before its rigours are revealed:

And then when they got to the second year, *then*, consciously taking it up a notch, we did actually have – we still do have – a module called ‘Sociological Perspectives on Educational Processes’ and it is a sociology course... (SL2A:43).

The Subject Leader suggests that there is a need to initiate students into the disciplinary methods of Sociology, but the statement reveals the inherent tension in the proposition to give low-attaining students an entrée to the rigours of the discipline. It is first described as ‘quick and dirty’, but then corrected to ‘intensive’:

... and we take them from the very beginning..... what is sociology? And I give them a quick and dirt.... well certainly a fairly intensive introduction to sociology.... (SL2AQ:43).

This suggests that there is an awareness of the issue of the disciplines as demanding and requiring the initiation, or enculturation, into the rigours of ‘hard knowledge’ described by Peters (1964) or Oakeshott (1989) and the tension this presents for the theory of Education Studies being based upon the discipline, especially with low-attaining students.

Elsewhere there is no reference to the issue of the rigours of the disciplines or to their difficulty for students, except in Case 6. Case 6 is interesting in that the disciplines are identified, but there is also an attempt to provide an ‘integrated’ curriculum:

When I came to (Institution name)... I was quite surprised to find that there were other types of modules that weren’t strictly discipline-based; they were quite inter-disciplinary. People took a theme that cut across lots of different disciplines. So, er, I thought that was a revelation to me. So now my feeling of Education is that it’s a field of enquiry that combines both disciplined areas of studies *and* areas of studies that are much more thematic and completely inter-disciplinary.... And this was totally inter-disciplinary: there’s bits of Philosophy there, Sociology, Psychology and there are things that, you know, you almost can’t regard as discipline-based at all; it’s treading new ground. (SL:6A:50).

But there is no attempt to conceal the identity of the disciplines from students as some modules are entitled by discipline and there is a combined approach offering both:

I would say about half the modules could be categorised as clearly having a discipline base with a title like ‘the Sociology of Education’ and I’d say the other half were inter-disciplinary, sort of thematic topic-based (SL6A:52).

Case 6 is a long-standing course and the newer developments have been towards ‘integrated’ modules:

It’s always hard to decide whether something is discipline-based or not, because we tended to move away from strictly calling a module, let’s say, ‘the Philosophy of Education’ (SL6A:54).

Again, a part of the move away from the explicit identification of the disciplines appears to be because of students’ interest and the desire to move away from the old discipline titles. It is not, like Case 2, that the disciplines would seem to be too difficult or ‘frightening’, for students are not perceived as being deterred by the rigours of the disciplines:

Oh, no, definitely not. I mean, I think they’re attracted by that....But I would say erm....that... student choice is really driven by their own personal interests. I think they just look at the course description and they think, ooh, I’m interested in that and I’ll go for it. I don’t think they tend to feel they need to cover modules in particular areas, or that some modules are more worthier than others because they’re discipline or not.... (SL6A:60).

It is that the new ‘integrated’ approach is more attractive, but this is largely a matter of giving modules ‘sexy’ titles:

So sometimes the titles could be sexed up if you like and essentially it’s still a discipline-based course (SL6A:56).

The second Subject Leader in Case 6 acknowledges that some students might be deterred from the disciplines in the module title and would choose others:

Some are put off by it and some are happy to do it. And I suppose... I’m thinking of individual students that we’ve had on the course and some who would have been interested in that side of Education could take a pattern of

modules through the course which allowed them to... and would thrive on it; others would find it difficult. For example, we have a module on Sociology and Education and students who haven't studied Sociology to some degree before they take that would certainly struggle when they do (SL6B:52).

The second Subject Leader sees Education Studies as a subject which 'works across' disciplines:

I think one of the key principles as I see it is the idea that students could work across a series of disciplines (SL6B:4).

But there is uncertainty about the depth of knowledge of the disciplines that students will have:

.... whether you're saying that they're going to come out of a module and they've got a clear grounding in Philosophy, I'm not quite clear whether that's the case (SL:6B:46).

Again, although this slight reservation is expressed, there is no serious discussion of the role of the disciplines and whether they can be said to be 'properly' grasped by Education Studies students.

There is an interesting point made by Subject Leader 5 who mentions to the popularity of Education Studies among students because of it is 'boundariless' quality:

... I think to some of them it's kind of an unbounded subject - an amorphous subject – you don't really necessary have to be particularly prepared to enter it, because everybody thinks they know about education. So I think they felt that they had..... the underpinnings and understandings of knowledge that would enable them to succeed on it.... (SL5A:20).

This suggests that the attraction is that students perceive it as not being bound by the hard knowledge of the disciplines. This makes it an attractively 'easy' subject in students' perceptions.

Case 7 has problems with conceptualising Education Studies in terms of the subject disciplines:

Some people feel that it should be atomised: you know, that you should do modules in the Sociology of Education; some people feel it might be erm more holistic, integrated and so on. What's *our* underpinning for it? I think our underpinning for it is somewhere in the middle there (laughs). Trying to articulate the theoretical underpinning is quite hard because.... and the reason I say that is because I have difficulties with it as discipline-based, but also I have difficulties with it in all the other senses (SL:7:26).

Again, the disciplines are said to be contained within the modules, but not identified as such:

You know, all those things because we want to give the students a clear sense of, if you like, the philosophy and theory that underpins these things – the impact they've had on current and practical developments... and then the wider range. So they would be made very aware of it within the module, but the module isn't called... (SL7:32).

And again there is the reference to integration, but an acknowledgement that there may not be sufficient depth:

... it's balanced and integrated. Now, course the disadvantage of that is that you may not have the opportunity to do the disciplines in depth any more. That's the trade-off of this (SL:7:36).

In Case 9 Psychology is the dominant discipline as a 'strand' throughout:

Well the Psychology is quite a strong element in the Education Studies programme. You know, it comes into the language, the language development modules; it comes into Psychology as a strand, because we've got three years of basic Psychology, you know, so students could come out with a broad understanding of personal development through a psychological process (SL9:26).

There are other disciplines:

Education Studies isn't just psychological. You've got philosophy, you've got historical competence (SL9:28).

But they are aware of the Psychology strand, and not the other disciplines, and Sociology only 'creeps in':

Well, they know they're doing Psychology because it's called 'Psychology'. They know it's Psychology. No, they're not aware that they're doing.... that this is some kind of a sociological element, because it's not called Sociology or anything. I mean, yes, it does creep in and you will say we're looking at a socio-economic this, and whatever (SL9:30).

In Case 3, the disciplines are included, but they are not treated in the 'traditional' manner of naming modules 'Psychology' or 'Sociology'. Instead, the Subject Leader explains, they appear piecemeal as required within modules. Rather than 'creep in', they 'crop up':

Yes, these are cropping up, but not in the traditional sense. So you can identify (tutor name) as the historian, and you can identify (tutor name) as the philosopher, and (tutor name) has philosophical leanings. I'm a jack-of-all-trades. So my origins are in sociology, but I also play about with a bit of the psychology and a bit of philosophy. You see these issues cropping up, and there are modules which it is possible to align to the old subjects, but the majority of them take a bit of a pick-and-mix approach (SL3:14).

However, in contrast with Case 9, there is a carefully studied rationale for this approach. As in Case 1, to treat the disciplines explicitly is seen to 'compartmentalise' knowledge and it is argued that an explicit emphasis on the disciplines would diminish Education as a subject in itself:

... because we don't wish to compartmentalise the knowledge – the information - that we're dealing with in that way. It restricts it, it undermines it and it demeans it. We want the students to deal critically with significant issues in education, and no single discipline would do that effectively. So we tend to work on the whole with a combination of issues, so that we would see Bourdieu and Hegel popping up in the same module.... at level 3..... (SL3:14)

The rationale here for not treating the disciplines in an explicit way appears to be a genuinely academic one based on a notion of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right which the original Subject Leader describes. The problem with the disciplines as explicit elements is the preoccupation with the nature of the disciplines and their own definitions:

I didn't want us to be hamstrung by disciplines' definitions of themselves that prevented us from taking any educational issues in any direction we cared to take it. So I made the decision that we would move away from the disciplines and try and establish the notion of Education as a subject in its own right. I

guess that's the core of what we've tried to do. We've tried to make Education, in the loosest possible sense, a subject that can stand with any other. Now, if you're back in the '60s there was the same kind of debate: whether you had the History of Education, the Sociology, the Philosophy, the Psychology, and Education itself fell through the net (SM3:16).

In fact, as noted in Theme 2, Case 3 includes a strong philosophical element. The decision not to call the course 'the Philosophy of Education' therefore is an interesting one which is based on this strongly-argued rationale for establishing Education Studies as a discipline in its own right. It is the one case which seriously considers the complex nature of employing disciplines without students' enculturation and the necessary critical analysis of the discipline itself. What is peculiar about the case is the paradox of using Philosophy so strongly, yet refusing to identify its name and its methods. It is in contrast to those cases which draw upon a number of disciplines in a limited way and for which there can never be, as in Case 7, any real depth. The students in Case 3 are using Philosophy in a highly informed manner to study Education, but without being consciously aware of doing so:

But actually the disciplines question from a students perspective is in some ways a non-question. When we have discussions with the third years and they're reflecting on the programme and we introduce the idea of the disciplines, we find it's something they don't understand, as students. They have no sense of there being a subject and they have no sense of a traditional or conventional approach to it (SL3:20).

Case 3's approach to the disciplines derives from the idea of Education Studies as a 'discipline' in its own right. This is a theme which runs through the other cases and is discussed next. In none of the other cases is the rationale so clearly made, however.

### **Education Studies as a subject or a discipline**

It is in answering the question about the theoretical framework for Education Studies that some refer to the discussion as to whether it is a subject or a discipline in its own right, or whether it is simply a derivative of other disciplines. The Senior Manager in Case 6 replies that the subject is defined by the six content themes outlined in their course, together with a debate about its existence as a subject. First Education Studies

can be seen as a ‘subject’ because it is a kind of composite that draws upon disciplines:

What’s the academic underpinning for it, I would say that ... it’s in those six themes and I would say that there’s something about Educational Studies that there’s always – quite healthily in a way – going to be an ongoing debate between those who will say, in inverted commas, *merely* an area of study. OK, so it’s not a discipline, it’s an area of study and we investigate contexts, and as we investigate those contexts we draw upon the discipline from other areas (SM6:30).

On the other hand it can now be depicted as a ‘discipline’ because of its salience as a new subject in the academic community and because of its social and economic importance:

Or the other way round to say, actually, because of all these new degree programmes, because it’s such an important thing in the life of the economy and so on and so on and so on, it is becoming an academic discipline in its own right. And that might be very broad and vary like other academic disciplines (SM6:30).

This is justified in comparison with other disciplines which have various theoretical perspectives. History is cited as an example:

You know you get historians in very different schools, etc etc with different skills and insights. *But* it is becoming a discipline in itself now... and I don’t know really; I hedge between one and the other really at times. I think I do see... erm.... I think I do see Educational Studies as being a bit more than an area of study. I think it’s got something (SM6:30).

This is an interesting definition of a discipline which is in contrast with, for example, Becher’s (1989) much tighter definitions which are based on the drawing of boundaries.

The subject leader in Case 7 has also considered the question of Education Studies as a subject or discipline ‘in its own right’, but seems to think that a unique theoretical perspective would be required, and s/he does not articulate this:

I have given a lot of thought as to why it should be considered in those terms: why can't Education Studies be considered a..... You know, where is its own *pure* theoretical underpinning.... as a subject in its own right? (SL726).

The interest in Education Studies as a discipline in its own right seems here to be more of a wish to be fulfilled than an argued position.

Finally, it should be noted that almost all the cases deny any influence of the QAA (2001) Benchmark for Education. Case 3 is typical in saying:

No. We found we match the benchmarks, but that was a retrospective exercise (SL3:60).

None at all, no. I mean, I think we felt we were doing all of them except the maths key skill, which we don't do and we're not going to do. Other than that, they didn't pose a problem for us (SM3:74).

In the English cases, it seems that the QAA Benchmark can safely be ignored. Only in Wales, where there was a general commitment to legislative documents, was there an acknowledgement of its relevance, although even here the actual influence on content is not specified:

I've got the QAA guidelines, the code of practice is on my desk all the time (SL9:14).

The overall conclusion is that Education Studies is weakly theorised across the nine cases, with only occasional instances of a clear definition or rationale. It is notable that cases refer infrequently to models of Education Studies in other institutions. Only Case 4 refers to having looked at other websites, and then what was found was rejected as a model. It would appear, then, that models of the subject have grown independently as the idiosyncratic selections of individuals or particular groups. The fact that there is no effective national pattern, and nothing agreed at the institutional level, means that there is at present little sign of an agreed canon of knowledge for Education Studies. This is consistent with the characterisation of 'postmodern' university knowledge depicted by Lyotard (1984), Readings (1996), Cowen (1996) or Barnett (2000).



## Summary

- 1 There is a high level of uncertainty about the theoretical framework for the subject among Subject Leaders.
- 2 In some cases theory is seen to emerge *post hoc* as a meta-theory after the introduction of module content.
- 3 There is only one case in which a theoretical framework informed the choice of curriculum content and this appears to have been devised by an individual, rather than as a result of combined efforts to define the subject.
- 4 Theoretical frameworks which were suggested emphasised ‘liberalisation’ or ‘emancipation’ from controls or from taken-for-granted assumptions about education.
- 5 All cases referred to the use of the contributory disciplines. However there is a wide range of applications and uncertainty about their role. In some cases the disciplines are explicit for students, in other cases they are not made explicit for various reasons.
- 6 There is concern among some subject leaders about the problem of engaging Education Studies students in the rigours of the subject disciplines, although in many cases this appears not to be viewed as a problem.
- 7 One of the reasons for the avoidance of the explicit use of the disciplines is the reluctance to identify with the discredited teacher training model of the 1960s and 70s. Another is that the disciplines might seem too difficult for students.
- 8 Bernstein’s model of collection and integrated codes apply approximately, with some cases citing a collection of disciplines, while others refer to disciplines being integrated into, or permeating, the curriculum.

- 9 In some cases the disciplines were seen as distraction from the identification of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right.
- 10 In some cases a single discipline dominates the content, usually because of staff interest or expertise.
- 11 There is little expressed awareness of the theoretical problem of students using a variety of disciplines with theoretically defined boundaries and methods.
- 12 The QAA Benchmark plays no significant role, other than in the Welsh example where there is a general commitment to all legislative documents.
- 13 Education Studies is weakly defined across the nine cases. It has developed independently and idiosyncratically in different institutions and there is little that could be described as an agreed canon of knowledge for the subject.

### **Theme 5: The vocational aims of Education Studies**

This theme examines interviewees' perceptions of the vocational aims for Education Studies. It is treated as a separate topic, although of course it is closely related to Theme 4 on theoretical frameworks. It also revisits elements of Theme 1 which considers the extent to which the Education Studies curriculum is determined by the contingency of former or concurrent courses. For example, Case 7 was derived very closely from a former QTS course, whereas Case 4 defined the subject as being highly differentiated from a concurrent undergraduate QTS course. This theme is intended to explore more closely interviewees' thinking about the vocational aims for Education Studies beyond the simple contingency of similarity to, or distinction from, another course.

There are three dimensions to this question:

- 1 the extent to which Education Studies is viewed as the preparation for initial teacher training
- 2 how it is seen in relation to the other forms of employment market and the current job market for education
- 3 the extent to which it is viewed as a university subject independent of employment

Bernstein's (1975) theory on the nature of the curriculum in relation to vocational outcomes is considered in discussing the data.

#### **Teacher training as a vocational outcome**

With the exception of Case 7 in which the course was derived from a teacher-training course and included an assessed teaching practice, a strong theme running through the interviews is the attempt to define Education Studies as distinct from teacher training. Even Case 7 was about to be changed in that a new subject leader had been appointed to modify the course away from teacher training. Theme 1 gathers the evidence for the distinction from teacher training. In this theme it will be shown that, in some cases, this desire to dissociate the subject completely from teacher training appears to extend to the tendency not to wish to identify it as a means of preparing students for entry to

teacher training.

Case 1 gives a rationale for distinguishing Education Studies from teacher training, explaining that it is a matter of breadth: education should be seen as broader than teaching because of its economic and political impact:

I argue that I see Education Studies as viewing education in its widest context. It's about educational policy. Education Studies has come out of the classroom in some respects and was dominated by the needs of teachers, because I think education's wider than that, and in that sense, how I view it is as an industry; I mean this is a reasonable size commercial enterprise..... it's a business (SL1:23).

Breadth is also the rationale in Case 4:

Well, obviously, it's looking at education in absolutely its widest interpretation... it's breaking down those barriers of what education actually *means* (SL4A:16).

In Case 1 it should also offer the critique which does not exist in teacher training:

...because I don't see there's a critique of government policy at the moment. There's moans and groans and half-hearted attempts at industrial action by a few teachers, but there's no systematic, high profile critique.... Ted Wragg is the only person who contends..... but even then his critiques are only located within the classroom. It's not that overview of education in the wider context. He doesn't talk about FE and he doesn't talk about other non-mainstream providers and so on. He doesn't talk about universities and how it impinges on him. So there's huge areas and it's school focus all the time. So there's no lecturer's perspective (SL1:23).

Here the notion of status is introduced. The intention is to define Education Studies as an academic subject with status, and it loses its status if it is seen simply as a route into teaching:

I think it has to have some sort of status and if you start to say it's a sort of ITT route, then that's not good (SL1:27).

However, there appears to be some ambiguity here. For, although the intention is strongly to differentiate Education Studies from teacher training, there is an admission that it does depend on students being able to progress to teacher training:

And students come on it who want to get into teaching (SL1:23).

If we said that you couldn't get into teaching from it we wouldn't recruit (SL:1:25).

This appears to be a contradiction: the subject is denied as a route into teaching in order to give it academic status; however, it is argued that it provides the critique which intending teachers will not receive on a teacher-training course. In fact it is not a contradiction because the subject can indeed prepare students for teacher training by providing a critique. However, the Subject Leader's desire to minimise the relationship to teacher training means that this is not clearly articulated.

Asked about the effect of the TDA Standards on the curriculum, Subject Leader 1 replies:

No, definitely not.

However, there is curriculum content which is appropriate for future teachers about children's learning in mathematics:

On the other hand I wouldn't want to say that it has been totally excluded. I mean we do have modules on how children learn mathematics. *But*, those are from the perspective of the process of how children learn mathematics; it's not about how to teach the National Numeracy Strategy; it's not how to do a good mathematics lesson; it is about how young children develop ideas and experiences and how you develop mathematical thinking and draw on the work of people like Skemp and Bruner and God knows who else, as well as the American stuff (SL1:77).

What is seen here, then, is some contradiction between the stated aim of clear distinction from teacher training and the more reflective thinking which acknowledges the role of the subject for future teachers. It would appear, though, that the priority of disclaiming the relationship to teaching dominates the thinking.

One of the notions about the relationship between the subject and teaching is that students are able to make an informed decision about their intention to teach. In Case 2:

I think some of them were quite glad of the opportunity to test out what it's like to be in school either during the course of this programme or getting jobs as teaching assistants before they go, 'oh this is for me, I'll apply for a PG', or 'no, I'm really not going to be able to stand this'. But at least they've ended up with a degree which is an academic degree.... and we might have equipped them to... (SL2A:69)

And Education Studies can dissuade students from entering teaching. Some who originally intended to teach are deterred by the perceptions of the job gained through their studies:

But we've had people interestingly..... In fact, we've had one person who came onto the programme, wanted to teach, was desperately unhappy that she hadn't got onto the teacher-training course, but as a result of having gone into schools and into classrooms said, 'I don't want to teach now; I know what they *do*! (SL:2A:65).

This is interesting in the way that the critique which Education Studies provides can, in itself, be a deterrent to future teaching careers in the way that it raises ideological issues on which students may take a position. The strong sociological element in Case 2 might be a source of this particular effect.

### **Other vocational aims**

All the Cases refer to alternative vocational aims for Education Studies other than teaching, although there is uncertainty about what the specific posts might be. Some actually state that they have not considered the employment of graduates. Other have considered alternative careers. This section takes the analysis of perceived career outcomes beginning with the limited view and moving gradually through to those cases with a more considered version of employability for Education Studies graduates.

Asked about other vocational outcomes, the Case 1 Subject Leader appears uncertain and cites only the general skills for any employment in an education-related post:

(Hesitates) Erm, I haven't got any..... I should have thought about that..... If you look at it as an industry with diverse roles and so on with diverse

providers, factors that are involved in this huge thing called ‘education’, then I see it as that we need to equip people working with critical thinking, with the ability to have some knowledge and understanding of education processes, have some basic skills to hold down a job (SL1:81).

In Case 2:

And some who’ve gone into other fields and said you might want to go into careers that are allied to education, maybe library work or other kinds of work and so..... I’m not on top of..... I haven’t involved myself in an audit trail to find destinations (SL2:65).

While Case 3 defines the subject most strongly dissociated from teacher training, the only response to the question about vocational outcomes is in terms of teaching:

I think they’re being thoughtful, informed teachers.... (SL3:58).

In Case 7 the course has been seen as a preparation for teaching, but the new Subject Leader sees the subject more broadly and again, like Case 5, there is the perceived shift in students’ career ambitions:

But we’ve noticed recently there’s a slight trend in the last few years for students at the end of the course not to.... to not want to go into teaching. So we’re beginning to see some shifts. And I think erm.... one of the things I’m hoping – one of my own personal hopes for the course – is that, while we don’t lose sight of that focus - because that’s what the (institution) is – I’d like to see students come in to do the course for different reasons and I’d like to see them leave and go on to do different things (SL7:102).

The alternatives, though, are not specified and are uncertain:

And I’m not quite sure what I’d like that balance to be, but I’d like to see that change curl back (SL7:102).

Case 6 suggests some thinking behind the subject as non-teacher training:

So my view was there was actually now a massive field of knowledge about educational ideas and issues and practices that could underpin a university degree. In other words, the field of education had actually grown as a subject area that went well beyond simply servicing teacher-training courses (SL6A:2),

although the suggested career definitions are rather limited:

... maybe the Youth Service, probation work, working in a school library, working in educational administration, going into educational research (SL:6A:2).

In some cases there is a more considered view of the non-teaching vocational outcomes. In Case 4 the Subject Leader has planned the subject for career outcomes other than teaching. The structure of the course includes a one-semester placement in a non-school organisation which has contacted potential future employers:

Oh, definitely. And I did do quite a lot of ‘phoning of organisations to say, would you be interested in these sorts of people who’ve done this sort of a degree, with this sort of background and would they be the sort of people you’d think of? (SL4A:132)

S/he is able confidently to list some possible career outcomes:

Libraries, museum service, art galleries, working in education offices, those sorts of things; working in education departments of all sorts of NGOs; community work, social services in some contexts... (SL4A:130).

The Senior Manager in Case 4 also makes a hesitant reference to the government’s *Every Child Matters* agenda, although its implications are not specified:

I suppose, the underlying agenda is the concept of Every Child Matters, and, you know, that people..... there will be people needed to understand and be able to be effective in an educative setting, wherever that may be.

Case 5 is interesting in that, while it is acknowledged that students come to Education Studies with a view to teaching as a career, the subject is successful in broadening their views of the vocational possibilities and there is reference to the way a specific module might inform career destinations:

.... a significant number have come forward to me to say they were thinking seriously about teaching at the point of entry, and actually through what we’ve done, we’ve broadened their concepts of .... how education can be used outside that narrow framework and actually they’re looking at all sorts of different things and so, for example, the module on the health economy as that



operates several students have come forward to me to talk about how education can be used through.... (SL5B:109)

There is a considered view of the destinations for graduates and the way Education Studies supports them:

I also think that there are vocational drivers in this which the Education Studies underpins. If we look at some of the options that they've got – Sport, Business Studies, IT and so forth... if they're going to go into business – the fact that they've got some educational background, that they can look at training, they can look at.... they can look at it as a valuable sort of underpinning of whatever the core vocational route is as well (SL5B:21).

However, none of the English institutions cites employability as one of the aims of the subject. This is in contrast with Case 9 in Wales in which employability is cited as a high priority for the institution itself:

Well, one of the priorities for this (institution)... was the employability of students (SM9:34).

Here the aims for the subject are conceived in terms of preparing graduates for non-teaching employment:

Our main focus isn't to train teachers from Education Studies. Our main focus is to make them employable in other fields as well (SL9:20).

Yes, it's all preparation. We want to prepare our students to be employable. It's all to do with employability in the long run, isn't it? And we're trying to work with the students now with the PDPs that are coming in now. We sort of build that into the programme as well. And (Tutor name)'s been instrumental in preparing a module particularly when they come to us first so that we start them off looking at what they do and then reflecting, which is a major part of the Education Studies programme (SL9:8).

And there is a confident statement of the opportunities in the re-modelled school workforce:

...there are so many education officers out there now that are not teachers anyway, so it's a wonderful programme for people to go out to do other things... We've got education officers in places like (Place name) and, you know, it's a wealth of experience: people who can be within a field of

education, but not necessarily wanting to go into teaching (SL9:4).

And there is a view of Education Studies fulfilling the employment opportunities of lifelong learning and this is built into the placement opportunities in the course:

... because the Education Studies looks from cradle to grave – we work a lot with adult learners – any placement opportunities the students get they're encouraged to not just look at one institution like a school – they can go to a school if they want to – but the next time you try to encourage them to get out there and work with adults or go somewhere else; go to one of the family centres (SL9:6).

As noted in Theme 2, this employment-related approach is part of the institution's commitment to government priorities for Wales. The expression of the aims of the subject in terms of employability, rather than as academic aims, conforms with the government agenda for performativity in higher education, as noted by Barnett (2000). The response to government priorities is also evident in the references to the development of the re-modelled workforce for schools with additional posts for teaching assistants and in care roles.

Apart from the hesitant reference to *Every Child Matters* in Case 4, the Welsh institution is in strong contrast to all the English cases in which the subject tends to be defined in terms of the critique of government policy or, more strongly, as the resistance to government policy on teacher training. The Welsh case also makes graduate employability an aim for the subject, in contrast with the English institutions in which Education Studies is depicted as an academic subject, free of the TDA standards and thus free of employability and performativity criteria.

### **Academic models and vocational outcomes**

Bernstein's (1975) paper on the relations between education and modes of production, outlined in Chapter 3, is relevant to the theory of the analysis of the vocational outcomes in Education Studies. Bernstein proposes of the secondary school curriculum that the high status, middle class grammar school curriculum is strongly classified by separate subjects and strongly framed, with clear definitions of non-negotiable content. This curriculum, he argues, is 'autonomous' and not related to employment outcomes. On the other hand, the working class secondary school

curriculum is more likely to be integrated - weakly classified – and less strongly framed in the sense that it is more likely to be negotiable with students. This curriculum, he argues, is more directly related to employment outcomes.

The data in Theme 4 on the theoretical frameworks show that institutions differentially depict their Education Studies curriculum as strongly or weakly classified through the foundation subjects of Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy of Education. They also vary in the extent to which they are ‘framed’ by the extent of choice of modules and response to the student market. In Theme 2 it is also shown that there are differentials in self-depicted status that some depict themselves as high status and academic, where others are characterised as being populated by low-achievers and of lower status than undergraduate teacher-training courses.

Also, as shown in this theme, there are differences in the extent to which institutions see the subject as relevant to employment outcomes, with some seeing the subject as a preparation for teacher training, some as a preparation for non-teacher-training outcomes and others seeing little or no relevance of the subject to vocational outcomes of any kind. The following lists the approximate types:

- strong classification through the subject disciplines;
- weak classification with no reference to disciplines or integration of discipline;
- strong framing of content with little or no choice of modules;
- weak framing of content with wide choice of modules;
- subject as high status and academic;
- subject as low status or for widening participation.

The data approximately conform to Bernstein’s depiction of strongly classified curriculum codes being autonomous and unrelated to career destination, where the weakly classified, integrated codes are strongly career oriented. It also complies with Bernstein’s depiction of the social class dimension, with the collection code as middle class and the integrated code as working class.

These can be summarised in the following table:

Pattern A	Pattern B
Strong classification through subject disciplines	Weak classification no disciplines or integration of disciplines
Strong framing with little choices	Weak framing with wide module choices
Autonomous with little career orientation	Strong career orientation in teacher training or others
Middle class orientation	Working class or widening participation orientation
High intellectual aspiration	Low intellectual aspiration

Cases 3 and 5 illustrate Pattern A. Both have a strongly classified curriculum in the sense of a strong dependence on the subject disciplines, albeit that for reasons explained in Theme 4, a single discipline tends to dominate in each case. They both have a strongly framed curriculum with little student choice of modules, despite their being large enough to accommodate choice. They both depict the subject as being of high academic status in relation to undergraduate QTS courses. Both cases have a weak account of vocational outcomes and represent Bernstein’s model of an autonomous curriculum unrelated to vocations.

In Case 3 Education Studies is described as unrelated and highly distinct from teaching and teacher training, yet in response to the question about vocational outcomes the reply relates only to future teachers and there is no reference to any non-teacher training outcome

I think they’re being thoughtful, informed teachers.... We have an uplifting statement in our prospectus which says we want you to make positive changes in whatever you do (SL3:58).

Apart from general moral uplift, then, there is no attempt to describe either content or skills which relate to employment.

Case 8 is more complex. The Senior Manager, asked about the theoretical framework, does make some reference to general employment in education:

... learning – education and learning – in an economy such as Britain is becoming a more ubiquitous area of social life and one would expect in the long run for it to become increasingly important service industry for employment and one would therefore expect a steady supply of students who are motivated by a number of things. They're interested in working with young people, they're attracted to the professional characteristics of teaching or teaching-related work as a career, and education and learning... (SM8:38).

But there is an interesting reservation to this reference to a Kantian notion of university knowledge and culture:

... for as far forward as one can see, will be a key dimension both of prosperity, but also of national aspiration and culture. This may sound a bit grandiose, but I think it is a social movement (SM8:38).

And the notion of high status, elite provision is inherent:

And, therefore, it was *very* broad-brush. The assumption was that this was a field that would develop strong undergraduate programmes over the next fifteen years and you should be in fairly early on, and as the market matures then the leading providers would rise to the surface in various ways (SM8:38).

The status of the institution and its students is the prevalent concept. The Subject Leader has only imprecise notions about careers:

Erm, well we see them as going into things like.... well going into museums, erm, other educational environments. For example, my (partner), ... works for (local organisation), but somebody who's done an Education Studies degree could actually go in and be an education officer there, because they would have an insight into the sorts of things that would be relevant. Yes, so there are other outlets within education, and also public administration. I think we had one student who said she was going to be a midwife; I'm not quite sure where that comes from (SL8A:114).

Strong classification through the subject disciplines appears to be commensurate with a weak vocational orientation. Education Studies is 'for its own sake', not for teacher training or for any other career, but for the student's own learning. In so far as it is a preparation for a vocational outcome, it is seen as the traditional model of a degree being a preparation for *any*, rather than some specifiable, career. Education Studies is

seen much more an intellectual activity for its own sake than for employment preparation.

Examples of the contrasting, the Pattern B cases follow. Case 4 has a low level of reliance on the disciplines and depicts Education Studies as inferior to teacher training. The course, as shown above, is based on employability and careers other than teaching.

Case 7, as a form of teacher training course, is low on the classification of the disciplines and high on its vocational outcomes for teaching.

Case 6 has a weakly framed curriculum with a wide range of modules and sees the subject as for widening participation. It fits the pattern in having a relatively strong account of vocational aims.

Some cases only partially fit the pattern. Case 5 depicts the subject as for low-qualified and widening participation students and held a stronger view of the vocational aims for the course. To this extent it fits the pattern, although it had a relatively strongly classified curriculum with modules with different subjects.

Similarly, Case 1 has an explicitly integrated curriculum of disciplines and perceives its students as being among the lower qualified who don't achieve the QTS degree. It would belong to pattern B, but does not quite fit because it had a low perception of vocational outcomes and had high academic aspirations for the course. So this case is something of a mixture of the two patterns.

The following table gives an approximate summary of this effect showing particular instances of high levels of each variable. The pattern described above can be detected, although there is a far from perfect fit. For example, Case 5, while it is depicted as low status and has the corresponding high emphasis on vocational outcomes, it has a relatively high reference to classified disciplines, which does not fit the pattern.

Case	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
High status			*	*				*	
Low status		*		*	*				
Strongly classified disciplines			*		*				*
Weak or integrated disciplines	*	*		*		*			
Strongly framed			*					*	
Weakly framed						*			*
High vocational outcomes	*			*	*		*		*
Low vocational outcomes			*					*	

Bernstein’s theory of curriculum and production, then, can be seen partly to inform the analysis of the data and gives some indication of the perceived links or discontinuities between the academic structure and vocational outcomes.

**Summary**

- 1 There is a universal attempt to define Education Studies as distinct and differentiated from the teacher-training curriculum. This appears to derive from the aversion of individuals to the government-controlled teacher training agenda.
- 2 In defining the subject as distinct from teacher training, the rationale is frequently offered that Education Studies should deal with the broader issues than the curriculum for teacher training.
- 3 In some cases the strong definition away from the teacher-training curriculum appears to lead to the view that the subject should not even be seen as a preparation for teacher training.
- 4 While Education Studies is usually defined as not preparing students for teacher training, it is acknowledged by subject leaders that students themselves perceive it as a route into teaching.

- 5 The distinction from teacher training, and the suggested links, are complex and depend on normative views of teacher training. Sometimes Education Studies is seen to provide the theoretical critique missing from teacher training. However, the critique of education might deter some students from a teaching career, particularly where there is a strong sociological emphasis.
- 6 Vocational outcomes are not generally seen as the aim of the subject. Only one case in England had made graduate employment a principle aim for the course. The tendency is to try to depict Education Studies as an essentialist academic subject without vocational aims.
- 7 While Education Studies is frequently defined as not preparing students for teacher training, subject leaders are generally uncertain about alternative careers for graduates.
- 8 The Welsh case is strongly committed to careers for students in the re-modelled school workforce, but this was partly a function of the institution's commitment to national government policy.
- 9 The emphasis on non-vocational aims for the course, particularly in England, might be a function of the impetus from teacher training which makes course leaders tend to want to define the subject as a pure academic enterprise.
- 10 The pattern of response approximately reflects Bernstein's (1975) proposals that a high-status, classified curriculum tends to be seen as autonomous and unrelated to vocational outcomes. Those teaching low status courses with an integrated curriculum, or less strongly defined disciplines, tend to have a stronger view of vocational outcomes as the aim of the subject.



## Section 6: Summary of the findings from the analysis of interviews

This section provides an overall summary of the findings from the analysis of the interviews under each of the five main headings:

- 1 Relationship to antecedent and concurrent ITT courses;
- 2 Institutional factors and the higher education market;
- 3 Staffing effects;
- 4 Theoretical frameworks and the contributory disciplines;
- 5 Vocational aims for Education Studies.

The text is intended to provide a transparent overview of the findings, free from detailed references to the interview data which occur in the earlier chapters. In order to preserve its value as a simplified summary, it includes minimal references to theoretical literature. Further discussion of the findings and their relationship to the background literature are included in Chapter 8.

Under each of the headings a number of characteristics are identified and the occurrences of these are indicated in Table 3 (page 254). The table gives only an indication of the noted occurrence of each feature; it does not indicate the strength or intensity of any occurrence. The categories are not always mutually exclusive: for example, in Case 1 the Education Studies was initiated by an individual, but there was also an institutional initiative and so both categories are scored. In Case 2 the initiative was more strongly that of the individual, and so only the individual row is scored. In some instances there is no score on a particular feature because it is not noted in the data. For example, Case 9 did not express a view about the status of its Education Studies course in relation to teacher training. The table then should be taken only as a simple overview of the features which are noted in the interview analysis.

Table 3: Occurrences of features in the data										
	Features	Cases								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Curriculum determined by antecedent ITT course							*		
2	Strong link to teacher training							*		
3	Soft link to teacher training	*				*	*			*
4	Negative to teacher training		*	*	*					
5	Concurrent undergraduate teacher training course exists	*	*	*	*	*				*
6	Education Studies as an institutional initiative	*		*			*	*		*
7	Education Studies as an individual's initiative	*	*			*			*	
8	Curriculum determined by individual's interest or competence	*	*	*	*				*	*
9	Curriculum determined by general staff interest or competence							*		*
10	Seen as lower status than QTS course	*	*		*	*				
11	Seen as higher status than QTS courses			*					*	
12	Seen as lower status than other subject in the institution						*		*	
13	Education Studies seen as widening participation					*	*			*
14	Responsive to the student market	*	*				*		*	
15	Resistance to the student market			*					*	
16	Compliance with government policy									*
17	Critique of government policy	*	*	*		*	*			
18	Uncertainty about theory explicitly expressed	*			*	*	*		*	
19	Module content and post-hoc theory				*		*		*	
20	Cited disciplines as the theory		*	*			*		*	*
21	Theoretical framework clearly articulated			*						
22	Strongly classified by disciplines - collection			*		*			*	
23	Weakly classified by disciplines - integrated	*					*			
24	Dominated by a single discipline		*	*					*	*
25	Disciplines not made explicit							*		
26	Curriculum strongly framed			*					*	
27	Curriculum weakly framed	*			*	*	*			*
28	Education Studies defined as a discipline in its own right	*		*			*			
29	Disciplines not made explicit: Education as a discipline	*		*						
30	Disciplines perceived as the theoretical framework	*	*	*	*		*		*	
31	Refer to disciplines, but don't cite them as the framework					*				
32	Disciplines perceived as rigorous and difficult		*					*		
33	Disciplines perceived as 'old fashioned'				*		*			
34	Education Studies prepares for ITT									
35	Education Studies as breadth	*			*					
36	Education Studies depicted as high status and academic			*					*	
37	Reference to non-teacher training vocations		*		*	*				*
38	Education Studies depicted as low status and vocational		*		*	*				*

## **1 Relationship to antecedent and concurrent teacher training courses**

This section examines the ways in which the subject is defined by its relationship to teacher training or, conversely, in its definition as distinct from teacher training. Only one of the courses (Case 7) had been derived directly from, and replaced, an undergraduate primary teacher-training course and that gave an example of Education Studies which is very closely related to teacher training by including a high level of primary school curriculum content and an assessed teaching practice. This can be seen to be the direct effect of converting an undergraduate QTS degree into Education Studies with the same staffing. The limiting effect of staffing is also noted in the analysis of staffing effects in Theme 5. However, at the time of the data collection, Case 7 was amending its programme to move away from its teacher training content and this reflects the overwhelming characteristics of all the other provision. The other eight cases all, to a greater or lesser degree, see the Education Studies programme as distinct from teacher training and the definitions in some cases are strongly marked by opposition to, or resistance to, teacher training by individuals. The pattern of effects is multiple and complex in the way interviewees express the definitions.

The cases in which the definition is most strongly distinguished from teacher training is where there is a concurrent undergraduate teacher-training course in the same institution. In these cases there appears to be a need at the faculty level to define Education Studies as distinct from teacher training and it is less likely to be depicted as a precursor to PGCE teacher training. Subject Leaders seem anxious to create an autonomous academic subject without reference to its historical teacher-training origins or to its vocational outcomes. None of these subject leaders referred to progression to teacher training as an aim of the subject. This is a somewhat paradoxical situation in which the institutional proximity to teacher training makes for a definition which is highly distinct from it. In the cases where there is no concurrent undergraduate QTS course, then Subject Leaders were more ready to acknowledge teacher training as a possible career progression. The strongest of the 'antithetical' cases is Case 4 which had conceived its Education Studies programme as exclusively for those not intending to teach, and had actually refused applicants to the first cohort who indicated that they wished to pursue a career in teaching. The fact that it had to revise this policy and take students who wanted to enter teaching is symptomatic of

the over-definition of Education Studies as unrelated to teacher training. Case 4 is one of the strongest of the antithetical models, the theme which runs throughout the data.

Where there is no consecutive QTS course in the institution, as in Case 6, interviewees were more open to the notion of the subject preparing students for teacher training. The strength of this factor is emphasised by Case 7 where the course was the most strongly related to teacher training and with no concurrent QTS course. However, the fact that they had recently introduced a three-year BEd QTS course had impelled them to revise the Education Studies away from teacher training.

Another reason for the dissociation from teacher training expressed by Case 4 is the need not to encroach upon teacher training placements in schools. This had the effect of barring students from access to schools and defining the content as concerned with any education in the community other than schooling.

A stronger motivation for the non-teaching approach to Education Studies, though, appears to be the ideological one of creating a subject liberated from the constraints of state-governed teacher training. This is a feature which emerges in the section on the effect of staffing and individuals' career intentions, but it also occurs here as an idealistic aim of resisting government intervention and freeing staff and students from the compliance culture of teacher training.

Another factor is the relative status of Education Studies and undergraduate QTS courses. In cases 2, 4 and 5, Education Studies is perceived as an option for those who are not successful in accessing the QTS course in the same institution and the subject is therefore perceived as low status. Again, this appears to be a function of the co-existence of Education Studies and an undergraduate QTS course because it also means that those students who do not get onto QTS see Education Studies as a possible route into teaching via a PGCE. Case 3 is an exception where there is a concurrent QTS course, but the Education Studies has been strongly intellectualised with a strong philosophical base and its leaders perceive it as of high academic status. In Case 3 all the data came from those directly involved with the Education Studies programme and there is no evidence from the senior management of the faculty who

might have offered a different view. However, it does demonstrate that it is possible for a course to be created which is perceived as high status by its tutors.

Where there is no concurrent undergraduate QTS course, in Cases 6 and 8, then the question of the relative status of Education Studies and QTS courses is not mentioned. In both cases, however, there are references to the lower status of Education Studies in relation to other traditional subjects in the institution.

Case 9 in Wales is another exception to this pattern in that, while it had a concurrent undergraduate QTS course, it did not perceive Education Studies as low status. Instead, Education Studies was seen as a part of the institution's overall mission to meet Welsh Government targets for non-teacher training undergraduates. The proximity of the institution's philosophy to the political thinking in Wales is a significant feature throughout.

Of the four institutions which had retained an undergraduate QTS course, the reasons for not changing to a 3+1 model were largely desire to preserve the successful *status quo*, not to take risks and to keep the provision for the element of the market that wished for it. One case would prefer to change in order to give more flexibility of staffing, but believed that it would be difficult to persuade staff.

## **2 Institutional factors and the higher education market**

There are strong market factors affecting the development of Education Studies. These affect first the existence of the subject in the institution's profile and second the content of the subject.

At the present time, Education Studies has a strong market presence and there is evidence that institutions have decided to include the subject because it has popular appeal in the market and will attract student numbers, rather than for any academic rationale for the existence of the subject. This operates at both the institutional and the faculty levels. The university agrees to the subject to increase its overall student number (Case 5) and the faculty agrees to it because it can attract numbers in competition with other faculties (Case 1). In some instances, for example Case 8, the

policy is a highly deliberative attempt to balance the faculty's finances against high cost teacher-training provision. There is, then, a strong market impetus in that some institutions appear to be doing it because others are, and they need to keep up: Case 3, Case 8. Again, there is relatively little consideration of the academic rationale or the employability rationale. The thinking appears to be: 'it's out there; it will give us numbers; we must do it'. Case 8 had a more deliberative approach and saw Education Studies as a means of attracting young and research-active staff into the Faculty in order to enhance its academic reputation, both nationally and within the institution.

There has been uncertainty about the market for Education Studies and the strength of the market growth in recent years has been a matter of surprise to some institutions. Case 5 found it had over-recruited its first cohort by a multiple of five and Case 8 came late into the subject because it had been uncertain about the market. Others, such as Case 1, had predicted the increase on the basis of the rising popularity of primary teacher training and the reduction in TDA allocations for primary teacher training. So, as Case 2 put it, Education Studies can be seen to be 'taking up the slack' of those students who wish to be teachers. The fact that some of the Education Studies population is the slack from the teacher training recruits makes the resistance to Education Studies as a preparation for teacher training especially contradictory.

Cases 2, 4 and 5 see Education Studies as a vehicle for academically weaker students, providing the institution or the faculty with the opportunity to increase recruitment among this sector of the population. This is in sharp contrast to Cases 3 and 8 who emphasise a strong academic role for Education Studies and are seeking highly qualified and high-attaining students. There is also a distinction between Cases 2 and 5: Case 2 identified its students as weak and held low expectations of them. Case 5, on the other hand, had a perception of weak students who later achieve.

Another factor operating at the institutional level is that Education Studies is seen by some as a means of fulfilling targets for widening participation, offering opportunities to less-qualified or mature students. This is, of course, related to the status question and is part of the perception of Education Studies being for those who are under-qualified for teacher training. It was strongly identified by Case 5 and associated with their need to recruit large numbers to fill their HEFCE allocated student total. In Case

5 this widening participation view is also associated with the view of Education Studies as a less challenging subject ‘without boundaries’ and lacking in the demands of the traditional disciplines. This is further discussed in the section on academic frameworks and subject disciplines. Case 6, however, had no particular need to increase student numbers and perceived widening participation as an ideological matter and in compliance with government targets for the institution.

The picture in English institutions is entry to the Education Studies market with minimal academic rationale. In contrast, the Welsh institution gave an account of a strategic initiative to counter the reductions in teacher training in Wales. This was a strongly argued institutional strategy which was derived in spite of opposition from other subjects in the institution. This strategic direction is symptomatic of the Welsh institution’s awareness of, and compliance with, government policy within the principality.

In the English cases the institutional decision-making appears to be highly influenced by individuals and in the interview data there is little evidence of a debate or the outcome of an institutional decision-making process. The subject simply appears because there are sufficient student numbers and it looks attractive to the market. It does not appear to have to be argued against any coherent challenge or critique, as in the Welsh case.

The market also affects the content of the subject in terms of students’ module choices. Here there is variation in the responsiveness to the market. Some institutions, such as Case 4, had such a small cohort that choice of modules was not possible. However, others were able to offer choices and there is evidence of the content of modules being affected by student demand. In some cases though, and particularly in Case 3, there is a strong resistance to market demands in the bid to maintain high academic standards. Students are told what is on offer at the open day and advised not to come if they do not like it. This is also reflected in Case 8 and appears to be a characteristic of those institutions which perceive Education Studies as the pursuit of high academic standards.

### 3 The effects of staffing on the Education Studies curriculum

While the market affects institutional decisions about the subject, the career trajectories and interests of individuals proves to be a powerful force, both upon the decision to run Education Studies and upon the content of the curriculum. In Cases 1, 2 and 8 the subject appears to have been initiated by an individual and then taken up by the institution. Of course, it is impossible for an individual to institute a subject single-handedly in a university. However, it would appear in the three cases that it was the individual's initiative which was then responded to by a dean at the faculty level. The fact that this is possible again highlights the low level of strategic institutional interest in the academic curriculum as long as it recruits student numbers, as shown in section 2.

In other cases, for example Case 3, the decision to include the subject is an institutional one, but the content is entirely determined by an individual and his/her academic preferences. Case 3 is notable in this sense because the curriculum chosen is so highly distinctive in its dependence on European idealist philosophy. A very different, but again idiosyncratic, curriculum is selected in Case 4 by a Subject Leader who was a Geography tutor and determined the content to be concerned with education in the local community and 'a sense of place'. These two cases are remarkable because of the particularly individualistic curriculum content. However, even where the curriculum content is less distinctive, it was still initially selected by an individual in six of the nine cases. In some cases the curriculum was said to have developed and moved away from the individual's particular predilection, particularly in Case 8, for example. In Case 7 the curriculum, which is essentially the primary curriculum and teaching, is determined by the collective expertise of the group of individuals teaching the course. However, this degree of dominance of an individual is a remarkable finding in that it reflects, again, the lack of institutional, or even faculty, academic rationale for the subject. The comment that the institution's position on the academic content is one of 'benign indifference' seems apt and significant.

One factor in creating this power of individual interest is the vacuum created by the lack of institutional or faculty academic strategy. However, there are others. One of the features is the need for individual staff to create a subject which they can teach



having been made redundant, or disaffected, by the introduction of the TDA standards and the demise of the subject disciplines in teacher training. So in Case 2, for example, a tutor describes him/herself as a 'social scientist' no longer able to teach sociology in the teacher-training programme. There is a powerful dynamic to create a subject to employ this knowledge. This is the reason both for Case 2 developing the subject and for its being essentially sociological in content and method.

Case 2 is a particularly strong example. However, other cases are similarly affected: Case 4 created Education Studies to re-deploy a group of redundant sociologists. And there is a strong ideological dynamic to create a subject for the study of Education which is both exempt from government control and which also provides a critique of the compliance culture of teacher training and government policy in education generally. For example, Cases 1,3 ,5 and 6 also make the case for Education Studies as the critique of education. These features can be seen as the effect of individuals' ideological views of education. But it is more than that: it is also a result in some cases of their particular experience of finding themselves in the increasing grip of government controls of knowledge in teacher training. It is perhaps not too much to say that the formation of Education Studies is a symbol of resistance to government control. This would also account for the strong resistance noted above to the definition of Education Studies as related to teacher training. In the flight from teacher training the ambition is to leave it as far behind them as possible.

An interesting feature of the data is that the notion of a curriculum created on the basis of the contingent knowledge or expertise of an individual, or a collection of individuals, is not regarded as problematical. In Case 3, although it is a highly deliberative curriculum with considerable theoretical underpinning, the fact that it derives so exclusively from the thinking of a single individual is celebrated rather than criticised. In Case 8 there is some reflective criticism of the way that the curriculum was devised contingently by a group of individuals. In only one instance, Case 6, has it been treated as an issue in curriculum planning that there ought to be some underlying academic principle for deriving the curriculum, other than simply the content which individuals happen to be able to teach. It is interesting to note that, in a subject which includes the study of the curriculum and the nature and definition of

knowledge, there should be such little consideration of the problem of who devises its own curriculum and on what principles selection of content is made.

The powerful effect of individuals might also be a product of the lack of any national agreement about the nature of the subject. For example, the QAA (2001) Benchmark for Education is weak in its definitions and, as shown in Section 4, has had no effect upon the curriculum. This must lead to the conclusion that the subject is under-theorised and this is further revealed in Section 4.

#### **4 Theoretical frameworks**

The responses to questions about the theoretical framework for Education Studies confirm the proposition that the subject is currently under-theorised. Most of the interviewees responded anxiously or with difficulty to the direct question about the theoretical framework. Only in Case 3 and with the Senior Manager in Case 1 was there a coherent attempt to address it and for the rest it produced confusion and uncertainty.

The picture appears to be that in most cases there was no prior theoretical framework which informed the curriculum selection and several referred to a *post hoc* notion of theory that would later emerge, or is currently emerging, after the content of the courses is already decided. It seems to be accepted that a minimal conceptualisation of the subject is required in advance of planning the content of modules. In these cases any framework is seen as a form of meta-theory, rather than one which informs the development of the subject or its choice of curriculum content.

Theoretical frameworks have evidently not played a significant role in the planning and validation of courses. Knowledge seems to be taken for granted and it is interesting that a theoretical framework appears not to have been a requirement of the validation process. A course can be produced with its content in terms of modules, but without an analysis of its theoretical aims. This might be seen to be a function of the QAA emphasis on ‘skills’, so that there is no proper articulation of what the theory of knowledge is, and confirms Barnett’s (2005) complaint about the lack of curriculum

theory and Readings's (1996) claim about the collapse of knowledge in universities.

There are two examples of argued theoretical frameworks. Case 1 sees Education Studies as a collection of knowledge and skills which enable critique of education. Case 3 sees Education Studies as reflection on educational processes. Both refer to the notions of 'emancipation' or 'liberation' in the sense identified by the Frankfurt School. In Case 3 this does appear to have informed the nature and content of the curriculum. In Case 1 it appears to be a meta-analysis formed after the construction of the course.

All cases referred to the contributory disciplines, and some turned to the disciplines in answering the question about theory. Others, however, only referred to the disciplines when asked directly about them and there is a wide variance in the significance of the disciplines. In some instances, such as Cases 5 and 9, the disciplines are explicit for students, with modules entitled 'the Psychology of Education'. In some, such as Case 8, the disciplines are seen as a strength, giving the subject academic status.

In other cases the disciplines are not made explicit for various reasons. In Case 2 the disciplines are kept inexplicit at the beginning of the course because it is assumed that the students would find them too rigorous and intellectually demanding. Case 2 saw its students as low-attainers who would tend to find this form of study difficult.

A second reason for reluctance to make the disciplines explicit in some cases appears to derive from the desire to create Education Studies as a new subject distinct from the old and discredited discipline-based teacher training programmes. In Case 6, for example, there was an intention to 'sex-up' the titles of modules, rather than calling them 'the Psychology of Education' which is seen as old-fashioned and less appealing to students. This suggests the idea that Education Studies should appear new and 'modern' in its appeal to the market. In Cases 4 and 5 there is an interesting contradiction borne of the historical conflicts in teacher training. On the one hand there is a need to preserve the discipline as a theoretical framework because there are staff who need to be 'liberated' from the TDA standards to teach Sociology. On the other hand, the disciplinary basis might be judged to be an old and discredited 'theory

of teacher training' course.

A third reason for the low profile of the disciplines is the attempt to see them integrated into the subject, rather than the so-called 'compartmentalisation' of the subject into discrete disciplines; Case 1 is a good example. Connected to this is the idea that Education Studies should be a subject or discipline in its own right, and the contributory disciplines would distract students from that image. Case 3 is a strong example of this view. The Senior Manager makes it explicit that the disciplines are not identified because they are seen as distraction from the identification of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right. The latter case is paradoxical in that the subject required students to operate at a highly theoretical level in the discipline of Philosophy, yet its students do not engage explicitly with the methodological questions in Philosophy.

The use of the disciplines in the subject can be seen in terms of Bernstein's (1971) curriculum theory of 'collection code' and 'integrated code'. A collection code is a series of identified disciplines, while in the integrated code, the disciplines are inexplicit or 'permeating' the subject. Again, the realisation of the discipline might be implicit or explicit with students being more or less aware of them. In Case 9, for example, Psychology is the dominant discipline and students are aware of its role, whereas they are less explicitly informed about the role of Sociology. The application of the theory is complex, however. Case 8 has an intended collection code, but one discipline is predominant, because of staffing weaknesses in the other disciplines.

Lacking in the discussion of the disciplines is a recognition of the conceptual difficulties involved in the inclusion of the contributory disciplines in the subject. According to Peters (1964) and Oakeshott (1989) the discipline require the enculturation into 'hard' areas of knowledge with strongly defined boundaries (Becher, 1989). This might be difficult to achieve within the context of Education Studies where a number of disciplines need to be employed and there is always the problem of simply 'dabbling' and not addressing the subject methods properly. Most cases seem to accept that the disciplines can simply be 'drawn upon' without difficulty. It is only in Case 2 where there is some recognition that the discipline might be difficult and so must be concealed in the early stages and in Case 3 where to

engage students properly with the methods of Philosophy would be a distraction from Education Studies as a subject. Case 7 hints at the problem of insufficient depth in the study of the disciplines. In Case 5 there is a suggestion of the 'boundariless' quality of Education Studies, implying that it is easier than the 'proper disciplines' and therefore attractive to students. However, this is inexplicit and not articulated in detail. Again, the fact that the problematic quality of the discipline has not been addressed by those designing courses is another sign of the under-theorised nature of Education Studies.

There is interest among some interviewees about the notion of Education Studies as a subject or a discipline in its own right. As noted above, Case 3 strongly argues this at the expense of the contributory disciplines. In Case 6 it is proposed that it might have status as a discipline purely because of its current and growing status in the academic community and its importance to the economy.

The conclusion from these findings is that the disciplinary boundaries of the type described by Becher (1989) are not drawn. It appears from the data that at present almost anything can count as Education Studies, there being no limits in terms of theory or content. One attempt to give a national definition to the subject was the QAA (2001) Benchmark for Education. All the institutions discount the effect of this document, other than in Wales where there is a general commitment to all legislative documents. Even there, the effect is not specified. The commitment to the Benchmark by the Welsh institution appears to be part of a general obeisance to government policy. This seems to stem from the institution's general allegiance to, and interest in, the Welsh Assembly and local politics.

There is one theoretical theme that runs through the English institutions and it is the notion of Education Studies as a means of emancipation, or liberation, from, the constraints of government-determined teacher training curricula. This is seen to operate both for students in their understanding and for staff in their freedom to teach. It relates to the earlier points about the importance of staff interest in defining the Education Studies curriculum: Education Studies as the resistance to government control of education. However, this theme is much less evident in the case in Wales

where Education Studies is seen as a commitment to government policy in terms of curriculum, quality assurance and employability.

Apart from this notion of emancipatory critique, Education Studies appears to be weakly theorised, with rarely a clear definition or rationale. The subject appears to have grown independently and idiosyncratically among individuals or groups in the different institutions with little transaction between institutions in growing the subject. Therefore, at present there is little sign of an agreed canon of knowledge for Education Studies, and this is consistent with the characterisation of 'postmodern' university in the critical literature as discussed in Chapter 2.

## **5 The vocational aims of Education Studies**

Section 4 suggests that the aims for Education Studies are under-theorised and inexplicit. One of the areas for consideration is the vocational aims for the subject, in particular whether it prepares students for entry to teacher training, an obvious vocational outcome for Education Studies. However, the data shows that this is not seen as a central aim for any of the programmes, except for Case 7 in which Education Studies is part of a 3+1 teacher education programme with a guaranteed place for graduates on the Primary PGCE course. However, with the re-introduction of a three-year BEd course into the institution, that programme was to be dropped and a new subject leader was appointed to re-draft the subject to be distinct from teacher training.

It has already been shown there is a tendency for Education Studies to be defined as radically distinct from teacher training for three principal reasons: first, the logistical one of the perceived need to differentiate the subject from concurrent undergraduate QTS courses in the same institution; second the factor of individuals' desire to distance themselves from the TDA standards because of their own career interests and trajectories; third, and closely related to the second, an ideological definition of Education Studies as a critique of, and resistance to, government control of the Education curriculum. There is a complex interplay of these factors in the discussion of the vocational outcomes for Education Studies.

In some cases the subject is described as being suitable for progression to teacher training, but this is rarely offered as one of the aims for the course. Only when interviewees are pressed as to the vocational outcomes, and the possibility of teaching, is it mentioned. So the picture seems to be one where the logistical, career-led and ideological motives for defining Education Studies distinct from teacher training leads to its low order in the aims for the subject. There appears, then, to be a desire to see Education Studies as an academic university subject without career outcomes. This is paradoxical in that it is a new subject and there would be an expectation that it would conform to the current demands for employability. However, it would appear that the suggested role of Education Studies as critique of, and resistance to, government control of education might be seeing it defined in a traditional 'essentialist' academic way. This might further be seen as a part of the reaction to the government-controlled teacher training.

In the survey of university websites (Chapter 6), 62% of the cases referred to Education Studies as a good precursor to teacher training. It is interesting that there is a distinction here between this relatively high proportion of references in the marketing context and the low level of reference to teacher training by the subject leaders. It is suggested that this is a feature of the market context: those compiling the marketing material would wish to make the subject sound attractive to as many as possible. Those who are interested in the nature of the subject itself, the Subject Leaders, may not share the same 'marketised' view.

In fact, when subject leaders are pressed on the thinking about its vocational outcomes, teacher training tends to be included. For example, Case 1 argues that the aim of the subject as the broad critique of education is a beneficial element for future teachers who will receive no such critique in PGCE training. Of course, this does depend upon a normative view of teachers as critical professionals, rather than as technical operatives, but the argument reveals a contradiction in the thinking when it is argued that Education Studies is an academic subject, but actually also for teachers. Others agree that students might proceed to a primary PGCE course, although, as noted in Section 1, there is variation in the extent to which Education Studies students are welcomed onto such courses and there is evidence, particularly in Case 3, of some

tensions between the two programmes.

The idea of the subject as a critique of education can lead to it being a deterrent to teaching, as described in Case 2 where students had been dissuaded from a teaching career when their studies had revealed the nature of the system and its effects upon children and pupils.

While Education Studies is frequently defined as not preparing students for teacher training, the alternative vocational outcomes are not well articulated. Vocational outcomes are not generally seen as the aim of the subject. Of the English institutions, only Case 4 had made graduate employment a principal aim for the course and the subject leader was unique in having made placement links with local organisations and businesses. Case 9 in Wales was strongly committed to careers for students in the re-modelled school workforce, and this was consistent with the function of the institution's commitment to national government policy.

The limited view of non-teaching vocational outcomes in England may be partly due to the timing of the data from 2004-2005. More recently, the re-modelled schools workforce and the *Every Child Matters* Agenda have become salient and interviewees might now comment differently on the opportunities for Education Studies students to gain graduate employment.

Finally, there is a pattern of response to the vocational outcomes for the subject which approximately reflects Bernstein's (1975) proposals that a high-status, classified curriculum tends to be seen as autonomous and unrelated to vocational outcomes. This is particularly true of Cases 3 and 8 where the course is depicted as high status and academic with a strong reliance on the subject discipline. Those who depicted their courses as low status, for lower-qualified students, or for widening participation, tend to emphasise an integrated curriculum in respect of the disciplines and vocational outcomes - either teaching or non-teaching – tend to play a stronger role.



## Section 7 - Further questions and future research

### Student Perspectives

In general, the methodological aim of achieving a set of accounts of the development of the Education Studies curriculum has been achieved. The study provides examples of the influences which have formed the knowledge of the subject in different cases and has indicated some possible patterns across the set. The data are restricted to perspectives of university academic staff, the actors directly involved in the decision-making for the formulation of principles and the selection of content. These are, of course, principal players in the process. Their accounts have provided direct insights into the thinking behind the subject as it now exists. The data benefit from first-hand accounts of the rationales for decisions taken and how those decisions were affected by individual biographies and ideologies. It also allowed for insights into the institutional perspectives on the subject, although these were usually second hand.

The method of interviewing subject leaders and senior managers was selected because the main interest in the study was to investigate the principles which informed the development of a new university subject.

The perspective which is missing from the study is that of the students, or prospective students. The students' perspective is important because, while the subject is created by academics, as shown in the data, it is done to some extent in response to the perceived market, and the market is defined by students, their preferences and expectations. They are, then, the complementary part of the equation which makes the subject.

There is a limited second-hand account of students' perspectives in the data analysis. It is noted that there is some discrepancy between the academics' view of the Education Studies as a non-vocational subject and that of some students who perceived it as a route into teaching. However, there are no direct accounts from students as to why they selected Education Studies as a new university subject and what their expectations of the subject were. The crucial question is the extent to which

the students perceived its vocational possibilities for teaching or other employment in education.

There is a series of questions which might be asked of students and which could form a study to succeed this one. It would be interesting to discover the range of motives for students' selection of the subject, whether they were based on employability notions or whether they simply prefer the content because it seems familiar.

Their perspectives on the actual curriculum would also be beneficial. It would be significant to know how students respond to those broad perspectives suggested in the website survey (Chapter 6) of global economics, ecological and human rights issues. The questions might be:

- 1      What were your reasons for selecting an Education Studies course?
- 2      When applying, did you have in mind a vocational outcome?
- 3      Did your view of Education Studies change during your studies?
- 4      Were your expectations realised?
- 5      Did the subject help you as a future professional?
- 6      Did you find that the Education Studies curriculum met your needs for future employment?

Systematic information from students of this kind would assist those devising Education Studies programmes to make them relevant to the current employability context of higher education. While there was no direct question in the interview schedule as to whether students, or future students, had been consulted, there was no mention of this having taken place. The main dynamic for the choice of content was the academics' perceptions, although, of course, some cases did allow a student choice of modules. Some, however, presented an agenda with no student choice.

### **Graduate destinations**

For all the discussion of the theory of employability in this study, there are no data on the graduate destinations of Education Studies students, and this will become both interesting and essential as the subject grows. It is currently much a matter for

speculation as to whether graduate employment in destinations other than teaching will be available. Some simple hard data from HESA would be most valuable.

### **The curriculum**

The present study is essentially concerned with the sociology of knowledge: how and why was knowledge selected, what were the factors which affected the choice in the curriculum. One of these influences is seen to be the theoretical framework from which individual cases constructed their curriculum. Another was the influence of the university in the higher education market. So while there are rich data on these factors, they represent the overall perspective and do not reveal information about the outcomes of the decisions. In other words, the study does not examine in detail the actual curriculum selected, apart from a brief survey of the limited information on the university websites.

At this level of analysis there appeared no common canon of Education Studies knowledge. The main finding was diversity of perspectives and the lack of definite boundaries for the subject, of the kind identified by Becher (1989). A further study would be to analyse in detail the actual content of a series of curricula to determine whether there are systematic similarities across the examples of the subject. The method for this might be to examine in detail course texts such as Bartlett, Burton and Peim, (2001), Matheson and Grosvenor (1999), Davies, Gregory and McGuinn (2003), Ward (2004) and Sharp, Ward and Hankin (2006) and it might reveal more similarities. One of the weaknesses of the method used in the current study – interviews with the subject leaders – is that there might be a tendency for them to exaggerate the particular qualities of their courses. As noted in Chapter 5 on the research methods, the interview schedule itself may have tended to encourage respondents to emphasise the unusual or particular. For example, one of the questions is, ‘What are the distinctive features of your course?’ This would tend to provoke unusual responses. The whole approach to asking how the subject was derived might make respondents search for something particular to say. A question such as, ‘In what ways is your course similar to others?’ may have produced different responses of a more uniform kind. The method of analysis used may tend to exacerbate this emphasis on the unusual or particular.

The same might be said of the survey of websites. It is likely that those writing marketing material for courses would tend to emphasise the unusual or unique in order to attract the attention of applicants. They may, of course, be attempting to identify a market ‘niche’ and this would emphasise the individual. They would be hardly likely to indicate that the course is ‘like all other Education Studies courses’. So this method may have tended to reveal a more diverse field than actually exists.

A study of course documents used by tutors and students, while perhaps a less engaging enterprise for the researcher, may produce a more accurate depiction of the range of curricula.

### **Institutional perspectives**

Of course, one answer which the study cannot provide is the reasons for institutions not choosing to do undergraduate Education Studies. Possible alternative perceptions of the market would be interesting. Occasional anecdotal evidence collected by the author points to the likelihood that some institutions would find it difficult to provide the staffing for non-teacher training Education Studies. The implication is that those who are employed to teach to the TDA standards cannot be extended to teach anything else. Further data about this would be useful to have.

On a similar theme, it would be interesting to know more about the institutions which did not choose to convert the undergraduate QTS course to 3+1. The four cases in the data here give different reasons, some saying that they do not wish to disturb the successful *status quo*. However, as Case 1 suggests here, that might be more to do with the reluctance of staff to take on new teaching.

### **The contributory disciplines**

The study has analysed academic staff perceptions of the role of the disciplines in Education Studies. The historical effects of the disciplines in teacher training are also considered (McCulloch, 2002, Simon, 1979). The conclusion drawn is that the discipline are seen to be essential to the new subject, but their role and application are

both diverse and, in most of the cases, ambiguous and unclear. The analysis of the literature reveals the theoretical, or epistemological problems associated with the importing of disciplines into another subject of study or discipline. These problems of superficiality and the complexity of the discipline were only occasionally acknowledged explicitly by subject leaders; there were just some suggestions that the disciplines are found to be difficult, or that the methodologies would hinder a concept of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right.

Some *modus operandi* for the disciplines within, or as a part of, Education Studies is needed. This would be something along the lines of finding ways in which Education Studies students can employ the methods of the disciplines from the stance of the subject without the need for the ‘immersion’ or ‘enculturation’ defined by Peters (1964) and Oakeshott (1989). Such an investigation is beyond the scope of the current study with its sociological emphasis. A suitable investigation would probably need a more psychological analysis of students’ learning in the subject. Again, it would require the perspective of students to learn their responses to the disciplines. It would be interesting to know whether the perception of students finding them difficult is true, and whether there are categories of students who are attracted to them or resist them. Wolf (2002) argues that it is the overwhelming desire for academic study which accounts for the rush for mass higher education and that students yearn for ‘proper’ degree courses. It might be that the disciplines provide that image which appeals to students in the market. On the other hand, Aronowitz (2000) claims that students in the mass higher education market are not prepared to suffer the pain which difficult study of the disciplines involves.

Another approach would be to analyse students’ written work to explore the extent to which their references to the disciplines meet the requirements of the academic community. It might, on the other hand, be possible to conceive of a means of using the disciplinary methods in a different way which is distinctive to Education Studies. However, this needs to be explored and has not yet been done.

The topic certainly needs more exploration. The evidence from the website analysis and the interviews is that a core theme of Education Studies is critique. It might well be argued that for there to be critique there must be a theoretical framework to apply.

For example, if there is to be a critique of intelligence, then the question arises of how much the Psychology the student needs to know. If the critique is of government policy, what sociological or economic framework is needed. Without this, it might be argued, Education Studies discourse becomes mere opinion.

### **A discourse for Education Studies**

Cultural and Media Studies have grown in universities in the last fifteen years and developed their own theoretical discourses distinct from their origins in English and Sociology (Readings, 1996, Chapter 2). At present, there does not appear to be a distinctive discourse for Education Studies of the type noted by Fairclough (1995). With the burgeoning of Education Studies as a new university subject it is anticipated a unique discourse may develop as it has in media and cultural studies. The publication of a recent series of textbooks on Education Studies (Matheson and Grosvenor, 1999, Bartlett, Burton and Peim, 2001, Davies, Gregory and McGuinn, 2002, Bartlett and Burton, 2003, Ward, 2004) together with the emergence of a new Association for Education Studies might be seen as the beginnings of such a process.

The present study has not addressed the detail of the type of discourse in which Education Studies students and tutors engage and, related to the discussion of the disciplines above, how it might differ from the discourse of psychologists, sociologists or philosophers. Again, this could be studied through an analysis of students' writing, or of discussions in student seminars or VLE sites.

### **Other university subjects**

Finally, a question remains about whether the findings in this research are unique to Education Studies or whether similar processes take place in the development of other university subjects. There are questions about whether other subjects respond to the market in the same way and are under-theorised in a similar way: whether the content is dependent on the contingency of tutors' given knowledge or expertise.

Again, this study does not attempt to address this question, other than to note that there might be a particular feature of Education Studies in the way it has been derived

from its teacher-training origins. It may be that the dynamic to dissociate itself from teacher training leads to an unusual aversion to employment-related aims. It may be that the discrediting of the contributory disciplines in teacher training in the 1970s has had a particular influence on the perception of educational theory.

An interesting research project would be to make a comparative study of Education Studies with other disciplines, using a similar method and the findings here as the basis. A particular question would be the extent to which the subjects reflect upon themselves, their theories and methods. For it is a surprising finding in this research that the theoretical conceptualisation is so limited in a subject which professes to be about the nature of knowledge and learning. It would indeed be disheartening to find that, for example, the curriculum in Sports Studies or Retailing had a more thoughtful and considered theoretical framework than Education Studies.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### Introduction

This chapter is intended to test the findings of the research against the theoretical background. The first section is a discussion of the origins and development of undergraduate Education Studies knowledge and identifies the factors which have contributed to the existence and the definitions of the subject and its knowledge content. The intention is to provide some explanatory theory for the findings in the research by referring to the literature analysed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 on university knowledge and the state, theories of the sociology of knowledge and educational theory and teacher training.

The second section offers the author's perspective in a discussion of the findings and their significance for current Education Studies subject leaders and for the future development of the subject.

### Section 1: The growth of Education Studies in higher education: an explanatory account of the data analysis

The main findings for discussion are as follows:

1. There is wide variation in the curriculum between institutions with no defined canon of knowledge.
2. The subject has grown in isolation in individual institutions with a minimum of networking across the academic community.
3. Its existence is determined by the higher education market in which Education Studies is currently a popular subject.
4. The QAA Benchmark has little or no effect on definitions.
5. Subject leaders have a high level of freedom in defining the subject and there is limited interest in the nature of the subject at institutional or faculty levels.
6. The existence of the subject, its theory and content have been determined by individual career preferences.
7. There are some individual and highly idiosyncratic definitions.



8. The subject is generally under-theorised with few examples of a theoretical framework for the selection of knowledge content.
9. The subject is largely defined to be dissociated from teacher training.
10. Education Studies is sometimes perceived as an academic subject with little performative function in the employment market.
11. Where the subject exists alongside an undergraduate QTS teacher training programme, Education Studies tends to be perceived as low status.
12. There are ideological perceptions of Education Studies as the reaction to, and resistance to, government controls of teacher education.
13. The role of the contributory discipline is diverse, ambiguous and frequently inexplicit and is influenced by their role in former teacher training courses.
14. There are attempts to define Education Studies as a ‘discipline’ in its own right.
15. Definitions of the subject to some extent conform to Bernstein’s (1975) theory of classification and framing in relation to production and vocational outcomes.
16. The Welsh institution contrasts with the English ones in perceiving the subject as a means of compliance with government targets for education, particularly in respect of graduate employability.

The discussion is structured under the following headings:

1. The market context
2. Theoretical frameworks
3. Vocational outcomes
4. The contributory disciplines

## **1 The market context and higher education knowledge**

In considering the ways in which undergraduate Education Studies has developed during the last ten years it is important to be aware of the higher education context within which it has grown. Readings (1996) and Haddad (2000) note the development of the university from its modern role in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in which knowledge was defined and codified by the university on behalf of the state and its culture. In Humboldt’s model of the relationship between the state and the university, ‘the state protects the actions of the university; the university safeguards the thoughts of the state. And each strives to realise the idea of a national culture’ (Readings,

1996:69). In the European modern model the university has a high level of autonomy and its staff enjoy high levels of academic freedom. Kogan and Hanney (2000) add to this, pointing out the exceptional levels of freedom from government control which existed for UK universities during the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The growth of Education Studies might be seen as a ‘modern’ phenomenon in so far as the institutions in the data appear to have control over the selection of subjects within the constraints of their overall government funding council allocations. Subject leaders and senior managers all refer to the individual decision of the institution whether to introduce Education Studies to its portfolio of courses. In their turn, subject leaders and senior faculty managers indicate that they had control of the definition of the subject and its content. At no point is there any statement about constraint over the decision to run the subject, how to frame its curriculum or what to include in it. In this sense, the university can be seen to be defining and codifying knowledge in the way that Readings describes. As Neave (2000b) suggests about higher education in the UK, the state is seen as a necessary evil which should not control academic life and in the configuration of an undergraduate course in Education Studies it would seem that the modern model is still in effect.

The survey of university websites for Education Studies (Chapter 6) demonstrates a wide variety of curriculum approaches and content. The interview data confirm this and indicate some highly individual and idiosyncratic definitions of the subject, both in overall approach and in detailed content. This diversity would appear to confirm that academic freedom is being exercised by the higher education institutions and by the staff within them. The QAA (2001) Benchmark for Education is one government initiative on the definition of the curriculum for Education Studies. However, the data from interviewees’ accounts suggest that the QAA document has had little or no constraining effect upon the choice of curriculum. Only in Wales was there an acknowledgement of its influence, and even there no specific direction was mentioned. The English institutions either discounted it, or referred to a retrospective exercise to match it. In one case there was a lack of concern where the Benchmark was not quite matched. Furedi (2004) argues that academics are relinquishing academic freedom to the influence of government quality assurance systems. However, it would appear that, at least superficially, individual interpretations and

definitions of undergraduate Education Studies appear to be flourishing under the control of autonomous universities.

Another feature of the development of Education Studies which reflects the modern university is the strong control of the curriculum which is exercised by individual power groups. The individual definitions of Education Studies as the Sociology of Education in Case 2, or as European Idealist Philosophy in Case 3 reflect the power of individuals in the university. Bourdieu (1988) depicts the university as a self-preserving institution: an autonomous site in which different orders of power clash and struggle for self-reproduction. The individuals' unchallenged control of Education Studies knowledge reflects this. Delanty's (2000) suggestion that the postmodern university sees the 'democratisation of knowledge' is not realised in the way that Education Studies is defined so powerfully by significant individuals, often the interviewees in the research. Where others have seen culture as a means of social integration or of legitimation, Bourdieu sees symbolic systems of difference and exclusion. Kant's conflict of the faculties is between knowledge and rationality; for Bourdieu the conflicts are between different sorts of capital: cognitive or cultural. Bourdieu's (1988) *Homo academicus* is a product of the field of academic power to control and classify knowledge and restrict the academic field. On the other hand, the individual nature of the Education Studies might be seen as the breaking down of the control and classification of knowledge, in that individual academics have the freedom to define knowledge. The resolution of this hinges on whether the locus of power is with the individual or with a broader academic community. However, another perspective is offered by Trow (2005) who suggests that diversity is a requirement of the market. It might be, then, that the diversity of the Education Studies curriculum, rather than being a modern function individual academic control, is a postmodern economic function where the university seeks a market niche.

Whereas Bourdieu (1988) and Becher (1989), among others, depict university knowledge as defined within strong boundaries set by an academic community, the data show that such a defining community is missing from the development of undergraduate Education Studies knowledge. There has been no active academic community which has networked to define knowledge; instead, it appears to have grown individually and idiosyncratically in different institutions with each creating its

own silo of knowledge, disconnected from others, and based upon its own interpretation of the subject. Individual subject leaders have been free both of state control and of the control and boundary limitations set by a powerful academic community. This might be seen to be a postmodern effect of Delanty's (2000) democratisation of knowledge.

The apparent freedom of individual academics to construct their own version of Education Studies reflects another aspect of postmodern university knowledge. This is the way that the university itself has lost its concern with knowledge as the centre of its being. As Barnett (2000) explains, instead the post-modern university is a company with many product lines and activities. It has no centre, no boundaries and no moral order. It merely responds to the market and will take students to study any knowledge which it can sell. This reflects Lyotard's (1979) characterisation of late twentieth century university knowledge and it is seen in the responses of the subject leaders and senior managers who, when asked about the university's attitude to Education Studies replied, as in one particular case, 'benign indifference'. The attitude is benign because Education Studies recruits well in the current market and attracts student numbers. It is indifferent because it is no longer interested in knowledge and its relationship to culture and society. In Readings's (1996) metaphor of the university like a trans-national corporation such as an airline, its interest is in paying passengers, not destinations.

So a major factor in the existence of Education Studies is the higher education market. Non-teacher-training Education Studies has become a popular subject attracting large numbers of students. According to the interview data it can be seen incentives to those who:

- wish to enter primary teaching;
- are considering teaching but are as yet uncertain;
- are interested in a career in schools or with young people;
- are interested in its contributory disciplines.

As Barnett (2000) suggests, the current market conditions necessitate the cynical profit motive which is seen most strongly in individual cases where the institutions, or

the faculty, needed the student numbers simply to survive, sometimes in the context of the threat of reducing teacher-training numbers. But it is also seen indirectly across all the data and in all instances there is reference to the existence of Education Studies being introduced or maintained because of its ability to sustain student numbers. These might be seen as academically highly qualified students, but there is a further role which Education Studies plays in some institutions in its potential to attract low-qualified students, or students who fill the government requirement for widening participation.

### **Theoretical frameworks**

In simple terms, the higher education market accounts for the existence of undergraduate Education Studies. However, the effects of the market on the subject are complex. Cowen (2002) analyses government policy for university knowledge in terms of global economics and market forces with governmental critique of the university and he suggests that there is taking place a ‘a rebalancing of the relationships between the state, the productive economy and universities’ (p.3). So the university loses its autonomy from government. The effect of this is a shift from knowledge as truth, to knowledge as ‘performativity’: that which is seen to be useful in economic terms. It is a part of the dynamic of epistemological change described by Lyotard (1979) as the post-industrial, postmodern collapse of meta-knowledge and the contestation of the nature of knowledge itself.

This might be seen to contribute to the lack of a common framework of knowledge for Education Studies. As noted above, there has not been a community of scholars to define the academic boundaries of the subject. This absence might be seen as part of the context which Lyotard describes as the ‘collapse of meta-knowledge’ in the sense that there is no apparent need to define knowledge and that anything is allowed to count in the subject. This would account for the lack of a national framework of knowledge. It would also help to explain the general lack of individual academic frameworks for the different curricula in each institution. Where subject leaders were asked about an academic framework, some were unable to assemble anything coherent; others found the question difficult and controversial. Several referred to the notion of a *post hoc* theory for the subject which would emerge after the course had

been running. This suggests the general lack of a perception of the need for an overall theory of knowledge. What counts as a subject is any loose collection of content which can be delivered by the staff involved. The lack of theoretical frameworks, may then be simply part of a general postmodern *Zeitgeist*. In this way, such theory is unnecessary as long as students can be recruited to modules in which they are interested, for whatever reason, and for which there are staff who are interested to teach them. And, according to Barnett and Lyotard, the explanation for this phenomenon is the marketisation of higher education. So the over-riding interest is the recruitment of students, rather than the knowledge which they study, and the recession of the university's definition of what counts as knowledge.

The interesting phenomenon here is that, while there is no common theoretical framework for Education Studies, the ubiquitous feature across the cases is the *lack* of a theoretical framework. And, as already suggested, this might be a function of the postmodern distaste for meta-theory. However, what makes this more remarkable is that there should be a lack of a theory of knowledge in a subject which should concern itself with the nature of knowledge and learning. Under theories of the sociology of knowledge derived from the Marxist perspective, including Gramsci (1967), knowledge is directly related to the power relations in the social context. What Marx and Gramsci intended was to expose the framework of knowledge which was defined in their own interests by the ruling class and imposed in an implicit and unquestioned manner on the working class. Here the relationship between knowledge and power, rather than being implicit and a matter for revelation by the sociological imagination, is explicit in the form of the government-defined national curriculum for teacher training; the TDA standards for teaching are an example of the explicit 'knowledge politics' described by Popkewitz (2000). As already noted, this top-down competence-based model was seen to disempower and alienate university tutors. The existence of Education Studies, then, can be seen as a bid to re-establish power over the curriculum by the university. This can be seen to be operating at two levels: at the institutional level the university regains its power over knowledge and retains the funding; at the level of faculty staff, individual tutors regain power of definition over a field of knowledge which was taken from them in teacher training.

It is perhaps, then, reasonable to view the theoretical framework of Education Studies simply as the wresting of theoretical knowledge from teacher training. It is a theme that runs through the discourse of the interviews. The fact that there is little attempt to define it further, other than in Case 3, might be explained by the ambition to have a subject which is free of ‘standards’ and imposed definitions. In a Marxist sense, it might be the very freedom from definition which is the theory in itself. The power of the market is explained by Aronowitz (2000) who argues that the knowledge studied and the standards reached are defined by a decreasingly academic student population and that the university becomes a ‘knowledge factory’. That the subject is determined by what is popular with student applicants means that the tutors share a curriculum which is implicitly and mutually agreed with the market. The market, in a postmodern sense, removes the need for a meta-theory. The economics of the university in the market provide the framework for the freedom of operation of the individual faculty. Implicit and unquestioned knowledge is self-interest in the sense defined by Mannheim in which intellectual thought is determined by ‘two very simple structural determinants of social character: to the existence of generations and to the existence of the phenomenon of competition...’ (1952, p. 193).

### **Vocational outcomes**

What is interesting here among the Education Studies tutors is that the resistance to the explicit government controls of teacher training is explicit and articulated. But the control of the market is not identified and resisted. And this, of course, is because the demands of the market – the popularity of Education Studies among student applicants – is consistent with the opportunity to create a subject free of government controls. So compliance with the market’s controls allows for fulfilment of the explicit aim which is the resistance to the government controls of teacher training.

Returning to Cowen’s (1996) analysis, his re-balancing of the relationship between the state and the university is based upon the notion that university knowledge moves from ‘truth-testing’ to the skills for employability. Barnett (2000) also stresses the move to performativity in university knowledge. In this sense he sees the contemporary university ‘dissolving into the wider world’ (p.20) as its knowledge becomes less and less specialised and categorised. This move towards performativity is a function of government control of higher education as the emphasis, for example

in QAA Reviews, is on employable skills, rather than their knowledge for its own sake. However, the data from the interviews on Education Studies show little attention to employability. In fact, with the exception of one case which was part of a 3+1 teacher education programme and the one case in Wales, the main definitions of Education Studies were determinedly away from employability. Most defined the subject as dissociated from teacher training, and only reluctantly as a preparation for teacher training. And, although the relationship with teacher-training is denied, with one exception there was little attempt to define it as providing skills for any other named employment destinations. Again, only the Welsh case expressed employment among the aims for the subject and only one English case included well-considered employment possibilities for graduates.

It is interesting that Education Studies should not have the strong employability focus which might be expected of a new university subject. As already noted, there is some contradiction here in that while the university academics do not see it as a precursor to teacher training, its students frequently do see it that way. Kant's 'conflict of the faculties' becomes relevant here: the professional subjects of Medicine and Law were seen as dealing only with prescribed and unquestionable knowledge, while Philosophy dealt with truth. Barnett (2000) suggests there are different positionings within the university along the academic-utility axis. Some situate themselves in the world, others keep to scholarly values, but on the whole, the conflict of the faculties is relatively restrained in the postmodern university as most subjects now turn to their relevance to the real world and employability. The view of Education Studies by academic staff as an essentialist subject disconnected from employment and the world is, then, a peculiar phenomenon. What needs explaining is the reason for the strong antipathy towards employability by the academic staff and for the way Education Studies is depicted as an academic subject disconnected from teaching and other employment.

The answer lies in the interview data in which the antipathy to teacher education is expressed, not in terms of the education of teachers itself, but in terms of aversion to the TDA Standards for Teaching and the government control of teacher education. The critique of the government control of teacher training is made by Mahony and Hextall (1997), Cowen (2002) and Hargreaves (2003). Hargreaves sees the controls of



teacher training as a function of a wider malaise caused by the global demand for increased standards through standardisation and the growth of a compliance culture in teacher education.

What is evident in the data is the particular nature of Education Studies as a means of establishing the study of education free of state control. It is also seen beyond the mere avoidance of control to offer the opportunity to critique the state control of education. And this is particularly powerful because many of those who have created the subject are those who profess themselves to be in search of a means in their careers both to escape state control and to critique it. The effect of the individualised definitions of the subject noted above is particularly strong because of the agenda of those involved in the subject's definitions. This appears to occur both at the level of the individual's career trajectory – those needing a vehicle for teaching the social sciences - and the ideological level of establishing knowledge as academic critique, or 'truth' in Kant's terms. It is not simply, though, that the proponents have an ideological or academic view, but that they have experienced directly, and sometimes painfully, the effects of government controls and the reduction of educational theory in teacher training. Some have returned through Education Studies from potential redundancy. It is suggested here that this biographical factor in the definition of Education Studies probably makes it unique among the growing university subjects. Mannheim's (1960) notion of 'utopia' is relevant here. Education Studies as an essentialist academic subject is seen to offer escape from state-controlled consciousness and offers what Mannheim calls the 'transforming' effect of the sociology of knowledge.

The argument constructed here can be summarised simply as follows:

1. Education Studies has grown as the explicit resistance by university staff to the government control of teacher training.
2. No meta-theory has been created for Education Studies and its knowledge is dominated by the interests of individual tutors.
3. Because of its resistance to teacher training it has been defined as a largely autonomous subject, not related to vocational outcomes, particularly those of teacher training.
4. Education Studies exists largely because of its popularity in the student market.

5. Because its proponents see it as an explicit resistance to government controls they are not resistant to market forces, nor do they perceive the market as a problem.

The urge to create an academic subject free of the government controls has perhaps made subject leaders over-zealous and it is possible that, because of the ideological and career needs of staff, Education Studies is currently over-defined as a non-vocational academic subject. This probably derives from the resistance to government attacks on the autonomy of the teaching profession in, for example, the 'training discourse' adopted by the TDA: teachers are not to be educated to be autonomous decision-makers, but trained to be technicians of the National Curriculum (Mahony and Hextall, 1997, Cowen, 2002, Hargreaves, 2003). This committed antagonism to Education Studies as the precursor to teacher training would certainly seem to contrast with the students' view which perceives it as a route into teaching.

Education Studies seems to have been fed by the market and flourished free of government controls, while teacher training has continued to have an increasing level of government direction. This appears to be a contradiction. In fact it might not prove to be so in the future. While the government has left the control of Education Studies to the market, it is the market itself which will impose limitations as students will demand employability within it. In its bid for freedom from the government control of teacher training, Education Studies has set itself up as a largely academic, non-vocational subject. In that sense it seems to have been travelling in a reverse direction from the rest of higher education, which has been forced to move from academic isolation to performativity and relevance to the real world. It may be that the market wants, as Wolf (2002) and Barnett (2000) argue, a higher education which is less vocational and performative. This would leave Education Studies free of the need for vocational outcomes. However, such a future seems unlikely.

Of course, the foregoing discussion has simplified the definition of Education Studies as non-vocational. In fact, as shown in Chapter 7, Theme 6, the subject is variously seen as autonomous or vocational by different cases and the differentials can broadly be depicted on the lines of social class and status which are outlined by Williams (1961) and Bernstein (1975). Williams proposes categories which include a high-status 'liberal/conservative' education as non-vocational for the 'educated man' and a

‘populist/proletarian’ education for the working class which is characterised as ‘relevant’ to students and to their employment. It has been shown in the interview data that there are differentials in perceived status of Education Studies, with some seeing the course as a high-status academic enterprise in relation to the employment-oriented focus of initial teacher training courses. In these Education Studies is seen as non-vocational and autonomous. In others it is perceived as of a lower order, with students who are under-qualified for QTS entry, sometimes as a widening participation subject. These cases tend to have a stronger view of the subject’s vocational outcomes. This categorisation is approximately consistent with Williams’s formulation.

Bernstein’s 1975 paper further differentiates these categories with analysis of curricular forms: the high status, non-vocational curriculum is seen highly classified with discrete subjects and highly framed with little input from students or negotiation of content. These are also the characteristics of the two cases in the Education Studies data: where the subject is seen as autonomous and non-vocational, the contributory disciplines are seen as essential to the subject. In the cases where Education Studies is seen as low status and vocational, the disciplines tend to be seen as integrated into the subject, or less explicitly identified and more student input is allowed in the form of module choices. This is a broad approximation and, in fact, there are exceptions and complications where, for example in Case 5, the subject is seen as low status, but the disciplines are defined, or in Case 3 where the discipline of Philosophy is strongly defined, but made less explicit to students for fear of detracting from a view of Education Studies as a discipline in its own right. The issues of status, vocationalism and classification of the disciplines should be seen as a means of analysis. The attempt to match them equally into a simple systematic table of relations is bound to fail. The table offered (Table 3, page 254) is simply to provide an approximate overview.

A further point about the status of Education Studies as a subject or discipline reflects the fact that, while the issue of social class in higher education used to be about participation or non-participation (Kogan and Hannay, 2000), now class differentials have firmly entered the university world. Aronowitz (2000) suggests that the resistance to cultural capital in working class schools has moved into the university sector, with students not prepared to commit themselves to academic study. It might be argued that there is a section of the Education Studies student population which

includes such students and which the subject accommodates. One feature of this might be seen to be a resistance to the rigours of the academic disciplines, which is next for discussion.

### **The contributory disciplines**

The place of the contributory disciplines in Education Studies is various and ambiguous in the different cases. The historical perspective is important here and relates to the discussion above about the relationship of Education Studies to its origins in the theoretical framework for teacher training in the 1960s. The accounts of Simon (1994), Richardson (2002), McCulloch (2002) and Crook (2002) all acknowledge the way that the subject disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and the History of Education were imported into the first Bachelor of Education courses by validating universities to introduce what was seen as an acceptable level of theory into degree-level teacher training. They also tell of the critical response which the disciplines received from students and teachers and consequently from the politicians and government. There is, then, a complex historical background on which the current Education Studies curriculum is based, the effects of which emerge in the data. The following historical factors need to be taken into account:

- 1        The subject disciplines were perceived as high status.
- 2        The disciplines were criticised for being irrelevant to practice and became discredited in teacher training, attracting the vilification of politicians and the government.
- 3        Many teacher-training academic staff developed their careers as proponents of, and experts in, one or more of the disciplines.
- 4        The teacher-training standards introduced in the late 1990s excluded the explicit study of the disciplines.
- 5        Some former teacher training staff who were committed to teaching the disciplines were made redundant or were disaffected by the standards.

What the data show are responses to a variety of these historical perspectives. On the one hand there are those cases which still wish to see the disciplines as high status in the old validating-university mode. Then there are those who, in responding to the

higher education market, see the disciplines as a limitation because they will be perceived by the students in the higher education market either as too difficult or ‘old-fashioned’ and part of the discredited teacher training model. This leads to the cases in the data where the disciplines are concealed, or made inexplicit to students.

At the same time, of the staff teaching Education Studies many are from a background in one or more of the disciplines. As shown, one of the reasons for the existences of the subject in some institutions is to provide a career for potentially redundant staff. There is, then, a tension between the need to preserve the disciplines for staff, where the disciplines are believed to form the proper theoretical framework for Education Studies and the need to conceal the disciplines from a potentially hostile student market. It is suggested that this historical background of tension between the ‘academic’ and the student market is one cause of the ambiguity about the disciplines expressed in the data.

Another cause of ambiguity is the difficulty with the academic role that the disciplines actually play and their relationship to the idea of Education Studies as a subject itself. In some cases the intention is to moderate the explicit nature of the disciplines so that they do not detract from seeing Education Studies as a discipline in its own right. However, it is necessary to reflect on the nature of a ‘discipline’. As shown in the analysis of the literature on the disciplines in Chapter 4, there is a tight definition of ‘disciplines’ which makes their role in teacher training and Education Studies complex. Barnett (2005) cites Peters (1964) and Oakeshott (1989) who define a discipline as the study of content with a strong boundary into which its students need to be socialised or ‘enculturated’ over time. The strong boundaries of knowledge in the disciplines are confirmed by Becher (1989) who refers to the importance of the academic community in making these definitions. As Tibble (1971) had earlier asserted, Education is not a discipline, there being no distinctively ‘educational’ way of thinking. As Barnett points out, a discipline is the study of ‘hard’ and clearly defined knowledge, and he distinguishes it from a ‘subject’ which is more commodifiable ‘curricular package... taught through units and assessed outcomes’ (p.33).

There is the ambition among some interviewees, though, to define Education Studies as a discipline in its own right. This would not be possible under Oakeshott's (1978) tight definition. However, as shown in Chapter 4, McCulloch (2000) suggests that it is not simply an area of study or knowledge, but 'a community of scholars who share a domain of intellectual inquiry or discourse' (p.102). This looser definition might allow Education Studies to be described as a discipline. It seems, then, to be this looser definition of a discipline which attracts some of the interviewees to the idea of Education Studies as a discipline, and this is argued by the Senior Manager in Case 6. It is also another reason for the ambiguous view of the contributory disciplines, but there is rarely any clear analysis of the relationship between the Education Studies and the disciplines in the data, only hints at uncertainty.

Another issue which is not addressed by the interviewees is the problem of how disciplines, which require a 'disciplined' form of thinking and long-term socialisation into their methods and boundaries, can be included within Education Studies. There is little discussion of how this can be managed within a single subject and appears to be a source of the uncertainty about the disciplines. In some cases there are hints that subject leaders are aware of the problem, as in the case where they are viewed as too difficult for first-year students, or in the case which refused to allow its students to engage with the problematic of the methods of the disciplines. However, lacking seems to be any considered ways in which the disciplines are included or 'integrated' into the subject. There are many forms of expression such as 'they creep in', or 'they crop up', but nothing is made clear or explicit.

Finally, it has been shown that in some cases the subject rests largely upon a single discipline for its theoretical framework, and this is usually because of staffing interests or staffing limitations. Again, the data reveal uncertainty and ambiguity about whether a single subject can adequately form the basis for an Education Studies curriculum. In some cases this was argued; in others it was argued that the disciplinary base should be wider, but without any articulated rationale for it.

For all the differential statements, uncertainty and ambiguity about the disciplines, in none of the cases were the disciplines discounted as a part of the theoretical framework for the subject. It would appear then, that the disciplinary basis for teacher

training catalogued by Crook (2002) and McCulloch (2002) lives on in Education Studies, albeit on a more complex terrain. It is argued here that the nature and status of Education Studies as subject or discipline cannot be properly conceptualised until the role of the contributory disciplines is made clear. The fact that they are unclear at present is another symptom of the under-theorised nature of the subject.

## **Section 2: Discussion of the findings and implications for the development of the subject**

Not surprisingly, the data reveal a wide range of approaches to the subject. However, a notable finding is the tendency for Education Studies to have been derived as a retreat from teacher training for individual academics. As noted in Chapter 1, the present author devised the subject precisely to convert an undergraduate QTS in order to avoid the teacher training standards and Ofsted scrutiny. It is interesting that others shared the same view. In only a few cases was this decision taken in the same way at the faculty level. In more cases the move was made by individual staff who wished to escape state control of the education curriculum and there is almost a celebratory tone in some cases that academic freedom has been found for these individuals. This might be extended to celebrate the opportunity for undergraduates to explore educational issues and debates, free of the constraints of professional requirements and state regulation. It might even be suggested that undergraduate Education Studies exists as something of an academic resistance to the state control of teacher training. This is highlighted by the finding in the Welsh institution where there was a strong commitment to the National Assembly and to government policy. There Education Studies is depicted as consistent with government policy, whereas in the English cases, almost without exception, the tenor is creating resistance to or avoiding government policy. And this is consistent with the one of the central academic themes of Education Studies: academic critique.

However, for all that Education Studies is depicted as critical of government policy and in opposition to the state removal of educational theory from teacher training, it is surprising to find the subject consistently under-theorised in many of the cases. Only one case examined boasted a consistently argued framework. Given that courses have been devised because of the demise of theory in teacher training it might be expected that those who regret the loss of the disciplines in teacher training would be anxious to assemble a strong theoretical basis for the new subject. The fact that this is not the case is probably due to a number of reasons. The first is the fact that the subject operates in the student market and there may be some resistance among students to ‘hard theory’: Sociology and Philosophy, and that the disciplines might be perceived as ‘old-fashioned’ theory. A second may be the sheer difficulty, discussed in Chapter



4, of conceptualising a series of academic disciplines within a single subject. A third issue is the idea of creating Education Studies itself as a recognised discipline, distinct from a collection of other disciplines. This was found to be of interest of a number of the subject leaders, but the identification of such a model is not yet evident. The implication of these findings for the subject, then, is that there is considerable work to be done on devising and articulating rational academic theory for Education Studies.

The lack of a strong theoretical framework appears also to be due in some cases to the way in which some courses were derived by individuals according to their particular talents and interests. This has sometimes led to an idiosyncratic curriculum. It has also led to the idea that the theoretical framework is something that will emerge *post hoc* when the course has already been taught for some years. The fact that this can occur appears to be a function of several factors. The first is that some courses were derived by individuals, or very small numbers of people, without an academic framework to guide them. The QAA Benchmark (2000) was found to be unhelpful, or too late to have made an impact. The second appears to be the lack of any institutional interest or guidance in the nature of the subject – ‘benign indifference’ is how the attitude of one university was characterised. The third is the lack of an academic community which might guide and share experiences and perceptions.

The picture, then, is of groups of individuals devising programmes from a mixture of previous experience, available knowledge among the staff, and intuition about students’ needs and interests. What is an interesting phenomenon here is that the subject with such an uncertain knowledge base has been encouraged to grow so rapidly. And this is because of the rapid expansion of higher education and the general growth in student numbers. The subject has flourished because it provides student numbers to expanding faculties and universities. But the expansion is also due to the rising interest in education outside the teacher-training framework. Data is needed on the perspective of students as to why they join undergraduate Education Studies courses; however, it is possible to speculate that the subject is attractive because it is concerned with children and young people, has a strong ideological base and is close to students’ own life experiences. It is to be regretted, then, that the numerical strength of the subject should not be matched by a theoretical vision. This is not to argue for a

single theoretical framework for all courses, but that there should be a stronger perception of the academic basis and more articulate aims for the subject.

The question arises as to whether this theoretical void is peculiar to Education Studies, or whether it might be a characteristic of any ‘new’ university subject. The question has not been addressed in this study. However, examination of the literature indicates that it is likely not to be unique in the postmodern university. Readings (1996), for example, suggests that while the expansion of higher education sees the construction of impressive new buildings, the epistemological foundations of university knowledge are now uncertain. Barnett (2005) regrets the lack of attention to the reflective thinking about the curriculum in the current discourse about higher education which is concerned almost exclusively with teaching and learning and with performativity and employment markets. These would, to some extent, account for the lack of theory. There is insufficient data here to sustain a case for comparison with other subjects, but it is possible to speculate that Education Studies might be unique in that it has a particular historical source. The subject originated in theory for teacher training which was comprehensively challenged and discredited by government agencies and which was replaced by a government-controlled teacher-training curriculum hostile to educational theory. The Education Studies curriculum has been derived by those who have worked in teacher education and whose individual ideologies and careers have been displaced by the uniquely assertive imposition of the government’s training agenda. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the picture of the subject as resistance to teacher training should emerge so strongly and lead to its dissociation from the aims of performativity and employment which Barnett (2000) recounts.

Because of its explicit bid for freedom from state control of teacher training and to be an essentialist academic subject, Education Studies can perhaps be seen as an exception to the ‘narrative of decline’ (Maclean, 2005) expressed in so many accounts of postmodern higher education. The opportunity which it presents to enable students intellectually to critique their experiences are grounds for optimism that Education Studies can help to fulfil Barnett’s (2000) suggestion that ‘... society is hesitantly intimating that it needs the universities to live up to their rhetoric of guardians of reason’ (p.34).

An area for discussion is the differential perception of Education Studies as either an essentialist academic subject or as a subject with strong vocational orientation. The data show a variety of perceptions, with the view of a strongly classified and discipline-based subject as high status and an integrated and vocationally-oriented subject as low status – for low achievers, or for ‘widening participation’. Another feature of the data is that Education Studies tends to be perceived as low status when it is run alongside a QTS degree in the same institution. In that case it is frequently seen to be for those who are under-qualified for a place on the QTS degree, and therefore of lower quality. The fact that in an institution in which it ran without a concurrent QTS degree it was perceived as a high status academic subject demonstrates that the differentials may be a matter of perception rather than reality.

### **The future for Education Studies**

To conclude the discussion a series of recommendations are here offered for the way the subject should be enabled to develop. The first is the need for an active academic community and this is beginning to happen with the founding of the British Education Studies Association ([besa.ac.uk](http://besa.ac.uk)) in 2005.

Second, the community should work to share perspectives and experiences to create suitable academic frameworks for Education Studies. This is not to advocate a single approach or curriculum canon, but to arrive at some principles which ensure a proper academic basis for the subject, which the QAA Benchmark seems not to have achieved. If Education Studies is to be perceived as a ‘discipline’ then its format needs to be outlined and the academic community will need to be united in their subscription to it. Of course, in these days of ‘knowledge democracy’ (Delanty, 2000), such a definition solely by the academic community may not be possible; it may need to be agreed with its students. As a contribution to this debate, Appendix 1 to this Dissertation is a paper by the current author proposing a theoretical framework for Education Studies, using the course at Bath Spa as illustration.

The indifference of the postmodern university to its academic knowledge may be a matter for regret, but it is not something which can be affected by those working in the subject. So it is best acknowledged and ignored. What *is* of interest to the universities,

and which will grow in significance in the coming years, is the matter of employability. Subject leaders in the English institutions have been able comfortably to distance themselves from this: Education Studies is distinct from teacher training and so requires no vocational outcomes. However, the pressure on every university subject to demonstrate the employability of its graduates is one which Education Studies will not be able to evade. It will no longer be possible to argue that the subject can luxuriate in academic critique. If it is to survive, the subject will need to demonstrate its relevance to the employability market. First, Education Studies must demonstrate its relevance to future teachers. More than this, though, it needs to be seen to serve the wider community of non-school organisations and commercial enterprises. This is easy to recommend and difficult to bring about, but is a target for the Education Studies community.

It is fortunate for Education Studies that a range of employment opportunities is being created by the government's Workforce Remodelling project and the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2003b). It does seem that the subject will need to respond to this, in the way that the Welsh institution in the data describes. What it means, however, is that the exclusivity from government standards and definitions in which the subject has basked during its short life is likely to end. The celebration of academic freedom will need to be contested. It is no longer a certainty.

A factor that would strengthen the academic community of Education Studies is, of course, even larger student numbers. This could be achieved through the conversion of primary undergraduate teacher training courses to Education Studies plus PGCE (3+1). The failure of a large number of institutions to convert their undergraduate QTS courses to the 3+1 format suggests that the ideological commitment to a liberated professional workforce may be outweighed by the inertia of successful compliance. This comment was made on a number of occasions by senior managers in the research. In contrast to the idealistic proposals of Hargreaves (2003) for teacher education free of the compliance culture, it may well be that the inertia of successful conformity is the stronger effect. The academic community of Education Studies, then, will need to continue to make the case for freeing undergraduate education from state-definition and scrutiny.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

**Towards a theory of undergraduate Education Studies**

### **Appendix 2**

**Transcripts of Interviews**

### **Appendix 3**

**Analysis of each interview set**

## **Appendix 1**

**Towards a theory of undergraduate Education Studies**

**Stephen Ward**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Towards a theory of undergraduate Education Studies**

This is adapted from a paper presented to the Annual Conference of the British Education Studies Association in July, 2005. It presents the author's interpretation of the aims and theory of Education Studies and uses some features of the Education Studies programme at Bath Spa University as examples.

#### **Introduction**

The analysis of the research data in this thesis emphasises the under-theorisation of undergraduate Education Studies as a new university subject and throughout the analysis a number of criticisms of its academic framework are made. It seems disingenuous, then, to conclude this thesis without offering some theoretical proposal for the subject. Therefore, this paper draws upon the author's experiences as a subject leader to propose a form of theoretical framework for an Education Studies curriculum. Although informed by the research data and the literature, it is a normative account which advances prescriptive suggestions for the Education Studies for the aims and the curriculum for Education Studies in the current national context of England and Wales.

In order to do this, it is necessary to consider the likely student population. Undergraduate Education Studies has become a popular subject in the higher education market. The reasons for its rapid rise needs to be systematically explored by testing student opinion, but it is possible to speculate on the reasons for students selecting it. Unlike some of the respondents in the data, the vocational reasons are seen as uppermost in its success:

- The subject has only recently been offered by significant number of institutions and so has only just become an easily identifiable subject in the market.
- It offers a route into teaching which, at the undergraduate level, avoids the narrowly defined TDA curriculum for teacher training.

- The publicity given to teaching as a career by the Training and Development Agency in the last five years, together with recent improvements in teachers' salaries and conditions, has increased the demand for places on teacher training courses; undergraduate Education Studies provides an opportunity for those who do not succeed in obtaining a place on heavily over-subscribed undergraduate QTS courses.
- The subject offers an undergraduate opportunity to those students who are considering a career in the education professions, but have not made a final decision to commit themselves.
- The re-modelled school workforce and the *Every Child Matters* agenda has increased the employment opportunities in education beyond teaching, and Education Studies offers an obvious means to such employment for those students who are interested.

However, there are other attractions beyond the vocational, and these are featured in the descriptions of courses on university websites catalogued in Chapter 6:

- The subject deals with an area of knowledge with which potential students are likely to be familiar because of their own schooling and education. It is therefore bound to have an appeal to those who are simply interested in the processes of education.
- It also appeals to those who have other interests in education, such as school governors, parents of children and those working with young people in different ways.
- The fact that it concerns the development of children will be an attraction to many.
- The subject has a strong ideological basis: a commitment to the benefits of education and the improvement of society.
- There is often a global perspective which attracts those who are interested in international affairs and working abroad.
- Finally, as the study of education, the subject is imbued with an inherent optimism and idealism about society and the world which is likely to appeal to young people.

## **The current state of Education Studies**

It has been shown in this thesis that the growth of Education Studies from its origins in teacher training has produced a wide variety of curriculum content and formulations of the subject. With some exceptions, the drive in the development of the subject has been to formulate Education Studies as an autonomous academic subject free of the constraints of the government-controlled teacher-training curriculum. The last five or six years have seen various attempts to define the nature of non-teacher training Education Studies. For example, Bartlett et al (2001) and Matheson and Grosvenor (1999) set out theoretical models which are distinct from teacher education. There is a range of highly contrasting offerings in different universities listed in the survey of university websites in Chapter 6. The subject is variously seen as social policy, childhood studies, environmental education, comparative international education, educational research, with varying layers of emphasis in different courses. The QAA (2001) Benchmark for Education Studies is highly unspecific about the nature and content of the subject, and there is a studied avoidance of references to teaching or professional training in the document:

Education Studies is concerned with understanding how people develop and learn throughout their lives. It facilitates a study of the nature of knowledge, and a critical engagement with a variety of perspectives, and ways of knowing and understanding, drawn from a range of appropriate disciplines. There is diversity in Education Studies courses at undergraduate level but all involve the intellectually rigorous study of educational processes, systems and approaches, and the cultural, societal, political and historical contexts within which they are embedded .....

A necessary feature of an Education Studies undergraduate honours degree is an intellectually rigorous study of educational processes, and the cultural, political and historical contexts within which they are embedded (Para 6.1).

The thesis attempts to show the reasons for the definition of Education Studies away from teaching or professional practice and as an autonomous academic subject. In this paper, the aim is to formulate a view of Education Studies which can be seen as an autonomous academic subject, but, at the same time, one which is relevant to and informs future professional practitioners. It will be argued that the distinction between an autonomous academic subject and the preparation for future professionals is probably a false dichotomy.



Vocational outcomes should not be seen purely in terms of teaching, but in the wider educational workforce which is growing in the extended school and with adult learners in lifelong learning and training. So Education Studies is not simply for future teachers, but for a whole range of possible careers, as well as simply of academic interest. It is suggested that the tendency to define Education Studies as an autonomous academic subject is to ignore its possibilities as a preparation for professional practice and that the relationship between the new subject and teacher training, as well as other professional vocations, should be explored.

This is not a plea for the Education Studies curriculum to be concerned exclusively with teaching and the school curriculum, and it is certainly not a recommendation that Education Studies should be a surrogate course in pedagogy. Of course, it needs to be carefully distinguished from teacher training. It should, though, be recognised that Education Studies is a subject which includes future professionals among its students. What they need is not more of the curriculum content and pedagogical guidance that they receive on a teacher training course, but a critical analysis of educational policy and professional practice and an understanding of the wider socio-economic issues and politics of education – the understandings that they are likely not to gain from a teacher training course bounded by the TDA Standards.

As shown in Chapter 4, state control of teacher education has led to a competences-based model with tight designation of curriculum content focussing on subject knowledge and its teaching (DfES/TTA, 2002). The resulting compliance culture of teacher training is well documented in Bottery (2000) Maguire, Dillon and Quintrell (1998), Mahony and Hextall (1997) and Cowen (2002). Hargreaves (2003) sees the controls of teacher training as a function of a wider malaise caused by the global demand for increased standards through standardisation which miss the needs of the global economy:

In their preparation, their professional development and their working lives, today's teachers must get a grasp of and a grip on the knowledge society in which their pupils live and work. If teachers do not understand the knowledge society, they cannot prepare their pupils for it. As a traditional Irish saying proclaims: 'You have to listen to the river if you want to catch a trout' (p. xvii).

Education Studies can provide this understanding of the knowledge society in which students, whether they are future teachers or not, are living. It is suggested that there is no need to differentiate between Education Studies for future education professionals and others. While Education Studies can be seen as an academic form of study for those who intend to work in the wider world, a similar understanding is required for those who intend to work as education professionals. The perceptions and understanding of Educational policies and processes for all are the same: prospective professionals are simply a sub-group.

### **Towards a theory for Education Studies for future teachers**

First a principle for Education Studies is proposed, before turning to some specific selections for the possible content of the Education Studies curriculum. This is the notion of Education as ‘emancipation’, derived from the Critical Theory of Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas of the Frankfurt School. Peters (1966) demonstrated the now-familiar notion that education must include the concept of that which is valuable. This idea can be broadened in that education might be intended to create ‘a better world’ and this is where Critical Theory becomes relevant. Blake and Masschelein (2003) summarise the key features of Critical Theory and their relevance to education as

- a critical stance towards society
- ethical concern for the individual
- rejection of all possible excuses for hunger, domination, humiliation or injustice
- longing for a better world

They point out that, while critical theorists have never taken much interest in education, an important aspect of their vision is the desire for an improved human condition and that Educationists have drawn from critical theory. How this model might work for Education Studies is now explained.

Everyone knows about education. All have learned and been subjected to educational policies and practice in various institutions and all have taken-for-granted assumptions about knowledge, learning, teaching and schooling. The role of Education Studies should be to enable students to understand the nature of education policies and

practice, to engage them in informed critique and to see education through the prism of academic disciplines. This involves challenging their assumptions about reality, freeing them from what Marx calls their 'false consciousness', a process which Habermas (1981) entitles 'emancipation'. There are many examples of students who talk of their lives being changed by new understandings, or of 'knowing the world differently'. It might be argued that any subject can do this. However, it is suggested that the depth of first-hand experience of schooling that most people have, combined with the ultimate revelation about educational process, can be particularly significant for them. The task is to de-construct the familiar and the obvious and to enable the individual to formulate an academic critique.

Any educational course is a set of propositions through lectures, seminars and reading the literature and research. For students, their background knowledge and experience can be drawn upon to test, verify or reject such propositions made to them. An example is the proposition that some educational research has found that whole-class teaching in primary schools is more effective in supporting learning than group or individualised instruction. First, the individual has easy access to the concepts in the proposition, having been experience most probably the types of teaching described. The individual can then subjectively test this proposition by recalling both good and poor examples of class teaching and draw their own conclusion. This is different from coming to a proposition in physics such as the atomic make-up of materials where there is no direct experiential access to the concepts and all propositions must be tested within the theoretical framework of physics. Familiarity, then, is a valuable commodity for the Education Studies student. On the other hand, however, such familiarity makes it difficult for the student to distance herself from the nature of propositions; the taken-for-granted in educational experience is bound to be very strong. The task for Education Studies is to deconstruct the false consciousness of the taken-for-granted of educational experience.

The current centrally-determined teacher-training model cannot be anything other than a particular reality which is set unquestioningly before 'trainees'. The very term implies their subjugation to a particular order. Against this, Education Studies is a requirement for the teacher who is going to be able to develop a proper professional career, rather than operate according to the latest government directions. Professional

practice in schools is now channelled through a series of unquestioned assertions. The latest are about ‘learning styles’ and ‘emotional intelligence’, notions borrowed from popular psychology. So there is now a flurry of unquestioned practice by an unsuspecting profession.

The emphasis on critique suggested above may give the impression that Education Studies can only ever be a negative analysis: complaint about Government controls. Instead of this, an extended notion of the concept of ‘critique’ is proposed. First, and obviously, it goes beyond negative criticism: it is not simply finding fault, weakness and evil. Instead, it should involve balanced evaluation and assessment against a set of principles. Those principles must be based, of course, upon values, and those values must be open to scrutiny and debate. Education Studies should be asking difficult questions about underlying assumptions and evidence.

Underlying the notion of values in education must be the idea that something is held to be good, the better world. The point is that, as well as offering a cold, rational analysis of education processes, the subject needs to engage with students’ interests and commitments; it needs to be ‘inspirational’, offering students an optimistic view of human beings and their learning, of society and of the future for a ‘better world’. Inspiration and critical analysis can be contradictory. Some students intending to teach may be disaffected by the revelations about nature of the education system presented in the Education Studies course: their initial excitement about bringing children to a better world is punctured by the realisation of the political structures in which they live. So it is important to balance these: the inspiration needed for practice, with the academic scepticism needed to discover truth.

### **The Education Studies curriculum**

It is argued, then, that the role of Education Studies is to enable all students who are interested in education to engage in informed critique of education for a better world. This section offers some examples of the ways in which the subject can achieve this for future teachers. They are:

- the contested nature of knowledge
- the contested nature of learning and teaching;

- alternative visions through international and global perspectives
- the nature of the teaching profession
- the role of research

Particular instances of the curriculum are drawn from the Education Studies programme at Bath Spa University and detailed in Ward (2004b).

### *1 The contested nature of knowledge*

For many students knowledge is seen as that selection which is the school curriculum, and as future teachers they may well see the curriculum as a received and non-problematic reality. Education Studies expels this myth by helping students to understand the distinction between knowledge and the curriculum and to understand the ways in which knowledge is socially and politically constructed. One way of achieving this is to guide students through the politics of the development of the National Curriculum for England and Wales. Another strategy is to contrast it with the national curricula in other countries. For example, the Norwegian curriculum provides a framework based, not upon subjects, but upon visions of human development. Students' opportunity to see alternative ways of perceiving knowledge helps them to understand the nature of the process which occurs in the UK and reveals to them the essential matter of the arbitrary and political nature of knowledge. And this is what can be *inspirational*: the Norwegian National Curriculum appeals often to students' view of a better world, where learning is not framed by an adult view of subjects; it enables future teachers to see an alternative vision of knowledge and the curriculum.

Future teachers also need to understand the debates within the subjects they will be teaching. A group of optional modules at Bath Spa is concerned with school curriculum subjects, although not the 'how-to-teach' pedagogical content. Instead, students look at the epistemology of the subject – what it is to know. For example, students examine Mathematics as *a priori* knowledge, reflect on their own learning in Mathematics and consider why some people find the subject difficult and intimidating (Hanson, 2004). In Science there is discussion of different perspectives on science: whether it is a body of empirical facts, or a creative activity and the beliefs that underlie different views of the subject (Howe and Davies, 2004). Bianchi (2004)

considers the nature of knowing in the arts, and how learning in art changes perceptions of the world. Haywood (2004) points to the ways in which, not only learning, but the nature of knowledge itself has been affected by the role of information and communications technology through the following functions: provisionality, capacity and range, interactivity, speed and automatic functions (p.179). The key point, then, is that not only the curriculum – a selection from available knowledge – but knowledge itself, what we might call the raw material of teaching, is seen as problematic and open to question.

## *2 The contested nature of learning*

Unsurprisingly the QAA Benchmark suggests that Education Studies should be concerned with learning and, of course, some aspect of learning theory has been a long-established part of teacher-training theory. Ironically perhaps, it is the learning theory based on Piagetian models of human development that attracted so much criticism from students and teachers about their training in the past. There is now, though, a welter of diverse learning theory to inspire students and teachers: Constructivist Approaches (Von Glasersfeld, 1989), Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983), Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1996), Accelerated Learning (Smith, 2003), Building Learning Power (Claxton, 2002), Philosophy for Children (Fisher, 2003) as well as various accounts of ‘brain-based’ learning and metacognition. These are now presented in popular texts and are taken up with enthusiasm by teachers and teacher trainers. The teaching profession in its usual way takes into its arms the latest recommendations for successful learning and ‘brain gym’, bottles of water and background Mozart become ingrained into the unquestioned orthodoxy of professional practice. What is often lacking among teachers is an informed critical analysis of these ideas.

Here the opportunities in Education Studies are for future teachers to be inspired and excited by new possibilities for learning and teaching and by the revelation of new insights about their own learning. At the same time, Education Studies for professionals should be offering a critique of these proposals. For example, what is meant by ‘accelerated’, what kind of ‘philosophy’ is it and how much of the theories depend upon mere textual metaphor in the presentation of theory? The psychometric

concept of ‘intelligence’, whether emotional, cognitive or multiple, is still inherent in theories of learning (Coulby 2000, Howe, 1999), and the very concept needs to be questioned.

### ***3 The contested nature of teaching***

From the debate about learning comes analysis of teaching. So there are debates about the relative merits of class teaching, group learning and individualised learning (Gipps, 1992) and evidence (Galton, Simon and Croll, 1980) demonstrates the superiority of those teachers who prioritise whole-class teaching. So we have the Effective Schools machinery with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in primary schools establishing practice based upon this evidence; professional practice is dictated by this top-down model drawn from selected empirical data and the model is fastened into teaching training with the three-part lesson.

However, these are technical matters. What teacher training is unable to explore from its confined technicist perspective are the underlying political assumptions about teaching. Teaching is not merely a technical matter like building motor-cars. It is a value-laden enterprise based upon political assumptions about the nature of human beings and the nature of society. The very act of constraining children compulsorily within a school may be worthwhile and good, but it is certainly political. How they are allowed to behave within the school is also political. Education Studies allows future teachers to consider and discuss the nature of the political decision that they have taken in becoming an educational professional and the nature of the political decisions which are taken on their behalf as they engage in practice determined by a government-controlled schooling system (Hicks, 2004, Bord, 2004). This is not an argument for de-schooling, but it is to argue that teachers should be informed about the possibilities of radical forms of education and to be able to consider them. A module on Radical Education at Bath Spa gives students the option to consider these issues.

The exposure of future teachers to such ideas has ‘radicalised’ them and made them disaffected about the school system, to the extent that they change their career plans, protesting that they could never be a part of such a system. This might be a case for

keeping prospective teachers away from this dangerous area of human knowledge and it is here again that there is a possible tension between critique and inspiration. The problem is in how to create inspired professionals, but who also have a critique of the system within which they are working. Other students report that taking Education Studies has made them *more* inspired about teaching. They say that understanding ‘the world’ and the nature of the system has allowed them to understand what they can do and what they can’t do, and that this has an empowering effect. Of course, more systematic data about students’ perceptions of Education Studies would help to substantiate these claims.

#### ***4 International perspectives***

One of the sources of the teaching methods in the National Numeracy Strategy was comparative data about teaching in Taiwan (Reynolds and Farrell, 1996) where undifferentiated whole-class teaching in a three-part lesson was depicted as promoting higher levels of achievement in mathematics. This was just one of the many attempts to drive the political agenda for change in the British education system by making selective comparisons with practice and attainment levels in other countries.

International comparisons are intrinsically worthwhile in helping students and teachers to perceive alternatives to received policy and practice. A current case is the Reggio Emilia approach to early years education in Italy.

Such comparisons can be taken at their face value and practice identified elsewhere can be unquestioningly accepted as grounds for change. However, what is possible in Education Studies is for students to look beyond the superficial difference of test comparisons and practice and to examine the cultural context within which the practice takes place. For example, as Wood (2004) explains, many of the Pacific Rim countries share a culture based upon Confucian ideals of a non-competitive society in which

...there is a pervasive belief... that all children are infinitely malleable and that children can be imbued with qualities which will last into adulthood. For Japanese teachers, therefore, all children are capable of success and they have strong expectations that their pupils will perform well (p.12).



This contrasts with the culture in which British teachers and children are raised where children are differentiated by attainment (or ‘ability’) and society demands they achieve individually. That it is just *not so simple* is the important point here and professionals who understand this are in a better position to understand the methods in which they are required to employ.

So it is a deeper understanding through international comparison which Education Studies can bring about, and this is an understanding of alternative world views. An examination of some different perspectives can help to free people from the realities in which they are locked. This can be a source of great inspiration to students. As Wood explains:

A consideration of Australian Aboriginal and Native American beliefs and values reveals a startlingly different approach to the physical world in which we live. Aborigines have a close symbiotic relationship with the land, of which they see themselves as caretakers and guardians.... In a similar way Native Americans have a sense of kinship with other life forms. These views are at odds with those of western societies which see the world as a place for exploitation and production.... Aboriginal and Native American education are informed by a particular understanding of the world and by a strong spirituality. They involve personal transformation through knowledge of history, ritual and myth, often encoded in dance, art and song... This contrasts with a western approach which has focused on education in terms of facts and figures which can be passed on in books and programmes of study. While it is easy to romanticise such approaches and use information out of context, a study of other world views and educational systems undoubtedly poses a challenge to the neo-liberal assumptions of western capitalism and the associated education systems (Wood, 2004:16).

Students find these ideas inspiring, again as a part of the emancipation process, the freedom from the closed vision in which they have been raised. The point is that, while they are enabled to perceive that there *are* alternative world views, it helps them to develop a critique of their own world view and to understand the nature of the neo-liberal society in which they live.

### ***5 Global perspectives on economics and education***

The use of international comparisons to create moral panic about educational practice in the home country is a now well-known strategy by governments. It is, though, a

very restricted version of learning about international education. Education Studies offers the possibilities of views across the globe, the relationships between economies and education and, for example, the causes of world poverty. Teachers are actors in the knowledge economy and, if they are not to be, as Hargreaves (2003) fears, 'the drones and clones of policy-makers' anaemic ambitions' (p. xvii), then they need to understand the political and economic role which education plays, not just in the society, but the *world* in which they work. Currently, teachers can be trapped within the confines of media perceptions of Africa. Education Studies can help future teachers to understand the economic implications of globalisation.

So student teachers need a grasp of the concept of globalisation in education and this is the idea of being able to understand the links between a range of issues. Hicks (2004) warns against the global perspective as being limited to a trip abroad or links with a school in another country. He suggests that what is needed is an overview of 'the state of the world' and the ways in which issues are related: wealth and poverty, human rights, peace and conflict, the environment' (p. 22).

These are topics which are touched upon in the school curriculum and in some degree courses. However, their relationship to education may well not be evident to students and it is necessary to raise their consciousness about them. Education Studies can provide such insights. Obviously, any one of them is a substantial topic in itself, but to introduce students to some key ideas, facts and issues can be enough to start them thinking with a more open mind-set. At Bath Spa a compulsory module introduces these, while optional modules which cover global issues in more depth are: Human Rights and Education; Education and Environment; Education in the Pacific Rim; Education in the USA; Education in Africa; Education in Europe; Education for the Future.

As Hicks (2004) suggests, there is a problem in presenting the world to children as overwhelmingly problematical because the effect of making everything seem impossible is disempowering. What is needed is the sense that action can produce results. The same is true of Education Studies students who can be encouraged to think positively about their role as education professionals and many come away from their studies with the sense that they are empowered to make changes of some kind in

the world. Again, it is this sense of optimism, idealism and inspiration which is essential in the role of the future education professional. And Education Studies can provide here both the inspiration and the analytic critique.

## ***6 The education profession***

If the ‘drones and clones’ model of teaching is to be avoided, it is surely essential that future professionals understand the nature of their profession. The suggestions above about teachers’ understanding of the nature of knowledge, of learning and teaching and of their role in the global knowledge economy are part of this. However, they also need a local knowledge of where their profession is within the context of Government policy, and this requires an understanding, not just of Government education policy, but of the whole political and economic backdrop against which education exists. Again, it is such a political analysis which is difficult to conceal within a teacher-training programme.

First students need to appreciate the neo-liberal economic western framework in which UK society exists; then they need to understand the role which politics plays in the Government’s global economic policy and its perception of the relationship between education and the economy. One of the common and well-rehearsed debates is whether education is to improve the individual or the industrial economy. Policy norms over the last twenty-five years have shifted strongly towards the view of education as fulfilling the nation’s economic needs (Bottery, 2000). However, as Wolf (2002) demonstrates, the relationship is not so simple and a good education system is no guarantee of a strong economy. This challenges the whole role of education in society and renders it problematic. Professionals need to know this and how the Government is manipulating the teaching profession, as Bottery shows, by creating a managerialist culture through budgetary devolution and the introduction of industrialised targets for children’s and teachers’ performance. City Academies, where they might find themselves working, are borne of a free-market notion that the involvement of private enterprise in the social services will help to improve them. Professionals need to understand the economic arguments upon which this is based, and they may find the policy to be justifiable. Equally, before professionals take a

decision *not* to work in a City Academy ‘on principle’, they should be informed about the principle.

Finally, they need to understand the nature of the free-market situation in which the education system is now operating. They need to understand that the National Curriculum and standardised testing were not set up purely to ensure that all children ‘received a good education’, but were designed to provide a standardised measuring scale for teachers and schools to be assessed against in a performative market. There is an apparent contradiction with the Thatcher Government, which was professedly committed to removing regulation and ‘rolling back government’, introducing the biggest legislative programme and regulation ever inflicted upon schools. However, this is simple neo-liberal economics: in order to be a free market there must be the regulations to enable it. The default for the market is not unregulated markets, but regulation. Strong political intervention is required in order to establish the conditions for a free market (Gray, 1998). The function of the National Curriculum and testing were created to fulfil this requirement. Professionals should know this.

## ***7 The role of research***

The role of educational research is essential to both Education Studies and future teachers. Of course, the Education Studies student must be able to read and interpret research data, understand it within a theoretical context and be able to carry out small-scale research enquiries using appropriate methods. But these are the very skills and knowledge needed by professionals. Action research has had a faltering presence in schools in the last twenty years. However, there is now a growing perception among professionals of the need to gather their own data and view their practice from a research perspective, and this comes from the Improving Schools culture. Further, education professionals need to be able to read and interpret educational research, rather than simply have the results of research fed down to them via Government diktat, such as the latest on ‘synthetic phonics’ (Rose, 2006). If there is to be a profession which takes ownership of its practice, it must understand the nature of the evidence. Government attempts to manipulate the practice of the medical profession have met much sterner resistance, and this is because doctors, for all the weaknesses of their training, are taught to have a critical analysis of research. The house journal

of medicine, the British Medical Journal, is a research journal. The house journal of the teaching profession, the Times Educational Supplement, reports mainly on the latest tussles between the Government and the professions. Its research reporting is second hand and scanty.

## Conclusion

What has been proposed here is a programmatic definition – a political definition - of teachers, or education professionals. It is argued that professionals should know about the world and be aware of the global political and economic context in which they work; they should not only know what they are teaching, but also understand the nature of knowledge and the way it is socially constructed. They should understand not just the ‘ways pupils learn’, but what underlies the assumptions about those theories of learning. They should know, not just what Government policy on education *is*, but why such policy is and how it is derived. They should have educational vision, but understand that other visions are possible.

In other words, professionals should be loosened from the technicist framework in which current teacher-training places them and enable to think, argue and reason. Education Studies can offer this because of the vagaries of the present UK higher education system, in which teacher training is controlled and HEFCE-funded courses are left with a free academic hand. This freedom should be used thoughtfully to create an academic framework for future professionals, and resist simply indulging pet hobbies and predilections.

This makes Education Studies the ideal precursor to professional training. In a 3+1 programme Education Studies is separated from the contingencies of training and allows students to take a critically analytical approach, unfettered by the immediate demands of practice. There are two *academic* advantages over the traditional forms of undergraduate initial teacher education. First, it allows universities to determine the content of education studies during the first three years, allowing them to by-pass the narrow, technicist definitions of TTA-governed teacher training. Second, it enables students to think and learn without the demands of preparation for professional practice which permeate QTS programmes and which often prevent students from

being able to make the kind of critical analysis of education processes and structures which should characterise a degree programme. The task which faces universities is to devise a form of Education Studies which will stand on its own as a legitimate undergraduate form of study, but will also be seen to be relevant and appropriate as a precursor to, but not a substitute for, teacher training.

It might be a golden age that we are in now when we can celebrate a wide range of Education Studies curricula in higher education institutions, a newly emerging subject born in the cradle of teacher-training. Efforts to allow the subject a broader range than the preparation of teachers is essential, but it should be acknowledged that future professionals still form a core of our students and what they need is Education Studies *and* training. It is argued then that, not only has Education Studies no need to dissociate itself from the preparation of professionals, but it should see the preparation of a future well-informed workforce as its principal aim.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Transcripts of Interviews**

**Appendix 2**

**Transcripts of interviews**

Interviews are transcribed with numbered interactions. The interviewer’s speech is shown in bold.

The Subject Leaders’ transcriptions are first in each set, followed by the Senior Managers’.

The transcripts are anonymised to conceal location and type of institution, names and gender of individuals.

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## CASE 1 TRANSCRIPT

### Subject Leader 1 (SL1)

May 17 2004

1. **How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. Well, there's a number of different levels. There's pre my involvement. About ten years ago the Director of the School asked a colleague, who's still here, to set up a department of education studies and nothing happened. I got interested in a department of education studies about five years ago. The original idea I had – because I'd been at a validation in the School of Health, and they'd been doing a degree on health and public policy, or something like that, I can't remember the exact title – and it just seemed to me there was a possibility of doing education and public policy, aimed at professionals, and other people, who needed to have an idea about public policy and education, but also how public policy was developed, how policy was generated, and so on. And that was..... I thought that was a good idea, but it wasn't allowed to progress for a number of reasons, namely that the guy who was Director of School then left.
3. We've gone through about three or four organisations; the Faculty was a school then and the person who's doing (Name of the current Head of Education and Childhood Studies School) job then left and the guy, who took over was from another school, didn't really want to do it, then he was ill, then died and we went through reorganisation and we got (Dean's name). So it was really that the present initiative was (Dean's name's). S/he felt, and I agreed, that we should go over to Education Studies: first to increase the portfolio of degrees that we have in the School of Education, also to increase the number of degrees not dominated by Ofsted and the rigours of ITT. Also looking at the workforce agreements and all the rest of it, looking at the demographics there's a good chance that the number of teachers is going to be reduced. So there's all sorts of issues and last year, the first year that she was here, she said 'Who's interested in doing Education Studies?' and I put my hand up, along with other colleagues, and so it came out of that.
4. **So you initiated it as policy, but then you were .....**
5. Yes, I could never understand why we weren't doing it. I was looking on UCAS sites and there are something like 40 institutions; there are something like 628 courses, or versions of Education Studies. There was a huge number of institutions: every other ex-teacher training institution – you know Bath Spa, wherever... It didn't make any difference, they were all doing Education Studies.
6. **It's relatively new, though, isn't it?**
7. Well yes, the last ten years. Lancaster seems to have been going for a relatively long time.
8. **So it depended on individuals, really? You had an individual here – a Head of Faculty – who wasn't interested, so it didn't happen?**
9. Yes.

**10. .... And then (Dean's name) came along so it did?**

11. Yes.

**12. And the university weren't saying you should be doing this?**

13. No. We'd have had more growth. And so we've got to get numbers from other courses and there's a huge amount of politics involved in that.

**14. Tell me a bit about that.**

15. Well the numbers come from courses which under-recruit. But, of course, within the Faculty they've come from..... they've come from Outdoor Leisure and Food School, and they're very worried that..... Well I was told by the director of that school that they saw Education Studies as a Trojan horse that was actually going to see the end of Consumer Studies because we're taking their numbers and, yes we can recruit, but they were having problems in certain areas, so their course becomes unviable. Then as a *school* they'll become unviable and the Director of School - and she's very meticulous –

**16. This is (Dean's name)?**

17. No, sorry this is (Name). You will discover names (laughs). In the past we had schools, and now we have faculties; within the faculties we now have schools.... And (Name) is the Director of the School of Outdoor Leisure and Food in the Faculty, and (Dean's name) is the Dean of the Faculty, and she's...(Name) .... is fighting her corner and she's very meticulous; she went through all the numbers..... and last year we got the numbers OK but this year, because we've got this new course in Early Years, we've got to get the numbers for that from somewhere. So we're taking 25 of her numbers; so we've got about 50 and you've got to think about it: it's not just 50 for one year, so it works out at 150 places from her school.

**18. So she's not happy?**

19. (Laughs) No.

**20. But you can recruit and get students?**

21. Yes, we can get students. The validation took place late July last year and so we had a very short time, but we got about 20 students, and we've kept them, though we did lose a couple.

**22. Why do you think it's so easy to recruit students to Education Studies? (Not on the schedule)**

23. I've been doing a bit of research for myself, because I want to do a presentation at BERA about why students want to do Education Studies and I've come to the conclusion that there's a mismatch between the views of the lecturers and the

motivation of the students. I argue that I see Education Studies as viewing education in its widest context. It's about educational policy. Education Studies has come out of the classroom in some respects and was dominated by the needs of teachers, because I think education's wider than that, and in that sense, how I view it is as an industry; I mean this is a reasonable size commercial enterprise..... it's a business. I'm not saying that's good, but for most people to actually criticise who teach, the business policy that has been developed, an understanding of those processes, and there isn't anybody at the moment and I think teachers get shafted because there's a lot of people out there who say the emperors' got no clothes, so to speak. Because I don't see there's a critique of government policy at the moment. There's moans and groans and half-hearted attempts at industrial action by a few teachers, but there's no systematic, high profile critique.... Ted Wragg is the only person who contends..... but even then his critiques are only located within the classroom. It's not that overview of education in the wider context. He doesn't talk about FE and he doesn't talk about other non-main-stream providers and so on. He doesn't talk about universities and how it impinges on him. So there's huge areas and it's school focus all the time. So there's no lecturer's perspective. And students come on it who want to get into teaching.

**24. So students see it as a route into teaching, which, of course, it can be.**

25. Oh yes. If we said that you couldn't get into teaching from it we wouldn't recruit. And in fact I've taken a lot of battering..... I don't know what kind of 3+1 policy you have at Bath Spa, but what we do have is guaranteed interviews for our Early Years PGCE and I know (Tutor name) at (another institution); I've talked to him/her and PGCE people there won't touch it. I know the same problem occurred at (another institution); the PGCE people won't look at Education Studies. It's a huge problem; but here, again with (Dean's name) backing - there's an issue of power politics here and it had to be fought for and I still think we've got battles further on down the road.

**26. But you're coming from outside teacher training? It's not originated within teacher training?**

27. No. From my perspective I see it as ....(hesitant) theory for teachers. I keep on saying Education Studies has to move out of the classroom and when you say it to people they look at you quite askance, but I think it has to have some sort of status and if you start to say it's a sort of ITT route, then that's not good.

**28. The next question is the aims of the programme and how they were derived, and I think you've talked about that to a great extent.**

29. I think so.... It's for graduates who can go into a range of professions which are allied to education, mainly that they want to go and be as teachers, but it seems to me that there are so many jobs these days in terms of..... well like thirty years ago you didn't have big accounting firms being involved in education. Now we do. Well you've got to have someone who has an understanding of policy in education, that wider overview; so obviously there are some jobs there.

**30. So the distinctive features of this course are.....?**

31. I think we concentrate on policy a lot. In the second year we have the politics of learning and we also have (hesitates) management in curriculum ..... there are a couple of modules that are oriented towards that, trying to get people to think about How did we actually get here? What's the nature of education policy? Both at the national and international level, but also understanding the ideology behind it, you know, because nothing comes without an agenda.

**32. Do you think, because of what you said about tutors' and students' agenda you have to turn students round to this?**

33. Well, I suppose what we *do* do is sell it and say, look what you'll be is a better teacher, because I think that one thing that teacher education has a deficit in is in terms of actually understanding about education. And with the stress on competences – I think that competences are important and all the rest of it – but you'd be talking about a much longer course and you've thrown out the baby with the bath water. You know, Sociology is not taught, Psychology.... I mean ITT pays lip service to Piaget and they get some sort of understanding of it, yes, but ....

**34. Yes, my next question was what roles to you think the subjects play. I notice that you haven't got modules called 'the Sociology of Education'.....**

35. There's two ways to go, aren't there? You either have subject-discrete modules or you have integrated modules. Subject-discrete modules means the ghetto-isation of the subject, to some extent, and putting the subject into separate compartments. An integrated approach, which is what we've opted for, is it doesn't get taught, but, as we've tried to do, for example, in the first year modules is Education, Values and Society where there are discrete blocks of teaching about the history of education, about philosophy of education and so on. So within the modules there are blocks which make links to the different subjects, but modules on the history of education, no we don't do that.

**36. But for the students, are they aware that they're doing sociology or psychology...?**

37. Yes, we flag it. We have a psychology.... in the first-year modules we do philosophy, history and sociology and psychology's down in the second module called 'How people learn' and that was because in the partner modules in the in the associated subject areas we've got special needs and the special needs people wanted to have that how people learn module as a separate entity. And it's flagged as sociology of education and history. I do history, for example, and we do look at – it's quite clearly indicated – from the Renaissance period to the present day and we're trying to make the links between curriculum development; the philosophy's there, but this is what it was like on the ground. And they will look at, for example, Brian Simon's work, because I think he was a brilliant....

**38. What about the contested nature of knowledge?**

39. In some respects I think the contested nature of it's going to come in the third level year. I think it will be done, well actually I know it will be done, because it's important that people realise that it is contested, that there are different..... and just to describe them and how it's actually implemented in practice, that's going to be there (hesitates) (phone rings; pause while answering).

**40. The theoretical framework for the subject – I think you've talked about that. Is there anything you'd say about that?**

41. What do you mean by that?

**42. It's whatever you would say.**

43. (Hesitates) I mean even within the group..... I've given a very partial view of it. I think if my view was in discussion in a sort of wider..... there would be probably dissension from it..... (hesitates)

**44. Debate within the team?**

45. Right..... er and debate within the course..... there are tensions (laughs).

**46. Are those from teacher trainers?**

47. Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I mean I'm trying to drag people away from..... dare I say it... a lot of the modules that were written for the Early Years bit I've changed (laughs)

**48. (Joins in laughing)**

49. I mean they were so ITT; I've opened them up. I mean some of them are still a bit ITT-ish, but I think we've got to.... I wanted them to fit into the widest possible context. So I think there are tensions there. I think part of those tensions arise because A) well I'm 50, so that means that when I was educated, when I did my PGCE 28 years ago I went into teaching when I was 27 and I'd also done a sociology degree and that knowledge and background means that you are a different sort of animal from colleagues who are now in their 30s. And I think that they have a very narrow focus on what education is (pauses, inarticulate) – I'm trying to help you with your research. What amazes me is when I was a student I was always politically active to some degree and that was always fed into things like what I discussed. But a lot of colleagues there's an absence of politics, and absence of the sociology and understanding, there's an absence of a critique of what they're doing.

**50. Because they're teaching on ITT?**

51. Yes.

**52. So while the course doesn't originate in ITT, some of the staff *do*.....?**

53. Yes, and it's making the intellectual jump out of it and actually looking at education, looking at the sociology of education ..... (indistinct) and philosophy, there's an absolute absence of it ..... (pause, indistinct) Montessori, Steiner, all these different traditions that developed over the years. What goes on is what makes a good numeracy lesson for a Reception class, a literacy lesson for whatever.....

**54. Do you find staff are reluctant to teach this, then?**

55. Ah..... (pause) There's a lot of politics here, right? Because we have a Childhood Studies Degree, and that's shared with the School of Health (in a separate Faculty) and Education Studies is seen as a.... and that's older, well it started in about '96, it's eight years old. So it's split between the School of Health and the School of Education. So it's like the School of Education declaring a bit of UDI and there've been lots of battles which I don't really want to go into.....

**56. But Childhood Studies is *in* the other.....?**

57. It straddles two faculties.....

**58. But who's responsible for it?**

59. It sits in the School of Health.

**60. So you've broken away from that?**

61. Yes, there's a challenge there (laughs).

**62. So the micro-politics are quite.....**

63. Oh, the micro-politics are phenomenal (laughs) and the wheeling and dealing is unbelievable, but we're still here and we're growing.... and that's important....

**64. Because you can recruit students?**

65. But it's the Dean now. We wouldn't be in that position; it would have been an uphill battle. But what was the question?

**66. It was the theoretical framework and you were saying whether people are reluctant.....**

67. Oh yes, well most people, like Colin next door, come straight out of school and they see it as an opportunity to do something different. And most of the people are..... positive about it. Erm the problems about it are the sheer amount of demand on people's workload, so getting people together is difficult. I think some people feel they don't have the knowledge. They're good at coming out as teachers and doing effective literacy lesson, but beyond that there isn't a great deal. But their enthusiasm for it.... they're reasonably committed to it and it's not..... the one thing that's here is *not* running away from Ofsted. I had a *battle* to get it,

right, and I think for some people when people were involved in it in the very early stages of this new round it was a way of getting away from Ofsted, but it's not seen as that. I mean I don't understand why, because I would think it was the obvious thing to do, but it's not, because it could have taken us towards Education Studies some time ago and we're a late starter into the field.

**68. My question 10 was 'Is Education Studies a way of avoiding state intervention?'**

69. No, that's not motivation as such. I tend to use the argument to colleagues.... I would be using the argument why would you be involved in that, with the demographics and the changing nature of teaching workforce and so on, and so if you're sensible about these things you'll keep your fingers in a couple of different pies and you can be sure that one of those is going to be there one way round. But, you know, in terms of ways of actually escaping from Ofsted inspections that's not.....

**70. How much does staff interest and expertise determine what's in it?**

71. Yes, there's a bit of that.

**72. There's you and.....**

73. Yes, there's me and we've just recruited somebody else, targeted at Education Studies. (Tutor name) will make a core team of two, a very small team, I know, but his first call is Education Studies and I think that's good and he's got a lot of the sociological background and all the rest of it – history's not too hot – this is what came out in the interview (laughs) and it's a good strong appointment. He hasn't got QTS, which I think is good as far as I'm concerned because nobody will be able to suck him into doing ITT, so from that perspective I think that's healthy.

**74. So you're having to resist people being....**

75. Of course, yes. We've just been given the go-ahead to appoint an Early Years person and I've had a major battle with that because they'll have to service part of the ITT courses, so they want somebody just hot out of the classroom and I've said I could do with someone like that like a hole in the head, because I want someone with that wider view of Early Years and experience, so there's going to be battles over that. I've already suggested the post is split into two, and have two 0.5s, one dealing with what I want and one dealing with whatever.

**76. So my question, 'does the teacher training staff exert any influence over the choice of content?' then, you'd say 'no'.**

77. No, definitely not. On the other hand I wouldn't want to say that it has been totally excluded. I mean we do have modules on how children learn mathematics. *But*, those are from the perspective of the process of how children learn mathematics; it's not about how to teach the National Numeracy Strategy; it's not how to do a good mathematics lesson; it is about how young children develop ideas and experiences and how you develop mathematical thinking and draw on the work of

people like Skemp and Bruner and God knows who else, as well as the American stuff. It's not, er..... (pause)

**78. Back to the students' response: you said they might have a different view of what they were coming into. Do you find they're saying we want more on teaching?**

79. Well, actually, what's been quite amazing is – the biggest group we've got in the first year is allocated to Special Needs – what's been interesting is the number of students who've turned round and said 'No I don't want to be a teacher'. Because they've seen all the diverse roles and contacts within the area of Special Needs. We've still got one or two people who want to be a teacher, but I've been surprised by the number of people who said 'No, I *wanted* to be a teacher, but I don't want to be a teacher any more'. It's about 50/50, which, at the end of the first year, is quite a dramatic change. We do have a work-based learning module, but that's not a teaching practice, or a teaching practice by any other name. And we try *not* to send them into school situations.

**80. What vocational outcomes do you see, then?**

81. (Hesitates) Erm, I haven't got any..... I should have thought about that..... If you look at it as an industry with diverse roles and so on with diverse providers, factors that are involved in this huge thing called 'education', then I see it as that we need to equip people working with critical thinking, with the ability to have some knowledge and understanding of education processes, have some basic skills to hold down a job.

**82. QAA benchmarks?**

83. We have looked at them, but what I find about that is they're so loosely drawn that you could drive a coach and horses through it. I don't know about other subject areas because I haven't looked at them, but I thought the Education Studies benchmarks..... well, it didn't define anything in terms of the body of knowledge you should have, because it's so widely drawn. Actually, I think it's so widely drawn that I think it's a useless document. It's there, you look at it and you think.... you pay lip service to it. Well you don't even pay lip service to it: if you talk about education you can't help but meet it. I mean, that's the problem, you don't have to say, 'oh I'm going to include that bit, or not that bit.... There are other subject areas that have a key core.....

**84. You're doing the skills, though, which are a QAA.....**

**85. Yes, well, skills.....**

**86. You've got very detailed skills at each level.**

87. But they're not anything you can disagree with.

**88. Do market forces play a role? I mean by that, is it what students want, or is it you saying what students need?**



89. No, I think if you just did what students need you wouldn't get the course. I think we do pay attention to what students want, in terms of the fact that we've got work-based learning. I know that's good practice now..... there was a time when the Dean wasn't too keen about the costs, but we kept it in, and I think that was the right decision, because it's important. The fact that we've got modules on Special Needs, Maths, Language, on Science.....

**90. All school-appropriate subjects....**

91. Yes.....

**92. And they're student-driven?**

93. Yes, and if we didn't have those I think it would give us problems. And sometime I want to write a module called what are the reasons for education? And looking at that would be a really nice and exciting module to teach. Whether people would opt for it, I don't know. I suspect, I don't know, that especially at Level 3, we need that exciting educational ideas and engaging. So in a sense that's not there and the other stuff is there and you can only do so much. We've got a module in this new one (The Early Years Route) a small business enterprise module, and that's there to say to people, if you want to set up your own nursery, for example, or be involved in the management of a private nursery. I mean I suggested it, but I don't *like* it.

**94. You don't like it?**

95. I don't like it, no. I'm not the best business person in the world, by any stretch of the imagination. But I recognise that if people want to have that wider role; it's giving them the skills of educational management. The two are seen to be part of the same coin. But it's recognising that people have different career options and choices and you have to recognise that people don't all think they way I think. So it's building realistic option choices. You can have a lot of options but they're not going to run because we don't have give enough numbers; you have to have enough numbers to make it reasonable.

**96. Last question: How do you see it developing?**

97. Well, I've got certain targets I want to achieve. I want 100 students per year. I think that's feasible; we've got five or six Education Studies degrees. I'd like to have two more. One is Business Studies and Literacy and Learning. Also I was thinking of combining the Special Needs and the Early Years together. In the long term I'd like to have an Education degree that is just Education Studies in its own right and that's my ambition.....

**98. Without Early Years.....**

99. Without Early Years or any of those modules, straight Education Studies, and I would like that to happen and, you know, down the road, that's how I would see it.

**100. I suppose Early Years is a recruiting mechanism.**

101. Oh, absolutely. Language, Literacy and Learning is a recruitment mechanism, Special Needs is a recruitment mechanism. There isn't much else that isn't (laughs). But they are there and they're compromises and it would be nice to have an Education Studies degree, but before we have an Education Studies degree I would want to build up the staff work on it so we've got the numbers and so that we've got a body of people who've got those sorts of views. And what we'd like to see is to build up some research in Education Studies and specifically what I'm interested in is educational policy and that at some point in time Education Studies here becomes a centre in its own right, with research attached to it. It's ambitious and it's not going to happen overnight....

**102. You mean staff doing research?**

103. Yes, and if you want to know about educational policy in the (Region) you go to (Institution). And that's a huge ambition that's probably never going to happen (laughs) but it seems to me that if you don't set your sights in terms of development of the courses and bringing expertise onto it and so go for growth.... If you don't have those views you're going to stand still and probably go backwards. And that fits in with (Dean's name) plans. S/he wants to get research and she wants it to have its status. S/he's already set up a research centre in Education.

**Senior Manager 1 (SM1)**

**May 17 2004**

- 1. How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. My perspective on where it came from is..... I came to this (institution) in 2002 and was very surprised that there was no Education Studies programme and nobody even talking about one. So, as Dean, I set about talking to people and found that, actually, people *had* been thinking of Education Studies programmes, but nothing actually had happened. It was a matter of galvanising interest and putting some energy behind it and finding a programme leader. We were very, very fortunate to have (name of Subject Leader) who was very interested and had a whole host of ideas..... and what was interesting about (Subject Leader) was where the likes of me, and others, coming very much, if you like, from the teacher education service, (Subject Leader) has a much broader span of interests: the community culture and all of these things and a pretty thoroughgoing grounding in all the philosophical tenets that we might see as underpinning Education Studies. So (Subject Leader) was duly appointed programme leader and he set about developing the programme.
3. As to where the numbers come from, that has been *extremely* difficult and, in fact, where they've come from – and I'm glad this is confidential – is that the numbers have actually come from the other faculties. Because, unlike a lot of universities..... I'm used to the context where, if you develop a new programme which is good a recruiter, everybody claps their hands and says go away and get on with it. But here, very firmly, numbers are sitting in faculties. And that's because we have a devolved resource model and so each dean is responsible for his or her salvation and ultimately the jobs of their staff. So you don't relinquish numbers to another.... Now, some of that brokering at senior level is going on and I'm hoping that we'll be able to attract more HEFCE numbers from the university to expand the present programme. But what I have been able to do is to move numbers from one school to another, but with difficulty, because I've then got staff who I can't deploy fully and I've got areas where I can't staff fully. So, we've covered it..... we've got our resources and incomes.....
- 4. But it's a matter of shifting things around?**
5. Yes, we're just shifting things around; we're not getting new numbers from the university.
- 6. Even though you can recruit them....?**
7. Even though we can recruit them.
- 8. Is this because Education Studies is a low-status area? Perhaps if you were recruiting to psychology it might be different?**
9. No, no... here, it's the difference with other universities. Here it's because we have, if you like, six robber barons. We sit very firmly on our numbers. If

anybody wants any of my numbers it's away with you, off with your head!  
But there is the potential for movement of numbers. It's invidious to start wagging a finger, but..... I envisage that there will *have* to be some movement.

**10. Because it is a good recruiter, isn't it?**

11. Oh yes, brilliant. The band is a bit problematic, though, and I could understand the planning department not wanting to broker a move from Engineering to Education Studies, even though Engineering is a difficult subject to recruit (laughs).....

**12. But they're cheap to teach, aren't they?**

13. They're very cheap to teach, yes.

**14. How has the curriculum developed? Where has it come from?**

15. OK.... (hesitates) The curriculum has come from ..... this is going to sound a bit.... Pretentious perhaps.... But what I did was gave everybody (laughs) on the team a copy of our book, because we had that and (Subject Leader) then got together lots of different programmes from other universities and had a look at that. But very much, I think because (Subject Leader) had very firm views, he was building from what he'd already had in mind. (Subject Leader) would dearly love a *full* Education Studies programme. I wasn't secure enough to go with that because I do feel we do need the even more solid recruiter of the other half of the programme....

**16. You mean the Early Years....?**

17. Early Years, Special Educational needs, hopefully in the future Language and Literacy. We've also got it tied up with (indistinct) and Food and Nutrition..... So the curriculum developed with ..... (Subject Leader) driving it and ..... a team of people working together. It was not a programme that was just taken from other programmes.

**18. It wasn't a QTS course converted into....?**

19. Oh, God, no..... I mean, in fact, that's the beauty of having (Subject Leader): s/he doesn't bring all that teacher education baggage with him/her in the same way. S/he has a much more liberated conception, I *think*. I'm speaking for him/her and s/he's well able to speak for him/herself.

**20. S/he's said that yes....**

21. Right, OK.

**22. But I suppose all staff teaching it are not necessarily of that view.**

23. Well.... I have appointed a new Education Studies tutor. We pinched him/her from (Institution). Yes we are trying to develop a dedicated cohort of staff. What I did was I made another post, converted it.....

**24. But I've seen in the handbook that there are a lot of modules that are being run by a large number of staff; and they're coming from....?**

25. Yes they're coming from..... (QTS courses). But we not anticipating bringing their experience from just ITT, because a lot of our staff teach on our Childhood Studies programmes as well.

**26. What is the theoretical basis of Education Studies?**

27. I've been thinking about this because of June 9<sup>th</sup> more than anything; I'm talking at the colloquium at (Institution) (about the nature of Education Studies). I actually think.... what I'm hoping to be able to say is that, rather than being a body of knowledge, rather than being a body of theories, if you like, what it does is to *draw* on the body of theory, but it actually is itself a tool which facilitates discourse, and it facilitates analysis. So, if you like, my theoretical basis for it would be a sort of meta-analysis of educational issues and developments in what is a very fast-changing scene; and that, I think, is its undeniable strength, because somebody could come to me to learn Education Studies and I wouldn't necessarily need them to have a whole raft of previous knowledge; what I would want them to go away with is the ability to question or critique education in all of its many forms. In a sense I think that's quite liberating, because it means that one isn't harnessed into sets of theories and bodies of knowledge that have got to be learnt. Clearly they are illustrated, they are also (hesitates) I mean if you want to enable somebody to analyse education then obviously you have to equip them with a range of analytical discourses that do that. And that's what we seek to do, I suppose.

**28. You see it as something above and beyond those.....**

29. I do. I think there is... it as a meta-analysis. I haven't worked with students as much as (name of a tutor in another institution) and the tutors here have, but that is its real strength, at a time when what is happening is quite the converse, quite the reverse. What we're doing with teachers is turning out relatively uncritical, trained beasts, if you like. I mean that's stretching a point. It's probably not fair to judge other programmes, but do you get what I'm saying: what the curriculum presents us with is a set of things to train people in. Now if you then go further and look at the para-professional workforce, the way that that's being approached in terms of training, it's precisely the same. So where is the room for the critique of the (indistinct).... For me this is about.... this is a degree we're talking about.....

**30. Going back to the university, is the university as an institution sympathetic to that?**

31. (Laughs) There's a level of disinterest..... The way we're set up, it is quite different from other places. This is my patch.... And what we do here is we

balance our budgets, deliver on a multitude of objectives; we draw a line under the objectives. Nobody bothers you; it's wonderful! But in some senses you want them, as you say, you want them to care.

**32. But it's what universities have become, isn't it? The postmodern university....**

33. Mm. Yes. Set of managerial units.

**34. Links with other subjects?**

35. Yes, we've got the links with.... Just a micro-political point, actually, the fact that Childhood Studies is within Health. And that's problematic for us because it's actually in a school called 'Childhood and Midwifery Studies'. Vexing, to say the least and extremely amusing. So, again, I've had discussions with the Dean and..... it's a hands-off situation really. If Childhood Studies was here with Education Studies we could go....

**36. What about Psychology, Sociology.....**

37. Yes, now that's an interesting one. We did contemplate having a half degree with Psychology. But, of course, we can't do it because, what happens is, in order to get their psychological ..... well registration with BPS I guess it is, they have to do so many units in Psychology and half programmes are not a sensible option for them. And I mean it's a good recruiter, so why do they need to bother? Now the other interesting one which is in this faculty is Sport and PE. Now, at my previous university, everybody wanted to be in a half-programme with sport, for obvious reasons. It was a brilliant recruiter. Here we've got Sport in this faculty; I've been talking with the Director of School and saying, 'Look we really ought to be thinking about combinations: Ed Studies and Sport or Leisure and Sport, and so on.' 'Why do I need to?' she says. 'I can already recruit them. I already do Physical Education or Sports Development, why do I need....?' So this is the issue..... There was something in the Times Higher quite recently about HEFCE not having any planning powers. And shouldn't we be wanting them to have some planning powers? Because who are we turning out? There's going to be plenty of people running leisure centres, it seems to me.

**38. How does the curriculum relate to government policy for universities? I suppose you've answered that.**

39. Mm.

**40. Was Education Studies developed to avoid state intervention?**

41. No. Obviously there's an extent to which we want to diversify the portfolio so that we're not overly dependent on TTA funding; so here was that element. But no, if anything we're running too many things. Of course, you did, didn't you, at Bath Spa?

**42. Yes, we converted our QTS numbers into all Ed Studies and PGCE.**

43. You did it through HEFCE, then?

**44. Yes, TTA gave the numbers to HEFCE.**

45. Well they gave them back, because HEFCE give them to them in the first place.

**46. Well, yes.**

47. What did they do about the PGCE, then?

**48. They gave us increased PGCE numbers.**

**49. (Further discussion about the 3+1 at Bath Spa)**

**50. You wouldn't think of converting your PGCE in this way?**

51. I would, I would, actually, but we haven't got to this point in our thinking yet. It's very interesting at the moment, because, when you think about the demographic change, the fact that reducing numbers in primary and all that, it's going to have to.... and of course you've got staff saying to you, 'We need more staff on the....' (indistinct...ITT course?) and I say, Yes, but.....in three years time we won't. Whereas if we converted then we could..... Of course the unit of resource is.... The TTA funding is good.

**52. But you spend more, don't you?**

53. Yes. What surprises me is that four or five years ago the management of the (institution) nearly pulled the plug on primary education here because they'd got a very bad Ofsted. Now if they'd had the foresight to do what you've done then, that would have been the time to do it. Instead of which, what they did was to give them extra funding to improve themselves, and of course they've done that now. But to keep primary courses going you've got to have so many specialists and this and that and the other. And our numbers aren't big anyway.

**54. Well it's worked well for us.**

55. The other problem is converting people from primary tutors into Education Studies tutors.

**56. I was going to ask about staffing..... So it wasn't to avoid state intervention..... What's the role of the market? This is a question about it's easy to get students, isn't it?**

57. Yes, although there is a sense in which the people who have been able to get on training courses, and so in marketing terms we might see..... You know, if there are fewer primary courses, if anything Education Studies will be an even greater pull.

58. Yes, I see.

59. I think we can only be in a strong position for some years to come.

60. **Of course, some of them have some fairly vague notions of ‘I’d quite like to teach, perhaps....’**

61. Yes, exactly, and when they’re eighteen.... I mean to expect someone to have some sort of wonderful vocational vision (laughs)....

62. **I’d like to get rid of our guaranteed place, really. We have to do it now as a marketing strategy, but now we’ve got so many who don’t have a guaranteed place that we could probably get rid of it over the years.**

63. Mm.... it was quite interesting here about guaranteed places - and we don’t guarantee places, we guarantee an interview – but even that was a struggle..... (indistinct) because they put around themselves the mystique of expertise....

64. **And Ofsted.....**

65. Exactly.

66. **And what about staffing.....**

67. Ah well, (tutor’s name’s) appointment is a case in point. Made a member of staff redundant who.... Well s/he wanted to go on ill-health retirement at the time, so I just converted the post to an Education Studies post. Er..... (hesitates) the school where moved numbers *from* ..... that’s, you know, very sensitive, but what we would see happening is through natural wastage, or other means, they would be replaced by Education Studies.

68. **So you see it as the growth sector?**

69. Oh, definitely

70. **You’d see Education Studies growing?**

71. Oh God, yes, better had do! (laughs) Oh, very much. I don’t know whether (Subject Leader) always believes me, because sometimes I have to speak with forked tongue, trying to get numbers from somebody over here, and telling somebody you can’t have them over here and – the usual Dean’s stuff.... (laughs)

72. **Single honours, would you go for that?**

73. It depends on critical mass. We just don’t have enough yet to go for single honours, but yes, it would be good to do that, certainly in terms of the current context, there’s going to be such a need for people who are steeped in an understanding of educational issues to then go on and do a year’s vocational



training. The other thing I see is Education Studies with Foundation Degrees, or a new kind of Education Studies slash vocational degree; I think there's a lot of potential there for us to develop things in the new concept.

**74. You haven't got Foundation Degrees now?**

75. Oh we do, we've got an HLTA – no sorry – we've got a Classroom Assistants degree starting next year for people in FE. So there's lots of synergies there.

**76. It sort of draws you back to the vocational, doesn't it?**

77. It does very much the vocational in that part of the..... (hesitates) What I'm trying..... (hesitates) Forget Foundation Degrees for the moment. What I'm talking about, I suppose, is Foundation Degree top-ups. We're starting Foundation Degrees, but what I'm talking about is the higher level ..... professional within the new context. So somebody might do two years of an Education Studies degree and then do two years of something which is a vocational stroke academic ..... Or even, actually, the way things are going, perhaps a year and a term.... I don't know, it's just thinking off the top of my head.

**78. Yes, sure, but you have this link with other things, the special needs and early years. Will that always be necessary, do you think, or will you ever be able to offer Education Studies?**

79. Oh yes, I think that in the new context we will be able to offer it, but that's why I'm talking about perhaps a two plus a two, or a two plus a one and a third, because I think you could give them a thoroughgoing grounding in Education Studies and all of those critical and analytical tools for them then to apply that in the work setting and develop those vocational and professional tools with it.

**80. Thank you. Anything else you wanted to say?**

81. I've got another meeting in two minutes. Thank you for keeping to the schedule.

## CASE 2 TRANSCRIPT

### Subject Leader 2A (SL2A)

July 13 2004

1. **How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. The beginning of the development of the programme was at the beginning of the academic year 1998-99. There was a kind of coincidence that occurred. In my own mind I had always wanted to have an undergraduate Education Studies programme, I think probably for a number of reasons, so there wasn't one single reason for that. One reason was a negative reason and that was the perception of the loss of Education Studies from initial teacher education as initial teacher education moved away from that 1960s 1970s model of the four-year BEd with lots of sociology, psychology and philosophy and moved towards a more competence-based and skills-based teacher training, as it then became. Then the foundation studies of education were eliminated, and not only were they eliminated but we moved away from a four-year undergraduate initial teacher education programme to a three-year initial teacher training programme. So that was all Ofsted, Teacher Training Agency and I guess everybody knows that kind of stuff. So I thought, well what is going to happen to the study of education? And so I thought there must be a way of retaining that, or bringing it back in. So that was one strand in my thinking. The other strand was that the study of education was something in its own right and, therefore, why shouldn't there be an undergraduate programme in Education Studies broadly similar to any other of the liberal arts. So those were, in a sense, I suppose, the twin reasons for wanting to start an undergraduate Education Studies programme.
3. **It didn't come from the QTS course, then, it was a separate...**
4. Oh, no, it didn't come from the QTS course, but by the time we got to 1998 the old QTS course with the foundation studies in education had already gone and there were a number of people like me who had trained as sociologists and who, in a sense, felt a little empty, as it were.
5. **So where did the numbers come from?**
6. Well, what we did initially.... because we didn't run a single honours programme in Education Studies we ran a combined honours and that's what developed, so it was initially for the first cohort that came on board in 1999 it was Education Studies combined with one of English, Art or Science. The numbers came from, I guess, two broad groups of students. One – and we didn't get this finally validated until the May of '99- and we took in our first cohort in September, so there was no publicity, it wasn't in the UCAS Handbook or anything like that. So, therefore, we took from two broad groups of students: students who failed for one reason or another to get onto the initial teacher training programme, either because they weren't competitive compared with other students, or they didn't get their GCSE maths or science, and that wasn't needed for this particular programme. That was one group. The other group of students was from clearing: those who were routing around for something to do – and so on and so forth. So I guess the initial cohort consisted of ..... students with..... relatively low A-level grades, compared with those in the initial teacher training programme. (Hesitant and

nervous tone about this.) And so we swept up, and we swept up sufficient to enable us to have about 30 or 40 – I can't remember – no more than that, as our initial cohort undertaking this combined honours degree, what they did, they all did Education Studies; those taking Art and Science did their Art and Science modules tagged onto other programmes; so, other words, what they did was, those people study art as part of initial teacher training, whether as secondary or as primary teachers, took in, if you like, some of our students who wanted to specialise in art, then went and studied those modules, but they would be studying with other people (Nervous quality about this.) And the same went for the Science – these were small groups. By far the largest group was studying English but we had sufficient numbers to have a special programme for them. So that was the first cohort, the '99 entry and they graduated in 2002.

7. So that has slightly changed because the nature of the programme has changed. So up until the end of this year we've been running two options – two optional combined programmes: Combined Education Studies with Early Childhood Education and Combine Education Studies with integrated Humanities. And we've marketed those very specifically to those people who don't necessarily want to go into teaching, particularly Early Childhood which has by far the largest number of people; many of those want to do work in early years, maybe in schools, maybe not in schools, and we've had a number of students who've gone on to do ..... So now, in relative terms, it's a much more positive entry, as opposed to the first cohort, which was a negative entry.

**8. A deficit group.....**

9. Yes, definitely a deficit model, so that's really the difference....

**10. I noticed you said 'I wanted to have Ed Studies'. So it's from you....?**

11. It *was* from me. I was.... I suppose that erm.... Just from a personal standpoint I've always.... I guess I've worn two hats.... since I've been in higher education, what, for twenty-five years, and the two hats have been: one as, yes, an educationalist, because I've always worked in schools of education wherever I've been, but I've always worn the hat of sociologist and, more broadly speaking, a social scientist. And so I've always had, if you like, those twin interests, and they came together when I was involved in, you know, the old-style four-year BEd courses where I could indulge my own interests, sociology and so on and so forth. But once that all went then I was left with, as far as teacher training was concerned, left with all the practice-oriented stuff, which I was always involved with when I became involved with teacher training, but that wasn't me and wasn't what I came in to do. And, therefore, this allowed me personally to get back, not only to some of the old things I was doing, but also to develop new ideas and, er.....

**12. It's interesting that you wanted to do that and the university allowed that to happen.**

13. Well, let me come back to the first statement I made and that was that it coincided with the appointment of a new dean here; s/he came in the September of '98 and, I thought, well I'm going to get in there very quickly and I had one of the first meetings with her. Basically I introduced myself and said, well what are your ideas as far as the school is concerned? And s/he said, well s/he came from

(another institution) and s/he said, well actually I'm very interested in having undergraduate Education Studies. And I said, so am I! So, to cut a long story short s/he said, 'Right, yours to develop'. And so I spent the greater part from September through to May developing it and getting it ... (tentatively) well with help and as a team. But I drove it... I drove the programme.

**14. So s/he came in with that.....**

**15.** Oh it wouldn't have happened without him/her. Er, possibly it wouldn't have happened without me, but I don't know that. I couldn't have done it without that positive proactive approach from the new Dean.....

**16. And the numbers..... s/he did the job of getting the university to allow.....**

**17.** Exactly, s/he negotiated with the powers-that-be and we were allowed .....

**18. Was that difficult?**

**19.** I don't think it was. I don't know, I'm trying to remember. I mean we got limited numbers – 30 or 40 – but then as we gained students things were over and above the students we would have had anyway because we had a cap on our initial teacher training numbers - because of Ofsted and all the rest of it – and we couldn't take any more. And the demand for entry to initial teacher training exceeded the supply. This part of East Anglia is quite densely populated and East Anglia is under-resourced as far as far as higher education, and teacher education in particular, is concerned and the demand is not just from the average school-leaver, but also from mature students and we inherited that from the original school of education which was originally a free-standing college – a college of education – so we had the day-training and a significant mature student entry. That has continued and has continued into the Ed Studies programme.

**20. But there was no resistance by the university to increasing Education numbers?**

**21.** No there wasn't'..... I mean they're very conservative, very.....you know the accountants run this place as they run every other place, so we always have to show..... There were spare HEFCE numbers and so they were allowed, through juggling about..... Numbers have been lost elsewhere in the university so I think we took up spare capacity.....

**22. So it worked.....**

**23.** That's right, and that's how we were able to do it, and the thing has evolved; it has not remained stable from one year to the next. The whole programme has evolved, so now, this coming September, we're dropping Humanities; the demand for Humanities is very, very light and so we were losing money and the demand for the programme is entirely Early Childhood and Education Studies and there's a big demand there.

**24. So single honours?**

**25.** Well the single honours has now been developed, but we're continuing with the combined honours at the moment. Chris will be able to give you more information on that because he's up to speed on that. I'm not..... We have a sort of peculiar administrative system here. We have something called fields and a field is like a programme. Chris is Head of Education Studies overall which

includes not only this programme but a number of other programmes; it includes the Teaching Assistants programme..... I up until a year ago I was Head of Education and Studies, but also ran the Education Studies part of the degree as well, so I ran the whole shooting match. I went on sabbatical during the second semester of last year, 2003, and so it was a good opportunity for me to give the whole lot up. During this year I've run the Education Studies pathway, as it's called – that half of the degree – I'm giving that up as well. So I'm giving the whole lot up. So I'm not sure who's going to be running it next year, but it's not my problem, but Chris has overall responsibility for it.

**26. If I can ask about the aims, then. If you can go back to the original aims and what you were trying to do.**

27. Well I can either talk generally, or I can give you the official aims.

**28. Tell me what you.....**

29. Well the aims as I see them are very simple: to erm..... to equip.... graduates from this programme with knowledge and understanding of education in all its different guises, in the same way as they might have an understanding of any other area of.... Knowledge and understanding of, broadly within the context of England..... broadly knowledge and understanding of process, of institutions, of philosophies, ideologies..... conventional notions of child development etc etc. In other words to have that..... more or less reflected in er.... QAA.... There seems to be a reasonable degree of consensus about that, looking other programmes in other universities.....

**30. So it's breadth?**

31. Very much breadth, yes, but moving from a broad..... I suppose less deep approach in the first year towards a sort of deeper analysis in the second and third year. So, yes, a breadth of understanding.

**32. How did you derive those aims? Where did they come from? It was you, was it?**

33. I think..... Yeah..... I guess it was. Erm, it was me, but in discussion with others we arrived at those aims. Erm, I think we drew on our experience of being involved with initial teacher education when that was one of the foundation subjects. Erm, but also suggesting and bearing in mind the diverse career opportunities (very hesitant and tentative), more or less knowing that a significant proportion would go into teaching, or some other educational profession..... we felt that this would give students an advantage over and above others. Not only would they, in acquiring the necessary skills and competencies for teacher training, they would also have acquired a hopefully thorough and clear understanding of education with due processes and ideas which they mightn't necessarily get from a teacher training programme. Erm, and I think there's some, at least anecdotal, evidence that our students who have gone onto a teacher programme – a PGCE – have been at a distinct advantage compared with some others.

**34. Would it be fair to say that your starting point would be what you were doing in the old QTS?**

35. In many respects, yes. Although, clearly we feel we have the scope to do more.....

36. **Any distinctive features of this course?**

37. Erm, we certainly didn't want it to be an arid academic course. And, therefore, from the very beginning we built in, in you like, practical aspects of experience and observation in educational institutions. But the course, in looking at education, is not confined to any one sector of education. We wanted to ensure that all students gained knowledge and understanding of education across the phases, from early years to adult education. And..... I'll just give you one example, in the third year – the final year – we have a placement module which is twenty credits, which is quite a good number..... but the remit for students is that the placement for that module could be taken in any educational setting. It might be an early years setting, it might be an industrial training centre. And the idea is that it would be a very intense period of observation, but combined with academic study in order to interpret what they'd observed. And each year did have that kind of element, some kind of practical, or experiential, element. We thought we couldn't have an education programme that didn't have an experience element; we thought that wouldn't make sense. But it did mean that those who did go into teaching had had some experience in school. I mean many of them had had experience in schools before they came.....

38. **What about the subject disciplines?**

39. The subject disciplines? What, in addition to Education Studies? Oh, within Education Studies.....

40. **Psychology, Sociology.....**

41. Yes..... Well we decided that we wouldn't go down that route totally in the sense that we'd have something called 'psychology of education'..... no we didn't. So we did that, I think for a number of reasons. One, not to frighten the horses too much, but it was a kind of compromise, so the initial..... The programme's changed a lot; for example we did have a couple of first-year modules, one that was concerned with something like educational institutions, or the study of educational institutions..... can't remember what it was called. And then we had another one which was the study of educational ideology, society and one that was looking at individual development. So *essentially* a historical macro-sociology one, one a more philosophical sociology of knowledge....(indistinct). And then another one which was much more psycho... psychol..... *psychologically* oriented. So the disciplines – the foundation subjects – they were there, but they weren't taught watertight in the sense... you know that .... the titles suggested that, you know, there might even be a number of disciplinary influences within each of them. But one was, you know, *much* more psychologically, one was much more philosophical, one was much more sociological.....

42. **But you were consciously building those in?**

43. Consciously building those in. And then when they got to the second year, *then*, consciously taking it up a notch, we did actually have – we still do have – a module called 'Sociological Perspectives on Educational Processes' and it is a sociology course, and we take them from the very beginning..... what is sociology? And I give them a quick and dirt..... well certainly a fairly intensive

introduction to sociology - some of them might already have those elements – and then come on to a study of current issues in sociology. And then you'll have another one which is a final year module, which is one that I've run, called 'Education in an Inter-cultural Context' and so that draws on a number of disciplines; so yes, for instance, sociology, history.... er, in sociolinguistics.... So you're looking at ..... things there.... Er...

**44. Because you were instrumental in originating it, does that mean that it tends to be sociological, philosophical rather than.....**

**45.** Yes..... Not so much psychological, because we didn't have any..... We seem to have lost our psychologists... So we didn't have too many..... We had to look at who could contribute... We had - and we still have – a relatively narrow staff base, because most of the staff are tied up with teacher training. Erm, so it took up most of my time, erm, and I guess I tended to teach across the disciplines (very quiet and mumbling) .....I did the psychological stuff....(indistinct)... although it isn't my bag.... But we have increasingly brought people on board and we have made some other appointments. (Speaking more confidently now.) But, with the Early Childhood Education pathway forming the other half of the degree for most of them, we're now building up some expertise in that area. We have had two full-time early childhood specialists teaching on..... mmm and erm..... (hesitant) to have some extent have taught within Education Studies, but not much. They've kind of guested on that side, but otherwise..... I think myself, a guy who works in the post-compulsory area, er... er... ran a module on lifelong education which was part of our political programme.....

**46. So the staff available tended to shape the curriculum.....?**

**47.** I think so..... mmm.... six of one, half a dozen of the other. I had an idea.... I suppose.....bearing in mind..... what I thought would make a decent degree..... bearing in mind what I thought might be attractive... and bearing in mind the possible starting resources, that was the way in which, in a sense, tried to influence the shaping of the degree. It hasn't always been easy and sometimes we've had to twist a few arms..... to.... to the programme.

**48. Are staff not eager to teach on this?**

**49.** (Sighs) The *might* be. But the biggest problem is..... the perception - that accords with reality – is that people are over-worked and over-stretched in teacher training. But either they're over-stretched on the teacher training programmes or they're also under the inevitable pressure that everyone's under ..... (indisict)... And, therefore, this comes way down their ..... So I often got the response, Yes I'd *love* to..... So there's someone who.... could very well..... When I went on sabbatical, and I was on sabbatical for half a year, the kind of balloon went up, because who's going to replace *me*? It was a problem. I mean.... when it came to the time for sociology module to be taught, although I'd devised it, this is the first year I've actually taught it..... erm.... and I didn't actually have time to do it, so I bought in someone who's doing a doctorate at the Institute of Education to teach the sociology module, and then someone in the Sociology Department up in Cambridge, but who specialised in education and found herself quite lonely up there, s/he came down and taught the Sociology of Education module and used her own book as a text – it's a shame because she's retired, because s/he was *really* good – and, although it would have been difficult for her to have moved from



Cambridge, s/he would have liked have been part of what's going on here and we sort of got on very well and s/he enjoyed teaching the module; s/he taught that and s/he taught another module as well. So s/he found herself more at home teaching Education Studies than s/he did teaching in the Sociology Department.

**50. But you were wary in the first instance of calling the courses' Psychology or Sociology of Education?**

**51.** Yeah, I think yes..... I think we wanted..... We didn't feel that that was going to attract the punters. We felt that they would..... once we got into these things, into the subjects, then they very well might be interested. But, as we know, labels put off people.

**52. You develop that as they go into Year 3, then.....?**

**53.** Yes, erm, and it's interesting that the sociology module..... for example, there's not (hesitates).... think about the..... the work the students..... for example, it's not gone down as well as the work on the intercultural module, which, although we don't live in an area where people naturally think about these problems, none the less, they became very interested.... the language of..... and, in fact, I think they found that they were interested..... Whereas, the sociology module..... er, it tends to be approached by them in a much more formulaic way. (This response all very quiet and indistinct.) Oh, all this class and education, it's very boring, more boring..... So it was.... the intercultural module, it has been relatively successful, and I think it's been more successful this year because there's been a full-time research degree student... and it was her area of research and we've taught it together and it's gone very well.

**54. How much do you think student's choice has affected the curriculum? Do they get many choices?**

**55.** There are no choices. We have very little in the way of choice; we simply haven't been able to offer it. I mean we didn't have sufficient students in the beginning, but in three years we've got (indistinct).... It's a significant number of people; it certainly employs full-time people here.

**56. So how much do you think students' responses determine the curriculum?**

**57.** To some extent.... We certainly take on board our evaluation processes.... er.... we do respond; sometime we like to..... (indistinct) But sometimes we like to in the sense that initially we think that's OK, good.... sometimes it's stupid.... Actually, they may be right. They're not always right.....

**58. Any examples of that.....**

**59.** Well certainly the structure, the administration of the programme.... For example, I'll give you one change that's going to happen this year. The intercultural module which would normally have been taught in the final semester of the third year was found by students to be too much, because it's a heavy one, a lot of them are interested in their dissertation, all the pressures are in that final part of the year. So we're now bringing it into the first semester of the third year and it evens things up a little. And we're also going to teach it differently: we're going to – and we may be looking at other modules - we're going to front-load the module and so we won't necessarily be doing up-front teaching all the way through the life of the module. And we will leave a much bigger space in terms ..... during the



second half of the module for tutorial work allied to essays and so on. Because the last time we taught it we taught it right up to the end, and students were saying, ‘Look, I’m really interested in doing an essay on this topic and it’s not going to be done until nearly the end.....’ So we’re going to teach in a more intensive way during the first half of the module and then have it tutorially-based for the second half.....

**60. This won’t substantially change the content....?**

**61.** No, I don’t think it will change the *content*; it may give some weight to some things rather than others in the light of that.... and obviously the weight given to different parts of the content may reflect who’s teaching on it. So E., my research student who is doing her research on refugee education, so they’ll be looking at asylum-seekers and that dimension much more up-front, which seems quite reasonable.

**62. So what you’ve done has been popular?**

**63.** I think that has..... Not all of it, by no means has all the programme.... I *think* that has been popular and students, I think you’ll find, will say it’s the curate’s egg, good in parts. The initial groups of students, initial cohorts, still saw it as a second best to getting on the teacher-training programme. And because they were disgruntled, disgruntled because they hadn’t got a place on initial teacher-training.

**64. Has that changed now?**

**65.** I think that’s changed to some extent. It’s changed because now Early Childhood is the other pathway, they’re going to be people coming along to the programme because they want to work in early childhood education and we don’t have another vehicle for that; this is the main vehicle for doing it and if they want to go into teaching as far as early childhood is concerned, they can do a PG, but they might not want to go into the compulsory sector, they might want to work elsewhere, in which case they could do other early childhood and early years work. But we’ve had people interestingly..... In fact, we’ve had one person who came onto the programme, wanted to teach, was desperately unhappy that s/he hadn’t got onto the teacher-training course, but as a result of having gone into schools and into classrooms said, ‘I don’t want to teach now; I know what they *do*!’ (Laughs.) And some who’ve gone into other fields and said you might want to go into careers that are allied to education, maybe library work or other kinds of work and so..... I’m not on top of..... I haven’t involved myself in an audit trail to find destinations. What we need to do, though, is now that we’ve had..... Er, this will be the sixth cohort..... I mean, last year we hit our peak with about 80 people, full-time students coming on the programme.....

**66. One of my questions was its relationship to teaching training. I can see now where it’s come from. The fact that you know some students will be going into teaching, does that affect what you do?**

**67.** No..... I don’t think so. What we said initially, and I don’t know whether that will operate, is that rather than all students coming onto the programme, if they do apply for a PGCE we would at least interview them, but we will not guarantee them a place. It’s not a three-plus-one; the programme stands entirely on its own, but they would get an interview, and indeed some of the weaker students were

turned down.

**68. But the fact they're going into teaching doesn't backwash into what you do in the curriculum?**

**69.** No, we wanted to make sure that it had an integrity of its own. We wanted to..... although we were aware of the reality that significant numbers would go in, almost as soon as the first group of graduation we knew that not all of them were going to go in. Some of them, in fact, due to financial pressures on students, got jobs as teaching assistants, and again, perhaps that's trying it out – seeing what it's like – before you actually make a decision. I think some of them were quite glad of the opportunity to test out what it's like to be in school either during the course of this programme or getting jobs as teaching assistants before they go, 'oh this is for me, I'll apply for a PG', or 'no, I'm really not going to be able to stand this'. But at least they've ended up with a degree which is an academic degree.... and we might have equipped them to.....

**70. And the anecdotal evidence is that they've been good PGCE students?**

**71.** Some of them have been quite good, you know, the best of our students have fared very well at PG.

**72. One of my questions was, 'Did the teacher training standards have any influence on the choice of content?' It might be the reverse, in fact?**

**73.** No, no, we steered clear of it. So again, looking at intercultural, students need a knowledge of race relations, but that didn't influence it at all, no.

**74. What about the QAA Benchmark?**

**75.** Yes, well, er.... Of course, it wasn't benchmarked to begin with because benchmarks weren't out. We were subject to a QAA inspection back in.....

**76. 2001?**

**77.** 2001, that's right. We were part of a much broader provision, so that all the post-compulsory teacher training.... and all the post-compulsory teacher training here is largely undertaken in outposts, so it's all validated from APU, the post-compulsory stuff is in FE colleges all the way up to Norfolk. So we were included in that. We didn't come out very well..... and....it was probably as much to do with our administrative systems as anything. We also felt that this was..... not as fair as we would have like it to be, given that we'd only been in existence for two years. So I don't know how much of that was to do with the other areas – the P-C stuff. But we've kind of left that behind, but we've nonetheless taken on board..... (indistinct).....

**78. Does the market play a part in.....**

**79.** Well, obviously this is a big factor in trying to convince the university about any innovative programme..... Is there a market for your programme? If you say, I don't know, they say, go away and found out before you can come with this new programme. We felt there was, and I think initially there was (indistinct) extra demand for a programme in education, even if it wasn't teacher training. So you took up that slack..... Erm, we kept our eye on the market certainly now we've packed in humanities because there was just no market for that. The idea was that we would have an integrated humanities programme..... er, well, possibly for

those who wanted to do early childhood and we did have one or two people, including myself, who contributed to that, but the one history element of that, we just didn't have the resources..... and I think that while it was quite an enjoyable programme, the last group had eight people on it, compared with God knows how many on Early Childhood. So it was a non-runner in the end and market forces have dictated the shape of the entire combined honours degree, so Education Studies and Early Childhood Education could have been fairly popular because of the early childhood element. The thing that we *are*, and I guess what we've begun to interrogate is, what's the future of Education Studies *as such*. Er, in so far as we've now got validated a single honours in Early Childhood, some of the Education Studies will be subsumed within that single honours Early Childhood. We're therefore looking to, and this is still at the moment of pre-planning, into looking at..... erm.... the development of a different kind of Education Studies programme, one would be internationally oriented..... for overseas markets. This was buoyed initially by a..... last September we had a delegation from China looking for partners. Nothing's happened so far as I know, but I still think, even though I'm not.... haven't got a major responsibility now for Education Studies I could be involved in some kind of international development. I'm hoping sometime this summer for Chris and I to put an initial shape to that. And that would be taking stuff we already do, like multicultural and giving it a much more.... We're still at the very beginning with that.

**80. Do you think that Childhood Studies might engulf Ed Studies?**

**81.** Yes, that's the market. There seem to be a hell of a lot of people.....

**82. And you're fighting to keep sociology going, aren't you?**

**83.** Yes, and whether that keeps going or not, I mean I ran a..... I do teaching on the Early Childhood pathway; I run a research module on that, but I also run a module called Young Children in Society, a sociological look at childhood. So that's all..... well, I quite enjoy doing that, you know. So there's a lot of sociology in there, but very much applied, you know. It's not a straight course on the sociology of childhood.....(indistinct).... So, yes, a question mark hangs in my mind over the future of Education Studies as such. If it's going to have a future in this institution it's going to go internationally oriented. Suits me anyway, because, as you know with my international background in comparative and so forth. But I think also I would see it as also complementing my own work that I do in the graduate field, which is most of my work now. I work with..... I supervise significant numbers of Israeli students and I've got a research student from Italy and what I'm trying to establish within the research centre here is what is distinct, the international orientation, and so because of that, I would see that as hopefully complementary to that the development of an undergraduate programme, which would be great, just for me personally, to have an undergraduate programme internationally-oriented in Education Studies and myself working in research and there'd be cross-fertilisation right there.

**84. And would that work with the university's missions.....?**

**85.** Oh, yes.....

**86. I wondered about the polytechnic thing. I noticed in your blurb it says, we kept the polytechnic because of the employment orientation. Does that make any difference?**

**87.** No, no. You won't find anybody committed to this. You know why it was kept because we couldn't find another acceptable title. We'd been Anglia Polytechnic and so Privy Council would have turned is down on Anglia University because of the University of East Anglia. Indeed, anything that didn't mark us out as being..... In fact, we were going to go for the University of Eastern England, like UWE; couldn't have that. UEE would have been like UEA. And so we tried all kinds of things; Eastern Counties University, but it makes us sound like a dairy or a bus company. We spent money on..... we hire brand image people... thousands of pounds and in the end stuck with Anglia Polytechnic. We call ourselves APU to sort of minimise the polytechnic thing. In so far as it's still retained within the title, then the powers that be decided, with the market people, that we should play it up, not than play it down – positive. There are other places in the world that have polytechnic.....

**88. But in practice, if someone says we've got teacher training; we don't want a course that's theory and not related to practice. You haven't had that?**

**89.** No, no, no, no, no. You see we've got here.... the (Name) campus is essentially a liberal arts centre, and inherited that, you know and it's for those students who wanted to go to (Elite University) but didn't have a snowball in hell's chance of getting there so they can go to a (Name) College..... It attracts a lot of international students, which is why they keep it.

**Interview questions ended here, but after the recorder was switched off, SL2 went on to make further comments about staff teaching on ITT courses. The recorder was switched back on to capture the following.**

**90.** They need to be getting themselves outside the work that they're doing, otherwise they don't see the wood for the trees. They're so bad with Ofsted and all that they they're like walking neurotics; unfortunate.... I know when QAA come, but all right QAA.... but erm.... worrying about the future of every little (indistinct)... have to get yourself outside of it and look at these things..... (indistinct) ....

**91. That's interesting, because in our team we have people teaching both; there are not many who are just doing teacher training or Ed Studies and they're all trying to get into Ed Studies and get out of teacher training.....**

**92.** While I think (whispering) because of our dire financial situation it's why we still have a teacher training programme. We just have to squeeze in.... we've made two appointments in Early Childhood/Education Studies and they're very separate and new appointments and we've just gone in there and these are people who are involved in teacher training .....

**93. So they're not teacher training; they're just Ed Studies?**

**94.** Well, one or two of them might be, I think, involved in teacher training, or early childhood, but er...

**95. Some people have made a real career out of getting out of teacher training and into Ed Studies .....**

96. Well, basically, I'm the one who's done that..... but it set a precedent in that we took Early Childhood into the combined honours..... but, yes..... I'm now no longer involved in any teacher training. But that would be in the last couple of years. I used to teach a module on the secondary programme.....

**Subject Leader 2B (SL2B)**

**July 13 2004**

- 1. How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. My understanding of it is that essentially the school wanted to move away from being wholly and exclusively a teacher training institution - both initial and post-qualification – and I think the then head of school had aspirations to broaden and looked around at areas that might be handled by the personnel, and identified L., amongst the others, and said, OK we'll do Education Studies and Early Years. So it was a voyage into the unknown because we had no history of it, but we had a number of people who could be legitimately seen to contribute.... to the broad church of Education Studies. It was pragmatic rather than principled. The Dean's view at that time was that if you're involved in teacher training and nothing else, your funding stream will be at the whim of Ofsted and the TTA.
- 3. So was it to some extent to avoid state intervention?**
4. Yes. For me, as an individual, it's one of the joys of running Education Studies, rather than being involved in teacher training.
- 5. So how do you see the programme in relation to teacher training? Does it have any relationship to it? Do the TTA standards have any bearing on it at all?**
6. Coincidental, rather than planned, and the stuff that's going on within the UK at the moment in terms of teacher training and teaching is obviously subject material for the critical engagement that forms Education Studies. We, the course team – such as it is – do not see ourselves in any way as being quasi or ersatz or surrogate teacher training; we're a discipline. Yet we recognise that a number of our students come into this programme because they've failed to get onto the, particularly primary, teacher training. They're taking this with a view to doing the PGCE. So *their* motivation is more towards teacher training, but ours isn't.
- 7. What would you say is the theoretical framework for it, then?**
8. (Sighs) I think that would be inspired by ..... erm..... the perspective of the original course leader (SL2A), who was essentially a sociologist. When you look at the content of the programme, even through its evolution to date, it has had a very strong sociological orientation, which I think is one of the weaknesses and one of the things I want to change. But this is the end of my first year of responsibility, so I've been finding out about things. I'm beginning to think about without having made any major changes.
- 9. Can I ask you how your thinking is going? How would you.....?**
10. Yes. I think the stuff is too narrow at the moment. Even if you look at the QAA Benchmark thing, Ed Studies is a very, very broad church. Presently, we represent well, I think, only one section of that congregation. so I wanted to..... I'm trying to reconcile two driving forces. One driving force is the nature of our current and predictable student intake. Ed Studies is not a very sexy subject, as seen by people out there. So we tend to recruit students from the weaker end of the academic spectrum. .... returners to education. Returners tend to be more interested in Ed Studies than the 18 year-olds. It's a broad perspective. So I have to be pragmatic

and think of the likely students. The other driver is my/our philosophy, which wants to broaden what we're doing in Ed Studies to bring in a strong element which says any form of education at all is to do with people and learning. And, therefore, Ed Studies ought to acquaint people with the debates about the nature of teaching and learning, as distinct from the debates about the nature of educational provision, which we tend to concentrate on at the moment. So I want to bring in a strand that at least allows the opportunity to get back into some applied psychology of learning. Erm, yes..... learning theory through motivation and all that sort of thing.

11. Erm, we don't do enough in my view about the political control and political role of education. The Blair government has been banging on for years, and the Thatcher government before that, with all the reforms, the way I see these, you can view those on two levels. One is the sort of technical thing if you buy into the premise that education needs reforming, what do you think about the nature of the reforms? At the other end is the (question) did education need reforming, or was it just a means to a very different end. So we need to be acquainted, our students, with those sort of discussion, of political culture of education in society. We don't do much at present on the economics of education. We do stuff about the sociological, about redistribution, but the actual economics..... And we certainly don't do enough about international comparisons. And particularly for our students, the 18 year-olds – huge, sweeping generalisation coming up here – are immensely parochial. Most are (Place name)... (Place name) people... and they tend not to think much beyond (Place name). The fact that other countries don't start schooling until seven..... it's that broadening out. We also get approached from time to time by Eastern Bloc countries and China and places like that, who want..... whose degrees are generally recognised as being worth 240 of our points, so they're looking for a top-up. So it's something to build upon that.
12. Why I described it as a tension is that the thought of trying to get some of our 18 year-olds interested and fired up by the economics and politics of education when they struggle to name the prime minister..... you see the kind of....?
13. **Yes, I'm struggling with the same thing..... We have *some* success with that, I feel. You've had one year.....**
14. It's possible.... erm the way we've approached it..... with L. (SL2A) I've re-designed the first year, a couple of years ago, we did it together. Because previously modules came in too quickly with the –ologies; it was too, sort of, up there or out there for them. And it turned them off. What we've started now is in the first term we concentrate on *them*, and their different experiences, and we move from the personal, beginning to build generalisations and that seems to be working better, because it gives them a handle.....
15. **These changes, they're what you're bringing; it's your... it's a personal thing?**
16. (Sighs) When the school first started discussions about this degree L. (SL2A) shared an office and we bounced ideas off each other. Whereas I had no formal role in it, I was part of the debate and that carried on until I was (SL2A)'s deputy, as it were, and therefore had more direct influence on things, and now I've taken

over.

17. **The role of the subject disciplines: you said you wanted more psychology. Will that be evident? Do you make the subject disciplines evident?**
18. Yes, we do generally. For example, there's a module that deals with the sociological perspective, and it's called exactly that. And the international stuff is called 'international'. So we do tend to, particularly in years two and three; year one is much more embedded. Year one's essentially about getting them to think, getting them to read, to question and all those sorts of things. So the input side of things in years two and three can be identified.
19. **How much does student choice play a part? Do students influence the content of the curriculum?**
20. (Sighs)..... There are two levels at which student choice occurs. There is provision within their sounds quite generous. However, pragmatics come in and the onus in this university is that if they want to do a free-choice module they have to organise it themselves. And very few of them bother. So we always put on a missing 60, as it were, which is Education Studies-linked .....
21. **So what they get is very much what you put on?**
22. Yes, although some do choose to exercise their right of free choice. At the programme level, within modules, certainly in Year one they exercise considerable choice by virtue of what they choose to bring into the discussion. As they move up years two and three they exercise greater choice because most, if not all, assignments are negotiated. So they require a 2000 or 4000 word piece..... yes, I think that answers it.
23. **And the vocational element, student destinations: obviously some go into teacher training.....**
24. We've only graduated two cohorts so the database is not large. Teaching, publishing; some have gone into work for educational support services, LEA kind of work. Others have just got a degree.... It's very difficult to see a progression – a career route – for which and Education Studies qualification would be the first qualification.
25. **Are they negative about that?**
26. No. Because it's combined honours, a lot of ours come in because they want to do the other bit. It's interesting that because there's a turn-around. I've tried informally talking to Year 1 over the year, and most of them are there because they want to do the other bit, Early Childhood or Humanities. So they're *obliged* to do Ed Studies and, as they go through, many of them actually find Ed Studies quite interesting. But it's the point I made earlier that, in terms of recruiting undergraduates, it's not a sexy subject..... If you think about it, I struggled to find a natural career from Ed Studies, so we're unlikely to find a 15 year-old saying, what I really want to be is.....
27. **Therefore, I'll do Ed Studies. Yes. So market forces, does that have any....?**
28. Oh yes. We struggle to recruit. We do. And for most of our students it is a second best. As I mentioned earlier the different ones tend to be mature who are actually quite interested and quite pleased about it. But it is hard work. And these days



since the reform in funding, most are the affluent or the indifferent and make very pragmatic choices about their first degree. But nowadays you can just say, I'll do a degree. It's something that might just interest me because I'm going for the experience. At the end of it I'll get some job or other. Or you were dead keen on becoming something. These days I don't think people can afford, literally afford, the luxury of spending three years up at a university to have a nice time.

**29. What about the Childhood Studies? (SL2A) said he though that would develop strongly.**

**30. (Hesitant) Yes....**

**31. It tends to be a growth area, doesn't it?**

**32.** It does, it does..... Erm..... but I think it's a bit of a boom market at the moment and I think that will begin to collapse in the not-too-distant future. Because there are only so many young children in the country. And they only need so many people to work with them in one capacity or another. And only a sub-section of those need to be graduates in Early Childhood.

**33. So you don't see Early Childhood taking over, or overwhelming Ed Studies?**

**34.** It might well, certainly in the shorter term. But I think what will be different will be that the Ed Studies will.... I think it'll grow differently from the Early Childhood stuff. The Early Childhood will grow principally from the home market and the Education Studies will grow primarily from the international market.

**35. Tell me about the staff teaching it. Are the staff teaching Ed Studies separate from the staff doing initial teacher training?**

**36.** Er... um..... some do both.... well..... I think just about everyone who teaches on the combined programme, certainly on Ed Studies, has at some time in their career been a teacher trainer. But someone like L, someone like me, have had years in teacher training, but no longer have any actual involvement. We've made one appointment two years ago who had not been involved in teacher training. But she was an early years specialist and we hired her for Ed Studies, but in the end we used her almost exclusively for early years. To date we have made no appointments specifically for Ed Studies.

**37. So it's people *from* teacher training?**

**38.** Yes.

**39. And are they glad to do that?**

**40.** Yes.... sometimes you have to twist the odd arm to begin with. My background isn't in Education Studies. My first degree was in biochemistry and physiology....I taught in secondary schools, then was hired here to do education management. So I've picked up, as it were, stuff about education management and Education Studies, rather than that being my natural domain.

**41. You say Ed Studies isn't a sexy subject. What do you think the university's view of it is? You get student numbers....**

**42.** I don't think it's got one, I really don't.

**43. Is it difficult to get student numbers?**

**44.** No. This (Institution)..... I can't make a comparative judgement, because I only know about this place, but our various areas of activity across the university seem to suffer from quite profound fluctuations in recruitment and our head money man is very happy to vire student numbers; but we have never yet recruited to our limit. We're always under-recruiting.

**45. So you're not having to fight against other competitor....?**

**46.** No, it's benign indifference.

**47. You mentioned the QAA Benchmark. Has that had any effect on your planning?**

**48.** Mmm..... It informs..... It is useful.... because it gives me a framework with which to engage. I think aspects of it are a bit daft. When you look at the totality of it, you think I've got an undergraduate degree with a singly honours, how am I going to do all that? Too broad. So our approach when we come round to writing the single honours next year will be to establish a rationale for a selection of bits from the total benchmark, and that'll be our interpretation of it.

**49. Which you can do, can't you?**

**50.** Yes, but I found it useful to have that overview thing and say, OK this is the particular emphasis we want to do.

**51. But I suppose the temptation is you must be doing this you must be doing that, you must be doing everything.**

**52.** Yes, but it's there to inform us not to determine it.

**53. And you're planning for single honours next year?**

**54.** Yes.

**55. Can you give me a rough idea of numbers?**

**56.** Yes, I can, no problem with that, but I think it's just misleading, because it's combined and very few of our students would have chosen the Ed Studies. So it's roughly Year 1 63, year 2 mid 50s, Year 3 mid 50s.

**57. That's number of students rather than ftes?**

**58.** Yes, so divide by two for the ftes.

**59. Chris, that's it. Thank you.**

**60.** Were there any surprises in that?

**61. (Pause) I'm surprised that you're not..... more gung-ho about it.... not that your not enthusiastic, but other people seem to be more 'missionary' about Ed Studies. You're more ..... pragmatic about it. They say, this is the new future.....**

**62.** Yes, and I think if this had been my discipline, I might be more, but it's something I've come into. My missionary zeal is directed towards another aspect of my role. Because the Ed Studies field includes all our foundation degrees, and the one for Teaching Assistants. And if you ask me about that, that's when you'll see the

missionary zeal.

**63. Oh, I see..... Have you a minute just to tell me about that?**

64. Sure.

**65. Are you sure you're all right for time?**

66. Yes. I'm joining some other colleagues in a meeting, but it doesn't matter if they've started first..... Erm..... I became..... It's been a personal crusade, this. It started about five or six years ago when I was still involved in primary teacher training and I went into a classroom to watch a student perform. Never met the student before – she hadn't turned up for her previous briefing or anything like that – so walked in and there are three adults in the room, and I'd been delayed, so I didn't have time to talk to anybody beforehand. So I walked in the room and sat in the corner and watched. I knew that one was a class teacher, I knew that one was a student, but I'd no idea who the third person was. In about a ten-minute observation I couldn't tell who was what. From what was going on, from observed behaviour, you couldn't tell. And it fascinated me, because one was getting paid this, one's getting paid that..... So I did a bit of sort of cheap and cheerful research, trying to understand who was a TA, a case study of all the TAs in one particular school. They were very diverse – an immensely diverse group of people – and, to cut it short, I started becoming very interested in the world of TAs and, by extension, notions of the professions in education and all those sorts of things, and then there was the opportunity to create for Essex Local Authority a Level 1 award. So I wrote that, ran it for a few years, saw its immense transformation of practice, and it really was.... the educational region's quite that large (indistinct) ... and then Blunkett invented foundation degrees, and I wrote one of those. And it's working immensely well. All the transformations are going on.... the good part of it's written (?) very, very well.... But one thing that it's achieving, apart from anything else, is a whole bunch of disgruntled TAs.

**67. Who want to be paid.....**

68. Well, yes, and they've invested all this effort and they've changed and some schools are saying great and using them, and others are saying how do you fund them.....(indistinct)...

**69. Yes....**

70. So what the schools and the government don't realise through their inept handling of Higher Level Teaching Assistants is that they are succeeding in politicising a heretofore a very docile and apolitical bunch of people. And I think in a few years time schools and the government won't know what's hit 'em. They'll all start getting Bolshi. They're very demanding with students; they're great with students, but they need immense amounts of support, particularly in their early experience and that takes up a huge amount of my time.... and my mental energy.

**71. Are you teaching them here? They're not being done in the FE colleges?**

72. Yes, we teach them here.

**73. Oh, I thought they had to be in FE colleges.**

74. No, no. You *can* be, and the government's preferred model is. But I looked at the preferred model and thought, no I don't want to do that. We've got a lot of our

partner colleges FE who are now starting to operate on it, but I'm much happier that we'd got it working, then we can export a sort of.....Because I have to admit to a prejudice here; I'm very sceptical about FE's ability to do HE. The FE culture, psychology and mind-set are profoundly different from HE. And what we're trying to do..... Sorry, I need to backtrack..... A lot of foundation degrees doing teaching assistants take a very NVQ approach, assessment by practical competence. We don't. We take an explicitly and avowedly academic approach. Our argument is the best way of improving practice is to develop your understanding of the issues..... We do education rather than training, to make that old distinction. And FE people getting let loose on that when they've got an NVQ mentality..... We shall see.

**Senior Manager 2 (SM2)**

**July 13 2004**

**Notes**

The Head of School had been appointed one year previously. This interview took place subsequent to the interviews with the former Subject Leader (SL2A) and the current Subject Leader (SL2B). The interviewee had indicated that s/he had little time and the original schedule was curtailed. In particular, I did not ask about the theoretical model.

- 1. I've talked to (SL2A) and I've talked to (SL2B) about the Education Studies programme. My research is about what Education Studies is in different universities. So I'd been interested in how you see it in the School of Education. Could you say something about the policy for Education Studies?**
- 2.** Well, it is an undergraduate programme, of which we do not have many in the school and, therefore, it's extremely valuable.
- 3. So you do value it? You see it as.....**
- 4.** Oh, yes, certainly.
- 5. Where do the student numbers come from?**
- 6.** They're HEFCE.
- 7. Yes, I just wondered how..... Because it's not that you've converted your QTS.....**
- 8.** No, we didn't do that. (Another local institution) did that.
- 9. Yes, that's what I'm getting to really.**
- 10.** If I'm very honest, and I shall be, because I know this isn't going to be attributed, when I came I did wonder about whether we should retain the three-year undergraduate ITT programme, or whether we should move to - not formally a three-plus-one, because I think there has to be an opt-out possibility at the plus-one stage - and recruit to Education Studies and encourage people to go on to do a PGCE. Because we're the only undergraduate ITT programme in the (xxx) Region, or in (regional area) I should say, because technically (County) comes into the (xxx) Region, and (Name) has one, I think it is fulfilling a real need and, therefore, we have not done that. So it's another degree of equal value with all our other degree programmes.
- 11. So it's the market that needs that (the QTS degree)?**
- 12.** Mmm.
- 13. But you'd considered.....?**
- 14.** Before I got here it was in my head that I shall have to have a look at this, but decided not to.
- 15. Yes, so that leaves the Education Studies programme here alongside that. I got a slight sense from both (SL2A) and (SL2B) that they got less good quality**

**students and the good students go onto the QTS, leaving them with the left-overs and less good quality students.....**

16. Well, they set the entry criteria; I don't set them.

17. **But you see it as a school something that you want to see expanding and successful? It's not just a residual.....**

18. No, no, no. Far from it. You see, their history with this goes back – I'll just go and shut the door, excuse me. Their history goes before mine, and what I have heard, from them, is that the first cohort of students was not particularly strong because I think the programme was validated during the year and they recruited onto it in the September without any marketing and things like that. So I think that they felt that they'd picked up most of their students from clearing. So that's perhaps coloured them in a way that my impression hasn't been.

19. **So your impression isn't that?**

20. No.

21. **And Childhood Studies is coming along now?**

22. Early Childhood Studies. Now then, that's currently half a degree – I'm sure they've explained that - and now that can be a full degree.

23. **Is that a response to the market?**

24. Yes. I know so. I'm told there is a market for it.

25. **Is there any sense that that might overwhelm the other Ed Studies?**

26. (Pause) Doesn't seem to be this year. But, yes, I think it's something we have been aware of.

27. **Can I ask about the institution: how that perceives Ed Studies? Is there any difficulty about getting student numbers from your institution?**

28. No.

29. **Are they benevolent towards it?**

30. Yes.

31. **Are they keen on it?**

32. Erm.... I've never heard any negative comments.

33. **They're benevolent then?**

34. Yes..... Well I'm not sure it's quite as positive as even benevolent. It's just if we're happy, they're happy.

35. **So as long as you get student numbers, that'll do?**

36. Yes, and assume responsibility for what happens to those student, yes, via people like (SL2A) and (SL2B).

37. **What about staffing of Ed Studies. (SL2A), I think, was the original course leader.**

38. Yes, he was.

- 39. How does it work with people teaching on the teacher training programme and people teaching Ed Studies. Are they a separate.....**
- 40.** No. The policy in the school – and you’ll have had (SL2B)’s version of this because s/he’s feeling sorry for him/herself at the moment – but I’ll tell you what the exact..... The policy in the school is that people teach to their strengths, preferably their research strengths, across the programmes..... During this year we have had Ofsted inspectors crawling all over us..... and (SL:2B) agreed with me that where there was conflict..... if there were conflicts of interest, for this year ITT should have priority. Now..... I don’t know, because I asked him to talk..... (Hesitates) Er, I have not seen from him his spreadsheet with requests for staff hours yet. So.....
- 41. But do the staff want to teach teacher training or Ed Studies? Is there an interest in Ed Studies, or is it something they have to be cajoled into....?**
- 42.** Well, I don’t know. I repeat the policy that people teach to their strengths across the school. That’s my perception.... We have got some *very* strong staff in the Ed Studies area, with great enthusiasm..... You know if there was something about research in the Ed Studies programme, I can’t see why a research professor shouldn’t be involved. I’ve done some teaching on it myself. So, I think that C’s view that he gets second best, which he once said in this office and I was quite shocked by, because in my view he’s got what he’s ever asked for. I’ve talked to him, so he’s obviously telling you differently.... (Angrily) I don’t see it as a Cinderella. I don’t know how many times I’ve got to say it. Nor do I see the foundation degrees as Cinderella subjects. I regard them very, very highly. I’ve done some teaching on that, as well.
- 43. I suppose it’s the pressure that people always feel they’re under.....**
- 44.** They’ve got a chip on their shoulder, actually, I think. No, I’m beginning to think that (SL2B) has got a chip on his/her shoulder about this. I’ll have to have a word with him/her.....
- 45. No, please not on account of what I’ve said.....**
- 46.** S/he’s going through a phase of being.... a bit swamped.....
- 47. And s/he did talk very enthusiastically about the foundation degrees. That’s what s/he’s enthusiastic about.....**
- 48.** Yes, but what we need to do is to identify someone to take Education Studies forward. We were going to do that a little while ago, but we’ve had to put a hold on all that kind of thing until the Vice-Chancellor’s paper on re-structuring, which is going to be announced later this week.
- 49. How would you see the ‘going forward’ for Ed Studies? What would be your vision for it?**
- 50.** (Slowly and carefully) I’m not sure that I’d necessarily like *very* many more HEFCE numbers on it at the moment. I think it needs a period of..... well, it’s just been reviewed..... I think it needs a dose of enthusiasm..... in terms of leadership. It needs the right person to lead it and take it forward. And I hope between now and Christmas we’ll identify that person.
- 51. Of course, you’ve got the single honours coming. That might give it more....**

52. Yes..... There is no hierarchy of courses in this school. I keep saying that ..... (laughs).... I keep saying it: there is no hierarchy. A foundation degree student is as important as someone doing a doctorate.

**53. How do you see it in terms of government policy for education?**

54. Now then, that's interesting, isn't it? Because it's not bad at the moment because people can do an Ed Studies degree and progress to a PGCE if they want to. I do see it in terms of an opportunity for widening access. I think we can..... We do get students on those courses who..... might not find other courses appealing. I think it *is* a good widening access.....

**55. And the fact that you can study education without complying with government standards does allow us to have a critique of things. That's what I found attractive about it in the way that that sort of study has been closed down by the Teacher Training Agency.**

56. You know, when I was doing my doctorate, where I used to go to hide, really to hide – I lived..... well actually I lived in (place name), but was working (Institution) – and I used to go into (Institution Library and the place I knew I would never be disturbed was in the philosophy of education section (laughs). Otherwise, the Law Library in August..... And it was quite interesting because occasionally you'd pick something up off the shelf, you know, Dewey and.....

**57. And now that's back, we can do this. Interestingly, L (SL2A) talked about how they were hesitant about calling modules the Philosophy of Education, the Sociology of Education so we don't go too hard on the disciplines, but is that we can do these things now.....**

58. Yes. It's liberating.

**59. Yes it is liberating and the feeling that we're getting away with that.....**

60. Have you been to (local institution)?

**61. No I haven't.**

62. Oh well, maybe you should go....It's not for me to define your sample, but I know Tim has moved to..... not having a primary undergraduate.....

**63. Yes, they've got a three-plus-one, like us. Joan, I said I wouldn't be long.....**

64. Is that all you need to know?

**65. Is there anything else you wanted to say?**

66. Mm, I don't think so.

**67. In some institutions there's a lot of micropolitics about who's teaching what and who's got numbers. That's not happening here, is it?**

68. No..... In terms of who's teaching what, I think there's one member of staff who C would very much like to have..... (laughs)... working on Ed Studies.....

**69. Who's doing ITT now?**

70. Who's doing ITT, yes. I know that's what he'd like. But he was very good about it and he said, we've got to give Ofsted priority and hope that it gets them off our backs all the time.



71. **And when it develops, perhaps into other areas, different content, would you be happy for the leader to allow that to go in whichever direction they wanted?**
72. Yes, well I would expect it to go..... I regard people who lead areas..... I regard as the experts in their field. And I feel I have the right to be informed, consulted, as I've said to I think it was (SL2A) or (SL2B) – it makes me sound like the (King/Queen), doesn't it (laughs) – but that's exactly how I feel. I expect there to be discussion, certainly between the person leading that are and me, and then probably with senior management as well, so that we don't have..... You have to be a bit wary that you're not getting a whole course predicated around one person's view. We did have one or two modules like that, but then (SL2A) took a sabbatical..... (laughs). So you have to be a bit wary of that.
73. **Yes, well, L was quite open about that: he devised it, it was his ambition and....**
74. I'm all for a bit of idiosyncrasy, but one has to be careful that the whole course isn't idiosyncratic.
75. **But that's true in other places, that one person's had a passion for it and it's gone that way. What's interesting is that it's susceptible to that because it's so open..... The QAA Benchmark is so broad..... So you'd leave it to them?**
76. Yes, yes, before going to approval.

**CASE 3 TRANSCRIPT**

**Subject Leader 3 (SL3)**

**11 November 2004**

1. **How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. I can tell you what I know of the story, but I wasn't here when it started. As I understand it the college was looking for something to deal with those students who had a problem with the QTS degree – they'd failed teaching practice or decided teaching wasn't for them – they wanted to offer something that still allowed them to have undergraduate study. There may have been a more positive argument for it, but I've never been aware of it. And so (SM3), who was the programme leader up until this year, was asked to take this forward and to have an Education Studies degree which was – as I suppose Education Studies degrees are – an inflation of the professional studies and theoretical aspects of the QTS degree. And s/he was primarily responsible for that – guiding it and leading it – with several colleagues from QTS programmes doing guest appearances. As I remember, and this must have been about ten years ago, (SM3) was the driving force.....
3. **What are the aims of the programme?**
4. Er, I think .... We'd all give you a slightly different answer, I think, but we'd all be on the same lines as making people more informed..... and *reasonable* in their criticisms of education; everybody has a view of education before they start; everybody can rant about what's right and wrong in education and for many of the students actually that viewpoint won't change in direction over the three years, but it will become more informed and their arguments will become more persuasive.... So we're looking for people who will be critical thinkers about issues which, because of our work on the degree, we think of as important, not only to teachers, but also to parents who want to go into supporting the child's education, adults without children who are reflecting on their own education, and as citizens and who are going to be voting for and supporting various education policies. So, the, we're looking for.... critical thinkers.
5. **How were those aims derived?**
6. The core staff from Education Studies are former schoolteachers, so myself, (Tutor name), (SM3), who are the longest-serving members, all came out of education, as many teachers did, in the early nineties, with our discomfort with the changes in education. (Tutor name) and I were primary teachers; (SM3) was a secondary teacher.
7. **You mean with teacher education.....?**
8. No, classroom education. So I guess you could characterise us as the kind of teachers who were, well, thinking teachers, quite innovative teachers and at some point made the decision that we weren't going to be headteachers; that wasn't going to be our career path. Our career path was going to be down the aisle of further scholarship in education and along comes the '88 Education Reform Act, and you know that time in schools when we were all very anxious and very defensive..... and, certainly the schools we worked in suddenly regressed to very mechanical formulaic ways of teaching and, suddenly, thinking teachers had

nowhere to go really. So we came out of the school system and developed our academic courses here. I guess those ideas about critical reflection on education reflect *us*, and the kind of teachers we were and our desire for more people to have more ideas about education. So, picking up on your intervention about teacher education, we saw the formulaic constraints on school work then fed through into teacher education and that became more formulaic and mechanistic, and again, then you become as a thinking teacher or educator, you become increasingly concerned that now they're completing the circle: there won't be the thinking teachers unless we encourage people to think about education.

**9. That's interesting; so it came from a school-based education critique, rather than a university one?**

**10.** Yes, yes, I think it would be fair to say that, yes. Our initial impetus was we needed to do something more satisfying

**11. And what would you say were the distinctive features of the curriculum?**

**12.** Theory. I mean real, serious theory, going back to the original work, and we're trying very hard to put a stop to the rot of so many textbooks – not only in education, but in cultural studies, and in many English texts – where you get fleeting references to say Foucault or Derrida, all the big names, and students learn a pat phrase that summarises that thinker in the usual kind of secondary text, and it doesn't do them justice, and it doesn't give the students the ability to understand them. We do our very best to bring them back to the primary works so they can understand it for themselves. The way I always spin that to students is that makes them a more powerful thinker. They're not repeating other people's interpretations, they are dealing with it themselves, and as a by-product of that they learn very quickly that there are very few original bits; they are re-cycled, re-worked, and by taking them back to the original thinkers – sometimes 2000 years – that becomes very, very evident. So, by this point in their second year they have learned through a combination of modules about the tripartite system and the '44 Act, and they have learned about Plato's contribution to education and they're able to make those links. So taking them back to the original theories of school work is the distinctive feature. Naturally, it's very demanding of the students.... and maybe I'm being overly-arrogant about our course, but my sense is that we are very, very demanding in what we require. If you look at our best students, they are doing the kind of work which I did at masters' level, and they're producing it as undergraduates. Now, I don't want to suggest that the majority of our students do that; the majority of our students are still undergraduate students, but there is a small proportion every single year that are doing quite astoundingly impressive work; and they're the ones who respond well to the (*indistinct*) and fly. So that's the distinctive feature of what we do. You'd be quite surprised by some of the dissertations..... You'd have to ask (SM3) because he's the leader who is responsible for those, but I think you could get permission to read them. But, with the demanding nature of the academic content, I believe we are distinctive in our support for students. And I believe that comes from our origins as schoolteachers. So we are incredibly committed to getting to know our students and supporting them as individuals, rather than simply an enormous student numbers. But that's getting increasingly difficult to do with the large numbers, because we started off with about 50 FTE, sorry, 25 FTE. Now we're up to 40, 60, 70 FTE, and so it's increasingly difficult to develop that personal relationship, but we are very

committed to it because of those things you earlier asked about. Our students aren't very confident in their abilities when they come; they think they might be able to..... but their confidence is undermined for various reasons: they struggled at school or didn't fit in at school. Quite a few students are mature women who have got to forty. They've got the children in school and they've realised they're much more able than anybody ever let them think they were, and they're very tentative when they come to us and if we simply gave them demanding material they'd be out by Christmas. So it has to be combined with the support; it has to be combined with the individual relationships; and that, I think, is what is distinctive; it is something distinctive of the college, regardless of the course.

**13. And what about the subject disciplines? What role do they play?**

14. Yes, these are cropping up, but not in the traditional sense. So you can identify (Tutor name) as the historian, and you can identify (SM3) as the philosopher, and (Tutor name) has philosophical leanings. I'm a jack-of-all-trades. So my origins are in sociology, but I also play about with a bit of the psychology and a bit of philosophy. You see in these issues cropping up, and there are modules which it is possible to align to the old subjects, but the majority of them take a bit of a pick-and-mix approach, because we don't wish to compartmentalise the knowledge – the information - that we're dealing with in that way. It restricts it, it undermines it and it demeans it. We want the students to deal critically with significant issues in education, and no single discipline would do that effectively. So we tend to work on the whole with a combination of issues, so that we would see Bourdieu and Hegel popping up in the same module.... at level 3.....

**15. But they are there: the disciplines are there?**

16. Yes.

**17. Are the students aware of the disciplines? Do they know that they're doing psychology or sociology or philosophy?**

18. They know they're doing psychology and they know when they're doing history. Erm, they do very little psychology really; it's a compulsory module in the second year which is called 'Theories of Teaching and Learning' and that's one of those modules that an Education Studies student expects to see on an Education Studies course. So it's the introduction to some of the ideas..... but – and I teach that module, and I spend most of the apologising for poor psychology and the rapid romp through psychology that that module represents – so they know they're playing psychology and hopefully my warnings make it clear that they're not doing pure psychology in any way at all.

**19. They're not getting a critical analysis of different psychological approaches?**

20. They're not at that stage because it's a level 2 module and there isn't a level 3 equivalent of that particular module. But actually the disciplines question from a student's perspective is in some ways a non-question. When we have discussions with the third years and they're reflecting on the programme and we introduce the idea of the disciplines, we find it's something they don't understand, as students. They have no sense of there being a subject and they have no sense of a traditional or conventional approach to it. So, maybe that's just because it's our students and the type of cohorts we have, but if we tell them when they've finished, you know had really a rather.... (laughs)... idiosyncratic approach to Education Studies,

they'll say, well I didn't know what to expect and what I had seemed fine.

**21. Do you think, then, that you've got here a theory of Education Studies that is not psychology, sociology philosophy? Is it something else?**

**22.** If it's anything, it's philosophy. In the end we get to a stage for those high flyers where the only useful support they have for where their ideas are going is philosophy.

**23. So how would you describe the theoretical framework for the course?**

**24.** Well, it's the paper:(by SM3 and SL3), and I'm (SL3). The paper, I think, is the best source of evidence about it and the paper's arguments about false consciousness and philosophical consciousness I think work as the philosophical argument and framework for the course, which is then translated into a much more – in prosaic terms – theory of critique. In the first year we're expecting students to reflect on their own experience which, as you said earlier, everyone has an experience of education, maybe not in school maybe not in this system, but we've all had an experience of education, and we all have an opinion. And for the vast majority that has to be worked through, and the limitations of their experience as a basis for understanding education has to be identified. So that they leave the first year realising that their understanding and experience are a wonderful starting point, but they can't call themselves informed about education, because that's all they do.

**25. I noticed in the paper there's one reference to 'emancipation', is that how you see that.....**

**26.** Erm.... Yes, to a certain extent, yes. We want to liberate students from taken-for-granted assumptions, yes. That's right. And we do that in a two-fold process in the second year in terms of introducing them to the social theories of the Frankfurt School; they're the theoretical perspectives that they get introduced to.

**27. Do they know about the Frankfurt School?**

**28.** Yes. Freire they get introduced to as well. They're introduced to Marx and Durkheim and, again, later on they retrospectively discuss them as the antecedents of the Frankfurt School. What else are they doing in the second year? They go back to Locke and Rousseau for early childhood studies. So many students will use the phrase 'blank slate' unthinkingly and they need to go back to the original work and see that Locke's misinterpreted. So we do a lot of that work in the second year. And in many ways you can see us as a very traditional, old-style degree in the second year; not in terms of the disciplines, but in terms of teaching students information and expecting them to take it on board and then regurgitate it. So we're always asking them for different ways. Read the stuff first; when you've taken that on board and we think you fully understand it, then we'll allow you to use that as the building blocks for critiquing it.

**29. How far does the students' choice of modules determine the curriculum? Actually, I'm not clear how much choice they have.**

**30.** They have a lot of choice. First year they don't have any choices. There are four modules which they all have to do. First year honours is combined with another subject and we're very, very positive about that. The combinations are always positive. Some other degrees at this college have taken the option of an eight-

module first year, but we're very happy for them to combine with other subjects. Even when they are miserable in one subject - sometimes that's us, sometimes it's the other subject – the experience of being miserable is useful. So we're very happy for the combinations that go on, but we restrict what they can do so that we have a solid basis, because there is no established subject base; they're starting from scratch in the first year, so everybody has the same. In the second year for the Education Studies students there are two compulsory modules, one a semester; one is about education and social theory, so you're talking about the relationship of education to society, it's role in society. In the second semester we do teaching and learning where they're looking at theories about culture and processes. Those are the only two compulsory modules for Education Studies students. Education Studies and Early Childhood have an additional compulsory module in the second year called 'Theories in Early Childhood', and that's where we take them back to the original work from Locke, Rousseau, Piaget and Vygotsky, because all four are bandied about quite happily, and misrepresented. So we go back to some of the original work, and *of course*, we can't cover them in any great length, but we try and alert the students of the need to go back to the.... Then there is another additional compulsory module for the Early Childhood people at Level 3, which is called 'Loss of Childhood'. We choose, I guess – as negative as that title suggests – and we're in the middle of re-vamping them, not because we're not happy with what we've got there, but we're trying to fit too much into it, because we do a lot with the nature-nurture argument and at the moment that module completely disrupts, and possibly upsets, students with the question, 'What on earth is nature?' Now that we have so much foetal screening and embryonic intervention, what's nature, what's natural? Those are the only compulsory modules. Everything else is up for grabs. However, that doesn't necessarily give a phenomenally different type of degree to two different students who take very different curriculum choices, because underpinning every single module is the same framework of experience being put it; and we've got generic learning outcomes for each level. They're always working for the same generic learning outcome and we're always working on the assumption that every student has been introduced in their mandatory modules to..... Rosseau, Plato, Marx, Durkheim, Locke, Vygotsky, and we tend to use those theorists again as a starting point in every singly module; so the same theorists come up again and again and again.

31. **So what I'm getting at then is you're not driven by 'ooh, they're not choosing this, so we'd better do more of that .....'?**

32. No, absolutely not, no. It's completely in the students' hands....

33. **And it's the same sort of stuff in each of the modules, so...**

34. Yes.

35. **And if a module didn't run, that wouldn't make any difference?**

36. No.

37. **Thank you, that's very clear. The staff expertise: how much does that determine the curriculum content?**

38. To a great extent, because we tend to teach what we research. For example, (Tutor name) does a lot of work in aesthetic education and s/he has modules called 'The Art of Learning'..... none of the others immediately come to mind; s/he has a

level version of Art of Learning, which I can't remember what it's called. But they all have themes about ..... aesthetic education and using images and icons about ways of forming thought, rather than using language. (SM3)'s a philosopher and his/her modules are called 'the Power of Teaching', 'Philosophy for Teaching' and that completely sums up his/her research interest. S/he's interested in the power and responsibilities of teaching. (Tutor name)'s work is in gender studies and history; here module's on women and power in education, gender constructions and the power struggle.

**39. Let me ask you, supposing (tutor name) left, would you then be looking for someone to do gender, or could you just leave that?**

40. We could just leave it. We could just drop them and then the new person could take up whichever modules they wished to..... So, as I said, we have a new member of staff starting in January and s/he will take over some of my early childhood work, because s/he's an infant teacher, but it's not what s/he actually wants to do in great detail. So s/he's serving that purpose for us because s/he can deal with (*three faces?*) in that area, but s/he really wants to write modules on environmental education, the type that you were talking about with your colleague. And that's what his/her PhD research is going to be in. So s/he's busy writing those modules so that they would fit in. So once s/he's on board....

**41. So that would be a new element....?**

42. Yes. S/he'll be taking us in a different direction.

**43. There are no other constraints?**

44. No, as long as s/he fits in with our framework and s/he has some sense of continuity with the kind of theorists we're dealing with, s/he can do whatever s/he wants.

**45. But your framework.....? I asked you that question; so how does environmental education fit into that framework?**

46. Because at level 2 we have in the early childhood modules a focus on the nature-nurture debate. At the moment we're dealing with human nature. His/her work will deal with the role of humans in nature.

**47. How do you see this programme in relation to teacher training?**

48. I think it has a complex relationship. (SM3) has a sign outside his/her door which says, 'Thinking of teaching? Think first.' And that's our primary objective. For those of our students who want to be teachers, and that's about half of them, we want them to spend three years thinking about educational processes, thinking about the role of the teacher, thinking about the significance of both good and bad experiences of school for the student, so that when they learn the technical skills of being a teacher, and learn the subject knowledge they need on their PGCE, they're always placing that within a much broader perspective of the role they are stepping into: What is education: What's it for? What have we based that on that's good education and so forth. And ninety-nine percent of the time we believe that is incredibly advantageous for them, for the teaching profession and, more importantly, for the children that they're.... (indistinct). Occasionally, we produce an argumentative one, and that's no help to anybody. And when that happens – maybe once a year – we have somebody who's not really suited to the education

system because they haven't appreciated the need to be part of a system...

49. **They want to be resistant...?**

50. Yes, and they haven't got the hang of sensible resistance and sensible innovation and creativity, and they want to go in and fight.

51. **What's the view of your PGCE course to students? Do they welcome applications from them?**

52. They welcome applications; there are no guaranteed places. They welcome applications and our students tend to be very successful, because they're able to talk about the important things. Anybody can bone up on the curriculum and recent policy, but our students can talk very well about individuality in the classroom and the need to make a response to various individuals in the classroom.

53. **Was Education developed to avoid state intervention?**

54. When I applied for my job, which was in '97, (SM3) sent me the application form and there was a covering letter which I remember very clearly saying something along the lines of, 'this is a wonderful opportunity to teach Education outside of the confines of QTS'. So yes.

55. **I think I know what you're going to say to this: Do the teacher training standards have any influence over the choice of content?**

56. No. Absolutely not.

57. **Are there any vocational outcomes at all intended?**

58. I think they're being thoughtful, informed teachers.... We have an uplifting statement in our prospectus which says we want you to make positive changes in whatever you do.

59. **Did the QAA Benchmark play any role in deciding what the curriculum is?**

60. No. We found we match the benchmarks, but that was a retrospective exercise. And (SM3) was in charge of the programme, as you know when you speak to (SM3), (SM3) has a very clear vision for the programme and I think if we hadn't met the benchmark it wouldn't have been a straightforward fiddling with the programme to meet them. S/he may well have been happy to argue philosophically....

61. **Market forces, do they play a role at all?**

62. No.

63. **Though you're in the market, the market's looking after your interests?**

64. Yes.

65. **Does the programme treat the political dimension of education?**

66. Yes. Not necessarily in the explicit, obvious form of ranting about the latest policy development, but at a much more generic and theorised about what is the role of education and who has the right to .... (indistinct).

67. **Last one: How do you see it developing?**



68. We're broadening our perspectives. We've (Tutor name) and (Tutor name) that you met this morning: new members of staff who are the moment doing one module each, (Tutor name) on critiquing higher education because that's what his/her PhD research is on and (Tutor name) on religious education which is what his/her PhD was on. So they're testing the water really to see whether those are routes that they'd like to develop. And we have another new member of staff starting in January who's going down the environmental education line. So we are broadening our scope..... quite rapidly and that's in response to the rapid rise in numbers. So, in the near future, what we are trying to do is maintain the quality of the student relationship, the quality of student achievement with larger numbers and the broader curriculum base. And that for the moment is simply our concern: to make sure we can do that.

11 November 2004

Senior Manager 3 (SM3)

**69. How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**

70. During 1992 two members of the BA Primary course team had written an Education Studies field for the newly-emerging modular degree. As they came off the BA Primary the whole structure of the field of Ed Studies was written around the disciplines; Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology were the core.....

**71. It was interesting that the disciplines had survived that long really.**

72. They hadn't taught it. No, they hadn't taught it. When I joined in 1992 the programme had no leader, so I was marched in front of the (Member of institution's directorate) and told, 'You will lead this', which I thought was great because it gave me the scope to put my vision of Education into the degree, not only into a module, but a whole degree experience. And from that moment I set about trying to transform what they had done, but not yet run, into what we've got now.

**73. OK, so where did the student numbers come from?**

74. Well, because it was HEFCE funded and any expansion in those days was good.... As I say, in 1992 we started with 17 students. They did have to take three fields in their first year and were probably picking up ones that didn't want to do Ed Studies at all, but they had to choose three, and they were doing Drama, English and Ed Studies. But that got us an audience and that began our teaching and our writing the modules. And I suppose over the years we began to pick up people who came to do Ed Studies specifically. We still pick up a large number of people who didn't come to do it, did it in their first year and then chose it for the next two. So that was good for us. The numbers were HEFCE numbers, so at that point...

**75. There was no difficulty with.....**

76. No, no. The TTA numbers were still upstairs, 220 of them. So we wondered if we'd be in competition, but in fact we weren't really. There were people who wanted to *maybe* teach, and came to do Ed Studies first, and there were people who *just* wanted to teach and went upstairs and did the four-year course. We didn't compete.

**77. There is a question of how it relates to teacher training in terms of numbers, and it was always completely separate, then?**

78. Yes, and we still are.

**79. What's the relationship, not academically, but between the two sections, or departments? Do they welcome your students onto the PGCE course?**

80. Hm, they're good questions. At a personal level, I think there's no problem with relations between any of the staff in the School of Ed at all, one department or the other. That's good. Do they like our students on the PGCE? Sometimes I think that they do. I think they like the critical spirit that they bring into the seminars. At times I think that one or two have perhaps not

understood that the professional requirements probably outweigh the critical requirements. But I think they've learned that lesson in the end. They certainly don't hold anything against our students; they leave them along with anybody else, and I guess they've taken about four or five a year.

**81. Is there any cross-teaching, or are people either teaching on this course, or the QTS?**

82. Mostly. There's a tiny bit of overlap, but very, very little. I mean even down to numbers like maybe someone will teach two lectures, two seminars on what is, after all, a four-year course. So really, the answer is no. So we're really..... a professional course, this isn't.....

**83. Can you say more about how it developed after it had started off....?**

84. Well, when I came in and looked at the course – and we had to teach it how it was in 1992, obviously. And as I said to you over tea, it was quite clear to me that the educational issues were getting masked by some of the disciplines' methodological issues. You could pick the Sociology of Education, but if you wanted to go into some of those issues in depth, you were in the end getting caught up with 'what is Sociology?' I couldn't see that..... No, I didn't want the course to go down that path. I didn't want us to be hamstrung by disciplines' definitions of themselves that prevented us from taking any educational issues in any direction we cared to take it. So I made the decision that we would move away from the disciplines and try and establish the notion of Education as a subject in its own right. I guess that's the core of what we've tried to do. We've tried to make Education, in the loosest possible sense, a subject that can stand with any other. Now, if you're back in the '60s there was the same kind of debate: whether you had the History of Education, the Sociology, the Philosophy, the Psychology, and Education itself fell through the net.

**85. And in the 1960s it was theory for teaching, wasn't it?**

86. Yes, psychological theory for teaching. I just didn't like the notion of Education that emerged out of an agglomeration of disciplinary approaches. It was that Education must stand on its own two feet, it must say it *is* something, and I guess over the last ten years we've been trying to form an idea of what Education actually is.

**87. And have you got it now?**

88. Well, we've got a version of it. One of the key sentences, I suppose, is that – and this would be true for anyone, I'm sure – but we've got to write this down: we don't just want people to study education, we want them to know they're doing it at the same time. And that, perhaps, has underpinned most of the reforms we've made over the years: not just to study it, but to be doing it, and to recognise that you're doing it, to recognise how difficult education is when you're doing it, to try and understand more of what those difficulties might mean for you while you're doing it, and even to turn the content of the difficulty into modules. Now that, I think, is the really distinctive thing.

89. **Can I just try you on that: you could be doing that while doing any subject, couldn't you? You could be doing Physics and reflecting and learning like that. Is that what you mean? Is that true?**
90. You could, you could. You can be reflecting in any subject. The advantage that Education must have is that it reflects on itself. And I believe that's where the definition's got to come from.
91. **You could say I'm searching for the Holy Grail of Education Studies theory. Have I found it here?**
92. (Laughs) You've found a version, you've found a version. I'd love to encourage everybody to go and work out what education means to them, and to write courses around that. That course is significant, not just in what they've learned, but in who they've become, how hard they found it, what they did when they found it hard. They struggled with the big book, but got through it.....
93. **There's a point in your paper where you say that something which claims to be educational and you find what is it.....**
94. Yes, because I think that reflecting on doing education is educational. And that's the only subject that has that advantage. We can come up with an idea of what Education is, but we don't.
95. **Now, look, I heard you say, 'I was unhappy with this...' How much was it your 'thing' then?**
96. Well, in '92, I got the leadership of it and all the other tutors were from the BA Primary, and they would be doing it as one module out of, maybe..... most of their other work was still on teacher training.
97. **Ah, so it started out with you working with QTS people, and you were the only one who....**
98. Yes, it's true, it's true. And the vision of how it had to go, if it was to be a subject in its own right, it had to have tutors in its own right.
99. **How was that? How did that feel then? Were people enthusiastic and excited about it, or were you having to work hard to make them see what they were doing?**
100. Erm, I had to work hard because, for some people, it would be one module – the only module – that they would be teaching out of ITT. And that experience was quite hard for me. Why should they take seriously something that was point one (0.1) of their timetable?
101. **Did any of them not take it seriously?**
102. I think they tried to take it seriously, but they couldn't get to know the students. They could teach and mark the work, but they weren't taking the course fully..... erm..... There wasn't a problem. Nobody said, 'I don't want to do it'. People thought it was quite exciting to be freed from ITT for a while, but it wasn't doing what I wanted it to do.
103. **It was watered down QTS?**

104. To start with, that's exactly what it was. And as professional studies got squeezed out of ITT, we were in a sense putting the stuff back in. There were a couple of module more or less the same.
105. **So how did it work with the staff, then? You gradually shed those people and got new people, like (name of tutor) came....**
106. Yes, that's exactly right. The first appointment would have been in '94-95. And we've made an appointment every two or three years since then.
107. **But the original students were ones who'd dropped out of the QTS?**
108. No, it wasn't that. Originally in '92, as I said, these 17 people turned up who had nothing to do with ITT at all.
109. **So they didn't originate in teacher training.....?**
110. No, no. The Head of Department had marched me up to the (Member of institution's directorate) and said, 'We've put this on; I don't know if anyone will come, and, if they do, I don't know why they'd come!' But they thought it was important to have Education represented in the modular programme.
111. **Why?**
112. Well, it's an odd question, isn't it? But how secure was teacher training?
113. **Yes.**
114. Well it wasn't a problem, because it meant the course could grow.
115. **So the institutional reason for taking it up was that the staff might become redundant if QTS numbers were cut?**
116. Yes, yes.
117. **And that didn't happen, so it grew anyway?**
118. Yes.
119. **So it's an interesting.....**
120. Well, it's an opportunity, isn't it? Very rare to get something in higher ed...
121. **Where had you been before?**
122. Well, I taught in a secondary school in Crawley in West Sussex for eight years, and while I was doing that I did my part-time MA and started a part-time PhD at Sussex and then I stopped teaching for a couple of years and finished the PhD and then this was the first job I got having done that. I came to teach ITT: Design and Technology two-years, Design and Technology four-years - remember those - that's what I was appointed to do. But I think the Head of Department always had in mind that he needed somebody to lead the Ed Studies field, and I think he had me in mind for that. He didn't tell me that at the time.

123. **That was a very happy coincidence.**

124. Yes.

125. **I asked Janice this question: What do you see as the theoretical base for Education Studies?**

126. Here?

127. Yes.

128. It's grounded in a vision of learning that comes from the Philosophy I did. The Philosophy I read is in the speculative tradition from Plato right through now, I suppose to, to Deleuze, Derrida, people like that. It's very much in a continental tradition. I believe they have a vision of the significance of learning as an end in itself and I've tried to build a course that makes that, not only the subject of the modules, but also the content of some of the students' experience. If it's names – where do I find the philosophy of education – it's Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, those kind of.....

129. **You didn't mention Kierkegaard in the paper.....**

130. No, but it's more difficult to make it look as though you're trying to create a course around Kierkegaard, because he's got this reputation for being existential, and how would you build that in? You see it's much easier with Kant and Hegel. But Kierkegaard and Nietzsche would be there as well.

131. **I know I asked you this over tea, but there's no student resistance to this? I mean Philosophy's not top of the charts now, is it?**

132. Mm, but again, you see, we're not *doing* Philosophy in the sense that we're doing the disciplines. I don't have to worry at all about whether we're representing the subject properly or not. Take out of it what I think is educational and put that in. So they come to Philosophy accidentally.

133. **What about how Ed Studies is now perceived in the institution, in relation, say, to the QTS programme?**

134. It's very high. The reputation's very high. There are three things that measure that. The external examiner's reports every year are quite fantastic. The QAA inspection got 24 and we were the first in the (institution) who had ever got 24. And the student satisfaction survey, which the (institution) carries out every year, we haven't yet lost a mark on anything, which, again, nobody else has done. So because of those three external measures I think our reputation is very high.

135. **So in terms of those university quality measures, you're what they want?**

136. Yes, I mean it might interest you to know that when we knew the QAA were coming in 2001 I wrote to them in 2000. I tried to explain the nature of the course in the hope that they would bring a panel that at least had some recognition that there was something going on here that wasn't going to be found in too many other places. And nobody ever said to me we took it into account, or we even got your letter, but we were satisfied with who we got and they were open, I think, to being..... What's the word?.... They were open to our argument that this was a vision of Education that was working, and the 24,

in a sense, was more about the global activity than the six categories....

137. **You mean they were going to give you 24 anyway?**

138. Well, I don't know, I can't say that. We felt like this is 24 ahead of the game.

139. **But you didn't get it wrong in any of those? If you had got it seriously wrong in any of those they'd have had to give you.....**

140. That's right. But I felt that we were having to..... to me, I was always putting the thing on the line, wasn't I? If higher ed can't recognise this for what it is then I've got a problem.

141. **What do you think about the QAA Benchmark? I think I know because you mention it in the paper, but did that have any affect on the curriculum?**

142. None at all, no. I mean, I think we felt we were doing all of them except the maths key skill, which we don't do and we're not going to do. Other than that, they didn't pose a problem for us.

143. **What about number? If they came back you'd be prepared to lose a point for that?**

144. Yes, yes, but they're not going to come back, are they, and do the same.....?

145. **No.....**

146. I'd probably slip some maths in somewhere..... (laughs)

147. **Links with any other subjects?**

148. Well, because it's a combined honours programme, our students take a wide range of joint degrees. Everybody who comes in..... no, that's not quite true..... Everybody who comes into Ed Studies has to do another field as well. So they might be doing English, Religious Studies, Drama, Performing Arts, Sport, Psychology..... Now, the link is in the student. Our links with other departments are not at an institutional level. We're going to go to faculties soon; I suspect that will cement relationships between people within faculties, but not necessarily between them.

149. **What would you be in?**

150. Well, they think the School of Education will stay as it is and we'll become a faculty of education. One of the advantages that we've had over the years is that we're the only field in the combined honours that's in the School of Education, so we haven't had to compare ourselves with practice..... it's part of that freedom we've enjoyed to do whatever we want.

151. **Has anybody thought of getting rid of the QTS degree?**

152. I think that discussion happened in the mid-90s. I think the college really at that point thought financially it didn't make sense. Because TTA brings more money in than HEFCE, than a HEFCE student, and there's 250, nearly 260, of them; that's over a thousand.

153. **You spend more though....**

154. Yes, a lot of it goes back out to schools and on coach trips and mini-buses and stuff, I know, but I think the college feeling now is that if they can sustain the four-year they'll carry on with it. And as I said to you before if they had gone to three-plus-one I don't think Ed Studies could have been what it is. The numbers would have been too big to do what we're doing. I mean 260 people don't get into one of our halls. At the very least we'd have to repeat everything twice. We haven't got enough staff to give the kind of attention to scripts and texts that we want to do. It's in our interest that it stays strong.

155. **So stay out of it....?**

156. Definitely.

157. **So you don't want to do a take-over job and colonise it?**

158. No.

159. **Can you just remind me of the numbers you've got now?**

160. Our intake now is about 120. So we're now at the largest population total we've ever been at, and that's about 270. And when you started with 17, that's quite a way to go. And the course has to adapt to larger numbers and we're in that conversation.

161. **Remind me about single honours and combined now....**

162. Everybody comes in on the combined honours programme, and everybody comes in to do two subjects. At the end of the first year they can choose to continue joint, they can do main or subsidiary either way, or if available they can do a single honours. So our single honours pathway begins at Year 2, regardless of what people came in to do.

163. **What proportion do single honours?**

164. The year we first offered it, one student took it. I think now, with Ed Studies, it's slightly less than half. So there's a great deal more trust in Ed Studies as a degree, I think with regard to the PGCE, but also with regard to being a meaningful experience.

165. **So it's becoming .....?**

166. I think so, I think so.

167. **What's the role of the market?**

168. Well..... I think when it was first put on in '92, as the Head of Department said to me, we didn't know who was coming and why. In that sense, we tested the market. Now, enough people come so we don't have really to think too hard about it.

169. **They come to do what we're doing so.....**

170. Yes.

171. **You don't feel that student choices are affecting what you do?**



172. No, no, not at all. Because they can go onto the website wherever they are. No, our message to them at open days is, look, you might like what you've seen, but you need to go on the website and see if you can see yourself in that; and if you can't, don't come. And that helps us.
173. **How do you see it in terms of government policies for universities?**
174. Well, it is attracting a wide variety of people, certainly mature students; absolutely in favour of widening participation and I suppose it's one of those subjects that does soak up a little bit of that. Is that what you had in mind?
175. **Yes, and whether they'd be sympathetic..... My thinking behind it is there's the government controls on teacher training and there's a government policy which seems to let us do whatever we want in Education Studies; it's that strange contrast and if they knew what we were doing.....**
176. It's funny, isn't it, because, you know, eight years ago, as you said, to do a PGCE you had to have a National Curriculum subject. Rather than that get tighter, it's got much looser today, which has been great again. But no government can come and tell us in higher ed what we should be doing. Academic freedom would kick in at that point. They can control the training programmes, but they can't start coming in here and telling us what we should be doing.....
177. **They do it through the skills, of course, don't they? Like the number.... It's the transferable skills that they.... But otherwise they leave us alone.**
178. I think we do what everybody else does: we look at the skills and find where they are. There's a mapping exercise all the way through.....
179. **Policy for staff appointments?**
180. Well, that is numbers driven. Money follows students.
181. **OK. What about their qualities? Are you looking for people with QTS?**
182. No, no. I said to you before, I find this one of the most interesting things. We put our adverts in the Guardian and the Times Higher: *wanted, Ed Studies lecturer*, and last time we tried to appoint we got two people, neither of whom were suitable. Now, if we weren't breeding our own subject tutors, I think we'd be in trouble. I'm not sure how we would keep our staffing levels up. We don't really want the disciplines - people with the disciplines coming - because they're not going to be happy. We need people coming in at the beginning of their career and we can offer them jobs to do research and teaching, but we haven't found any people out there who want to take that option.
183. **Are you seeing Education Studies are a sort of refined, rather rarefied subject?**
184. No, I think it's the opposite. We can offer the most extraordinary opportunity. If you're interested in education, if you want to teach you're interested. We've got a structure that enables you to do it. There aren't many

people out there who I think would call themselves Education Studies tutors. Certainly not by doing a PhD, or having just finished one. I find that interesting.

185. **Go on, how do you see them?**

186. Well, it's a good question. The people I meet at conferences who are doing PhDs are largely, again, mature students, perhaps coming out of the classroom and doing their PhD as a transition into higher ed and teacher training. The younger people I've seen doing PhDs - they may be in the Philosophy of Education discipline – and they don't even make a natural transition to a much more open-ended Education Studies degree. It's difficult and I think it goes back to the core of what you were saying before. It isn't out there as a subject, and if it isn't out there as a subject, it's not training its own people through PhDs. And if it's not training its own people through PhDs, there's no recruitment to come. And we're always going to have to take people off the BA Primary or teachers from classrooms; we're always going to have to do that.

187. **But as a subject then it's growing its own people, rather than taking people from elsewhere....**

188. Yes, I think that's going to be very slow, but critical.

189. **How do you see the subject developing?**

190. My guess is that it will retain popularity as a way into teaching without committing too early. I think a lot of school-leavers will take that option. And that's good. Will it become a recognised subject wider than that? I don't know, I don't know. Maybe your association will help. Maybe that's the kind of thing it needs now, but I don't know.

191. **How do you see it developing here?**

192. Now, now I see it as a framework, as I said, where you can appoint people to come and do and teach their own research interests. Well it's a great offer. Anything in the field of Education, you know, Stephen Ward's a historian, Derek's doing aesthetics, anything. Come in and talk to us. Send in an application and come and see if you can.....

193. **So you see it as broadening the curriculum into different areas?**

194. Yes, and as one goes another one comes along, but as long as we hold together with our structure of Year 1 experience, Year 2 theory, Year 3 critique, as long as we hold that I think we can accommodate a great deal.

195. **But if Stephanie left, you wouldn't be looking for someone to do that?**

196. Not necessarily, no.

197. **Anything else you think I haven't asked, or anything else you wanted to say?**

198. No, only to say that I think what you're doing is important. Unless we believe in Education as a subject in its own right, then I think we'll continue to

simply be under the tutelage of other.....

199. **Other disciplines?**

200. Yes.

201. **And just a feeder for QTS?**

202. Yes. And we are, are we not, the subject experts of what a university does.

203. **Yes, you make that claim in the paper, a rather Kantian claim, I thought.**

204. Conflict of the faculties... (laughs) Of course, we're the lower faculty. But I do, I think... I'm looking at Barnett's book and his stuff on higher ed. I can see what he's *trying* to do, but I still don't feel it comes out of a vision of what education truly is. What is it that we're doing? I think we have to be the people, not only who can put courses on, but inform the policy-makers in the university.

205. **But aren't the policy-makers in the university extraordinarily indifferent to the curriculum?**

206. Well, that's good news and bad news. It leaves us to do what we want, but it doesn't take the university forward.

207. **I think Barnett's point about the crumbling of knowledge in the university is very good, isn't it? Huge buildings, but crumbling academic foundations....**

208. Although I suppose I see the course retrieving some of the foundations.....

209. **Yes, and I picked up Barnett saying that, that students..... while it looks as though they're shopping round for the easiest way to get a good degree and a job, they actually do want some real good old-fashioned theory.**

210. I think you're right. I think it's proved here.

211. **Well, that's it, you've got the.... You're showing it here. I've grown to that through our course, which came from a QTS pretty directly, and I've seen students taking off with intellectual theory in a serious way. What I dreamed of, but never thought it would happen.**

212. Yes, I think we have to shout that, I really do.

213. **But we really need to be clear about what that intellectual theory is.... Or I don't know, maybe lots of bits and bobs and people doing different things is OK. Maybe that's it and we're not going to find a meta-theory....**

214. No, well we don't want to write courses for each other, do we?

215. **Well, no, no.**

216. But we all believe in the same thing: the value of education in itself.

**217. Then there's Childhood Studies and all those early childhood.....**

**218.** Yes, well, there again, you need to talk to Derek because he's written the early childhood pathway in quite a distinctive way, and again, it's very heavily theoretical, very heavily. And we've just appointed somebody else who's going to start whose interest is in 'nature' as a concept. Now you can apply it to childhood, obviously, but it's going to take the students in a particular direction.

**CASE 4 TRANSCRIPT**

**Subject Leader SL4A**

**9 February 2005**

- 1. How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. It was really the previous head of department's baby. S/he was at a point of realising s/he had a lot of staff who had expertise that wasn't being used appropriately because of the changes in teacher education – moving to the competence-based and school-based stuff and all the sociology and psychology of education all went out of the window. And the number of people who were experienced in terms of psychology, sociology..... S/he thought that this would be *a* way of using the expertise that we had there already to move it forward and to get away from the confines really of Ofsted and TTA. Those two authorities are so restrictive, aren't they?
- 3. So there were staff who were interested in teaching.....?**
4. Not really happy with the things that they'd been channelled into doing with all the standards and.....
- 5. And so where did it start? How long has it been going?**
6. Oh, I mean, it's been going..... This is the first cohort, but the planning has been going on for two years before that..... a lengthy process. I don't know why, I don't know why, but it took two years. On reflection, I think it was good that it did take two years, because I don't think we would have come up with what we've come up with in a short space of time. We would have gone down the let's do a bit of Psychology..... you know. I don't think we would have been as free-form as we have become because of the length of time we had to think about..... *re*-think things.
- 7. Who led that?**
8. Me.
- 9. So it was somebody's baby, but you.....**
10. It was his/her baby, but s/he gave me the job of doing something about it.
- 11. So you've been in it...**
12. I've been in it from the beginning, yes.
- 13. So it's originated from scratch in the sense that the student numbers haven't come from anyone else?**
14. Mm. We went for 25 in each of three years, so we're looking eventually to have three cohorts of 25. And I think we will go that far.
- 15. Can you say something about the aims? How do you see the aims of the programme?**
16. Well, obviously, it's looking at education in absolutely its widest interpretation, which I think has been one of the hardest things to get over to the students, especially as some of them were hi-jacked from a teacher training course, and some of the things that we've been doing with them they think, well what's this

got to do with teacher education, you know. It's breaking down those barriers of what education actually *means*.

17. **These are ones who applied for a QTS course and you said, look there isn't a place on that, so come on this?**

18. Would you *like* to come on this because it leaves your options.... it gives you wider options.....

19. **Why didn't they get on? Were they.....?**

20. They did get on, they did get on. We just gave them the opportunity of doing this with a PGCE, just a few.

21. **So they're all qualified.....?**

22. Oh, yes. They're all qualified. It's just that we didn't have enough for one course and too many for another course. I don't think we'll have to do that again. Especially now primary numbers have gone down.

23. **Ah, yes. There's been a cut in QTS numbers and you've got better application this year for the Education Studies?**

24. Yes. So, aims. It's the interpretation of education in its absolutely broadest sense: a process of living, not just a preparation for future life. And also the (Institution) is very keen to be a community partner and so we've built in placements in Year 1 and in Year 2, because we do want to try to get these students to be part of the community, rather than just coming from three years, disappearing again and not actually contributing to the community. So *that's* an underlying principle as well.

25. **I noticed that, and the placement's not necessarily in school.**

26. No, definitely *not* in schools, definitely not in schools, because we don't want to encroach on any of the placements that are used by QTS students. It's meant to be seen as a separate ID.... they're meant to have a separate ID.

27. **The next question is 'how were they derived?' but I think you've given me that.....**

28. And the notion of 'equality' is the underlying principle that hopefully goes all the way through.

29. **Can I ask you how you see that 'equality'? Does that mean they will have an understanding of equality and *inequality*?**

30. Yes, yes.

31. **So it's their understanding of it that you..... ?**

32. Yes.

33. **So is there some ideological thing behind that? Other than analysis, is this in some way..... does it have a political drive towards equality?**

34. Well, I suppose..... I mean one of the significant tutors on the course is a Marxist and, you know, s/he's up-front about being a Marxist and a lot of the things that s/he does obviously have a political bias to them, but that's fine, you know, if you're up front about things. So certainly s/he has a significant input in Years 1, 2 *and* 3. And so there will be that influence in terms of the sorts of things

s/he's doing. Erm..... but also, I think, in the context of..... It's that sort of idea; it's a bit vague really.

35. **Because you haven't done it yet.....**

36. But that's what we're aiming for.

37. **And the distinctive features of the curriculum?**

38. The placement is very distinctive, trying to set it in the context of the urban environment in which the (institution) is situated. Because, although the students are at the (institution), they don't all necessarily come from (Local place name). And they don't all necessarily *live* in (Local place name), but we're trying to give it a focus of being part of what's going on within the city.

39. **So they could do placements elsewhere, but the focus is on .....?**

40. Yes, we had to, you know..... you always have these idealistic approaches, don't you? But I think, in reality, we're going to have to allow them.....

41. **To be wherever they are?**

42. Yes. That's what we hoped would happen, but in reality it doesn't.....

43. **So that's the placement; anything else that you'd consider distinctive about it?**

44. Erm.....

45. **In your planning you thought, this is a new idea.....**

46. Well we weren't really sure, because to us it was all new. Obviously, we looked at people's web-sites to see what was going on out there and many of the courses seemed to be the old 'ologies, you know. And we tried to.... and I suppose to keep away..... it took a while to.... multi-dimensional..... all the way through it's multi-dimensional, rather than trying to put things into pockets. That was what we tried to do.

47. **And by 'pockets' you mean the old disciplines?**

48. Yes.

49. **Because, actually, by next questions is, what role do the subject disciplines play: psychology, sociology, philosophy.....? They don't appear strongly in the document....**

50. They don't appear strongly, and deliberately, but they're meant to, as I say, permeate everything..... but when we had the validation, the (person) from (name of another institution), whose name escapes me, was our external scrutineer and s/he.... when s/he read the documentation s/he felt it had a heavy sociological bias and I think that is a true reflection of the people that are working on the course. The other disciplines are there, but I think it does lean towards being sociologically-based.

51. **How much would you say the students will be aware of the sociology, the psychology, of the disciplines?**

52. Well those who take modules in the School of Applied Social Sciences will be more aware, but if they don't take those I don't think there will be a great distinction; there will just be..... it will just be a more holistic approach.....
53. **So you use the content and methods without calling it.....**
54. Yes.
55. **Because one of the things I'm groping towards in this is 'what is Education Studies if it isn't bits of psychology, sociology, philosophy.....**
56. It is bits of that.....
57. **But you're trying not to use those terms....**
58. Those terms, no.....
59. **In know this is a hard question, but have you got some kind of 'theory' of Education Studies that is something different from bits of the disciplines?**
60. Erm..... well I think we would like to have and I think it would probably be organic as it moves forward. But you know, when you're sort of writing modules, that have to go in the validation, but you know you're not going to be teaching until 2008, it's really difficult. You know what you're trying to work towards, but how do you break it down to make it so that there is a distinction between each of the different learning experiences that the students have..... Because we've just finished the first semester modules that the students have, and there are only three, because they were double modules, moving into the next semester and we are bringing on line Media and Creativity..... in terms of, you know, a learning environment, and I was talking to (SL4B) and I'm saying well, I did some of that in my module, because we went to this museum and we looked at these... looked at the way that..... So we've now got to, I think, to guard against being too free-form about it and actually having repetition within the module, but that, I think is only going to come with experience.
61. **So you do seem to have a view of it as.... Maybe I'm putting words in your mouth here, that it's not clearly defined for you, but perhaps a bit like me, you're trying to feel that it's something other than the old disciplines, but..... You used the word 'organic', so it's something else, but we're not quite sure what.**
62. To be honest, I think that is fair. Come back to me in three years time!
63. **I think that's where we all are.**
64. A more distinct interpretation. We definitely wanted to try to do something other than going back to the old disciplines, even though it started out as using the expertise of those people who are psychologists and philosophers: using their expertise, but not necessarily in the way they'd been used before.
65. **For choice of modules, does that determine the curriculum content in any way. How much choice have they got?**
66. There's two electives in every year, that's all. So there's a big compulsory core....
67. **So it's very much what you've written is what they get.**



68. Yes.

**69. And what about staff interest and expertise, how much does that determine the curriculum content?**

70. Well, I suppose quite significantly. Which is why the people who have worked on this have been very keen to be involved because they see it as a way of using their particular specialism - their particular areas of interest in research and whichever – because you're not confined to National Curriculum subjects and that sort of thing, so there's been a lot of support for trying new things....

**71. You haven't had difficulty in getting staff to do it then?**

72. No, because they have realised that they can do what they want to do rather than what the TTA are saying they should do. So that's been nice.

**73. And do they see it as an opportunity, or is it an escape from the TTA....**

74. I think it's a bit of both. The Marxist (person) that I mentioned earlier, I mean he just thinks it's fantastic: this is wonderful, you know; at last I'm doing something that I want to do. It's been a revelation for him; he'd like to be even more involved, I think. So that's been very good. And some people who weren't involved to start with have become involved because they've realised that there is more freedom in this kind of degree and have come on board subsequently.

**75. So the people teaching it, are they all teaching just Ed Studies?**

76. No, they're doing other things....

**77. Of course, you've only got a small number of students now, so they're teaching across both....**

78. Yes, and also we've got people who are in our Continuing Professional Development section of our School of Education who are people who run Youth and Community Diploma courses and who do Teaching Assistants foundation degrees, so people from wherever in the School of Education have become involved.

**79. As the course grows, might there be some people who would like to come in and do just this?**

80. I think so. I think, I'm sure (Tutor name) would definitely.....

**81. Yes, we've reached that now where we have some people who don't teach any TTA.....**

82. Yes, I think definitely that will be the situation.

**83. And what about the students' response? I thought you said earlier that some of them were questioning what's this got to do with teaching.**

84. Yes, what's this got to do with teaching, but you've got to remind them they're not on a teaching course: you're looking at education in its widest context; they in which people learn; you don't just learn in a school; every experience is a learning experience.

**85. Are you convincing them of that? Are they going along with it?**

86. Gradually. We'll see when we've marked the first set of assignments.
87. **The next question was how you see it in relation to teacher training. Because the ones you've got now are the ones who are likely to go on to teaching, aren't they?**
88. I should think there's a fifty-fifty split at the moment. Some are definitely convinced they still want to teach and others are keeping their options open, and are pleased to be on a course that will allow them to keep their options open.
89. **In designing it, how much of a view to the TTA standards did you have?**
90. None.
91. **Did you see it as, this might prepare them and help them with it?**
92. We didn't at all. But we've had to revise our thinking on that, because we recruited so poorly last year we think we may have been a bit narrow in terms of..... or a bit exclusive in terms of the type of students we were looking for. So.... I mean we've had a huge increase in applications, but also I've made offers to people I wouldn't have made offers to last year who definitely say I've always wanted to teach; I want to do an education degree and a PGCE. You know people who thought about it, and giving them more credence in terms of knowing what they're applying for, because one does assume that they've read the documentation and know what they've applied for. And I think we were a bit narrow and exclusive last year.
93. **So that's in the admissions, but what about the content? Do you think you might revise the content?**
94. No.
95. **You won't change the content to make it look as though it's related to.....**
96. No, we've slightly re-worded the flyers and things to say that should you meet DfES criteria and want to teach, then you could be eligible for a PGCE. We've put that in, whereas it didn't mention teaching at all in our original documentation, because we weren't looking to tread on anybody's toes within the School of Education. It was meant to be completely separate and distinct from..... but we have had to revise.....
97. **How does that go? Is there a sense that you *might* pinch their students? Is that what you meant: take away students from the QTS degree?**
98. Erm....possibly. I think there was a feeling that there might be, because it's a three-plus-one. Why are people still applying for four-year undergraduate courses?
99. **So you had to make this look as though it was not encroaching on that in any way.**
100. Yes, and also because the admissions criteria are different from QTS; they don't have to have maths. We do say they have to have English, but they don't have to have maths to get on the Education Studies course..... and, er, so we're looking for a wider group of people to apply and we didn't....(pause) We thought it would be different to the way it's turned out, but because of our experiences to date, we've had to think, yes these people might want to teach and we mustn't

make out that this route won't *allow* them to teach. But the content is.....

101. **You're not trying to say, look there's a bit here on behaviour management.....**

102. No, not at all. And also, and I don't know whether this is of interest, but we're looking to – we haven't had a meeting yet – but we're looking to validate a new degree for 2006 which is going to be Education Studies with English.

103. **Combined award?**

104. Yes, combined; so it will be a bit of what we've got already, plus English. And again that would probably allow them to do PGCE secondary, not just primary.

105. **Why did you not start like that, making it a subject in the combined awards degrees?**

106. It was just never considered, never considered, because, I suppose, it was considered to be too close to what was happening in the rest of the school. We wanted it to be quite different.

107. **Because actually I've looked at lots of websites and found that most courses started out as a subject in combined awards and then progressed to single honours. Whereas you've done it the other way round.**

108. Well we've got a highly qualified English specialist who is now without a sort of remit really. S/he's involved with the degree which is partly in Applied Social Sciences with English; we've got a degree with the School of Languages with English, and this sort of completes the triangle...S/he's keen to.....

109. **So these would be modules just in this degree programme; it's not that it's being done with other courses?**

110. That would entirely be within the School of Education, whereas the other two degrees are partly School of Education and partly Applied Social Sciences or Languages. This would be kept entirely within the School of Education and we'll use the expertise that we already have within the School of Education; so it's just an expansion of ..... I mean, when I offered them the electives this Autumn, a lot of them went for the English options that were in the School of Ed. They couldn't all do English because the groups would have been too large. But I thought, there's a market here and therefore it looks as though it's something that would appeal.

111. **Was Education Studies developed to avoid state intervention?**

112. No, because it wasn't developed with the idea that these people would end up teaching. Though, as I say, we've had to shift our emphasis, but the validation documents are quite distinct from anything that's..... I've read your..... David Hicks did an article about your course in Education Studies in some document, and I thought that was very interesting what you did there, breaking away from Ofsted, yes, brilliant.

113. **Yes, liberation!**

114. Well that's a bit radical for our place, but I was very interested to read it.

115. **Has that been considered: breaking up the QTS course to make three-plus-one?**

116. No. I've circulated that article and said, well what about this, and a lot of people were quite keen, but I'm not sure that it would ever happen.

117. **Well, tell them from us it works.**

118. Yes, I thought it was great, but we were three-quarters of the way to..... I think it was this time last year I read that piece and we were almost at validation then.

119. **You could carry on with this; it's just that the QTS would stop and they'd all join in and you'd get bigger PGCE numbers from the TTA.**

120. Theoretically.

121. **Well the TTA did that instantly for us.**

122. Did they?

123. **Well yes, because they want to get rid of QTS.**

124. Oh, right. Well I'll have a word with (SM4). Well you could have a word with (SM4).

125. **Well I am trying to be objective here!**

126. Well that would be brilliant and a lot of the people in my course development team are very impressed by that. Not that it was an option, but just highlighting that it is possible to do this.

127. **Vocational outcomes, and I've seen the list that you've got and it's quite an interesting list of vocational outcomes, and you didn't include teaching on them, I noticed.**

128. No.

129. **So say what those were.**

130. Libraries, museum service, art galleries, working in education offices, those sorts of things; working in education departments of all sorts of NGOs; community work, social services in some contexts, you know.... quite a lot of different things.....

131. **So you had those thoughts in mind at the beginning really, rather than teaching?**

132. Oh, definitely. And I did do quite a lot of 'phoning of organisations to say, would you be interested in these sorts of people who've done this sort of a degree, with this sort of background and would they be the sort of people you'd think of? And yes, they were interested and they're interested in offering them placements.

133. **Did market forces play any role in that?**

134. Well, we did.... we looked at our local providers and what they were doing and whether there was any immediate competition. But the only thing is that (Name) who was the previous head of school before had been a QAA Education Studies inspector, or whatever they call them, for years and so s/he knew what was going on out there and s/he felt we could do something better.

135. **I was also thinking of student choices, the market in that sense. I suppose the course is a response to that.**
136. Yes, and also it's one of the growth areas, isn't it? I can't remember all the statistics; I have to be careful when I'm saying all this, but it is a growth area. So there was another case for the (institution) saying yes go ahead with it.
137. **Do you know whether the (institution) readily went along with it? Was there any difficult in getting it approved?**
138. No, there wasn't actually. But I think we'd done our homework quite thoroughly; (Name) was a stickler for that. We had a good case when we went in.
139. **The QAA Benchmark: did make any difference to what you did? Did that have any influence on it? I see you've quoted it in the book....**
140. Yes, we took the Benchmark statement as the underlying principle. Why reinvent the wheel, sort of thing. We've got to work towards the Benchmark anyway. So yes, we did. They're pretty..... you know, all-embracing, aren't they?
141. **Not much you couldn't do really?**
142. Exactly, but we certainly did take them into consideration right from the start.
143. **What about the political dimensions? I think you've said something about that, but could you answer that question: How does the programme treat the political dimensions of education?**
144. Well..... (pause) I think it depends on the individual tutor..... I think, to a large extent, in terms of how far they get involved with that sort of thing. Some will be more involved than others, but I can't see how you can do it without involving politics, can you? And the..... and the students are quite..... you know, politically aware, which is good. They're their to come up with their own.....
145. **There's the policy module: that's policy and politics, isn't it?**
146. Yes, we've got that.
147. **Last one is how do you see it developing?**
148. Well I think that it will develop in slightly different ways to that which we had envisaged initially because we didn't feel at the start of the course that the market was there that we'd hoped would be there and I think we will find that more people want to continue into teaching than we had originally thought would be the case, but I think that it will also encourage other people to look at different contexts rather than the teaching. I think that some will probably who were dead set on teaching will probably not want to teach in the end because they see that there's a..... It opens up more opportunities and erm.....
149. **So those who were thinking of teaching might actually do something else; it's opened things up for them.**
150. That's certainly what the first cohort is already saying, but it's very early days. And you see we have to evaluate everything as we go along, make changes as we feel appropriate. As I say, the only real changes we've made is our thinking on admissions; we haven't changed the content at all. But we have had to re-think our wording, you know, to actually state that it would actually be possible to go on to

teaching if you wanted to and not exclude people who always wanted to be a teacher. So we've had to think differently in terms of who we take in, but we haven't altered the content.

151. **Because some course do say, when you look at websites, that this could lead to teaching, but others say this is anything but teaching, and maybe you gave that impression....**
152. We did give that impression, I think, which might have put people off.
153. **But you've opened it up now?**
154. Yes, we've opened it up.

**Subject Leader SL4B**

**9 February 2005**

1. **How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents? I'm thinking of the Education Studies Degree course.**
2. I may not be a good informant for this because I wasn't in the early days of setting up.... Mel was doing the beginning.... I think the reason I was asked to be involved in the team was that, at that time, I was coordinating the Education Studies strand in the QTS courses and I just had an interest anyway. My area is ICT and I had a view of the ways in which ICT enables us to express Education, rather than it as a subject in its own right. Maybe it's that. I'm not sure I am the person.....
3. **But it will be interesting to have your ideas about the programme and what you think Education Studies is. One question is, is it Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and History?**
4. I think that they inform it; it draws on those; maybe you could describe it as trans-disciplinary, but it has to draw on those domains, ways of thinking and looking at the world in order to.... yes, different ways of looking at what's going on. My own background is Psychology..... and I think we lost a lot in Education Studies in teacher education when we lost the Sociology of Education, the Psychology of Education, but I don't think that putting them into their subject domains is helpful. I'm not sure I've explained that very well, but I think Education Studies, and Education as an area, draws upon a whole range of disciplines, and that's why I think it's of interest. You can have ecology, an environmental approach to looking at the world..... in the a psychological way of looking at the world, in with a sociological, in with my area which is social informatics.
5. **Social informatics: talk about that.**
6. (Laughs) Looking out of the window, trying to draw your thoughts together at the end of the day. My area is ICT in teaching and learning, I suppose; that's the title of it. But I feel anxious that that area of ICT has been appropriated to try to raise standards, so use ICT and your GCSE results will go up by half a grade, which I think is an absurdity. I see the interest of ICT in education as much more of the implications it has for the social and cultural lives that we lead and how we might draw on that for the ways in which we teach and - our pedagogy, our designs – the environment, the learning. So there's a bunch of us who tend to say that social informatics, it's not a (indistinct).... it's a way of looking at the world and the implications of technology.
7. **How much does that inform this degree course?**
8. Well, there's a thread, just because I've written modules for each year. So in Year 1 one of the modules is Creativity and New Media, so what are the affordances of these new media that enables a creative expression of experience. And so we're teaching it next semester, but there are many overlaps with that and what Mel has done in this semester in terms of the sense of place: looking at (Local place name), for example, and so I'll be picking up on some of those themes, taking (Local place name) Museum and using that within a module for creativity. In the next

year there's module called 'Borderless Education' which is about on-line communication – on-line communities – ways of learning where the boundaries aren't clear. At the moment it's called creative and cultural industries because of it being about (Local place name). There's a lot of digital media in small companies here. We wanted students to know what is it like to learn in places like 'Epic', which is a multi-media production company, or places such as 'Lighthouse', which is a media centre where they make films and ..... So there's a thread through our Education degree about the implications of new technologies on this business of learning within a context of (Local place name) within the wider view of our society

9. **So how would you describe the overall theoretical framework, then?**

10. I'm hesitating..... I mean, we've discussed it as a team and I'm thinking, ah, if I had the documentation here with the words..... I can't remember the words that we actually put in the validation document, so I'm trying to think, ah, does what I say this afternoon match with what we said (laughs)..... at validation? The theoretical framework for the whole degree? Well, erm, perhaps rather than to talk about a theoretical framework I can give our motivations for wanting to do it; that'll give some clues as to what our theories were..... Erm, in addition to the 'let's diversify' generally within the School of Ed. A sense of engagement in our own particular domains; I won't call them 'disciplines', but 'domains'. And that was social justice, globalisation, technologies, sense of place, you have this engagement. All of us have in common and engagement with education as, not just learning, it's erm realising one's potential..... of learning beyond..... instrumental learning for your qualifications and learning in order to be a participatory citizen in the world. I suppose a sense of what are the values and beliefs about ..... yes, being an active and informed citizen. And I think that fuelled us to say, yes, but how do we express that within subject domains that we all operate in, and also a sense – I hope this is for your research and not for external examination or anything (laughs)....

11. **That's why I wanted to do this before I start as the external examiner.....**

12. Also for a sense of what are the dynamic, *inspiring* aspects of education we feel have been squeezed out of us in the Teacher Training Agency model of a teacher. We feel very strongly that we have tried to hang on to those at (Institution name) and, rather teacher education, not teacher training, but which we can no longer find space to do. And much of that is to hand over some autonomy to the students, to give them more of a string vest approach, instead of tight knitting ... so an opportunity also to model ways of learning and teaching more authentically within the Education Degree than we feel able to do in the teacher training degrees, because it's not about meeting someone else's standards, it's more to do with personal and intellectual growth; well not just intellectual, but personal growth.

13. **For the students?**

14. For the students.... Now, in many ways we acknowledge that's a beached whale or you were around in the 60s and 70s, weren't you? But we do feel committed to that, otherwise we wouldn't have stuck with this, would we, for all these years, if we didn't think it's related to values?

15. **So it's ideological, really, the fact of your doing it?**



16. Yes. Well, pragmatic and practical too in that we were told we need to diversify; there's some of that too. But yes..... We saw it, I suppose, as an opportunity to express our ideology. We didn't know this when we started, but looking back on some of those processes; and the validation meeting, which was actually very positive and we were actually very.... assertive about the nature this degree and what we wanted it to look and feel like; yes that's how it.....
17. **How did that occur, because there's a bunch of you from all sorts of domains and disciplines?**
18. Well, we were astonished in the way that it did. You know, we came from different areas ..... and (SL4A), (SL4A) I suppose, was the constant to it as some people came in and some people had just left the institution and then other people came in. So while that actual process for that validation was *hard*, and I think (SL4A) found it hard to crack our heads together and 'now look you got to get this through...
19. **So there was all sorts of ideological kite-flying?**
20. Yes, but I think she dealt with it very well. She managed to keep us all together and we all turned up at that validation meeting we were all pretty,,,,,, you know, strong for this. So what do you mean? Well, we're going to do that because we felt committed to..... For example, they said, why don't you have exams? And we said, well how can an exam express the kind of learning experience we want in the kinds of modules that we're writing for?
21. **Good, yes, that's very clear. Thank you. And the relationship to teacher training is..... what?**
22. Well, again, I'm going to be murky in a sense.... Initially, when we were planning it, it wasn't..... the degree experience for the students themselves..... there's no expectation that it would lead into teaching. So the relationship came from the staff who designed and were teaching it. There wasn't an expectation it would lead into teaching. That's shifted, and now some of the people who are on it are saying, actually, I think, might want to teach. And so we can say, well you could apply for a PGCE. But I think at first we thought they'd be people who were interested in education settings, but not necessarily QTS.
23. **But of course they change their mind don't they in all sorts of .....?**
24. The relationship lies, I suppose, in the team being involved in teacher education.....
25. **They all know about teacher training, but the course isn't designed to provide things for a PGCE, it's not designed to provide preparation for a PGCE?**
26. Mm, no.
27. **And the staff, they like doing this, or do they have to be coerced into it?**
28. No, actually, staff are..... Well you've got to ask Mel, actually, because the staff that met around the table, you know, they really wanted to do it (laughs).
29. **Any sense of status between doing this and an ITT course?**
30. (Pause) My immediate reaction was, oh no, but I've just remembered one member of staff didn't want to be involved because it *wasn't* teaching, and she said, we're

about teacher education and unless it's a route into teaching I'm not interested. But I'm not sure that's a status....

31. **So its' not something in the school as a whole that people who teach on Ed Studies are sort of a lower level than the.....**

32. No, if..... Now then, I have issues about the way we interpret our status in a school of education..... Erm, many of the people..... Mm... the folk who were involved in developing the Education Degree, such as myself, are actually the folk who are involved with much of the postgrad work and the subject specialism work – the curriculum work on the teacher ed courses. Whether.... How that's seen as status you'd have to ask the other folk.

33. **It doesn't sound as though it is.....**

34. No.

35. **One of the questions was, do the teacher training standards have any influence over the choice of content? It sounds like the reverse, really...**

36. (Laughs) Yes.

37. **What about the QAA Benchmark, did that play in role in your.....**

38. Well, yes, in that we, erm..... In Education Studies within the teacher education programme, well I coordinated it for just two years but we started from the QAA Benchmark document: this is what Education Studies *is*. Because historically Education Studies in the teacher education programmes had been a dumping ground for everything else, so we don't actually plan the lesson - Ed Studies'll do that. They've got to have the school handbook – Ed Studies'll do that. And we said, we're not doing that any more. And so we cleared the decks. Actually it used to be called 'Core Professional Studies' and we said, this is a discipline of its own and the QAA Benchmarks, we took those, we added some of our own and then we mapped those onto the standards. So we looked at it from that point..... Because we had to make a clear.... Yes, it took us two years to make it clear to the staff – and maybe this is where the status came in – that Education Studies is a *serious* business and not a dumping ground. So there'd been that kind of campaign going on.

39. **Because it had been a lower status dumping ground within the QTS?**

40. Yes, yes. But we've recently made an appointment of a very well-published, immersed-in-research person who wants to *teach* it; you know, she wants to see what it looks like, not just write about it. Erm, and we're thrilled to have her because, you see, as far as the status thing goes, that will be a clear signal that we rate Education Studies and we get high calibre people in to do it.

41. **And for the students.... in the relationship between Ed Studies and the PGCE, would the Ed Studies students be welcome on the PGCE course?**

42. Eventually, yes, for primary? I don't think they'd be unwelcome. But they're only in their first semester.... No, no, they wouldn't be unwelcome.... Oh, I see, no they wouldn't, because I *hope* that the Education Degree will be actually quite a rich experience and, interestingly, as we're re-designing our BA (with QTS), we're looking at providing opportunities for these kind of experiences for teacher

education students too.

43. **Oh, are you?**

44. Yes. So, having said al those (indistinct), everything I'm saying shows how close they really are. And that's the staff team, because we all do everything.

45. **So there isn't somebody looking after the PGCE who's going to be jealous about the kind of students they get on the courses?**

46. No.

47. **Although that does tend to happen in some institutions.**

48. Well you'd have to ask the.... But I suppose initially we weren't thinking it would led to a PGCE..... So it may have happened, but I've just not heard.

49. **What about market forces? When you thought of this degree, did the market play a role in that?**

50. Erm, I don't know enough of that, and I'm not sure we to that right. I wasn't involved in the conversations about having marketed it, no. And I think when we were planning it we had an image there that there were people who wanted to go into educational settings such as charities, media centres, being learning officers for museums and stuff; now whether we did that marketing well enough.....

51. **But you have an eye to that market, whether it was correct or not?**

52. Yes.

53. **How do you see Education Studies in the future? I suppose it's only just started, so that's difficult.....**

54. (Laughs) I'm starting to teach it next week. I think it's too new for us. I would like to think it developed into a very strong programme. My colleague from (Another institution) is in the next room and I think that they've got a..... Have they? Have they got Education, or is it a communications degree?

55. **They do have Education Studies, but they're talking about getting rid of it.**

56. So I'm actually ill-informed about how they've gone in other places, so it's maybe too soon to say.

Senior Manager SM4

9 February 2005

1. **How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. Can I just clarify something, because the Education Studies programme is quite diverse here. So there are lots of facets to it. So we've got the BA Honours Education Degree, which is new, but we've also got all of the Education Studies *programmes* which contribute to the initial teacher education.
3. **I understand. So it's the non-teacher training Education Studies that I'm interested in.**
4. OK, so that's interesting in itself because I don't think those two things are separate entities. The reason for that is that we have a tradition here of Education Studies, which we used to call 'Core Professional Studies', being a central part of all of our initial teacher education programmes. Because we've now got a broader concept of the kind of students that we teach, so we're involved in Foundation Degree, Masters level programmes etc, what we've then developed are education *aspects* to those courses. And then the last development which we did launch last year was the BA Honours Education Degree. So, I suppose, in a sense, the Education Honours Degree arose from our very strong traditions that related to ITE and to those related, you know, MA Education-type programmes, and we've got an EdD here as well. So..... (pause) ... Yes, the other thing – it's all very complicated – but we've got an Education Studies group which encompasses that provision. So the Education Studies team may teach on the BA Honours Education; they may also teach on the undergraduate or postgraduate ITE programmes.
5. **OK.**
6. The main differences, I suppose, is the degree that relates to Education has a very strong commitment to equality and it's set firmly within our geographical setting. And we're now looking at ways in which people can contribute to Education other than being in teaching, and in a way that influences the kind of modules we've got on courses like the BA Professional Education Studies which is a CPD course where people that are working in an education setting can gain a degree. So they might be youth workers, they might be all sorts of people who are in a setting where education is involved in their work.
7. **So it's very broad, isn't it?**
8. Yes, it's very broad.

9. **So, while my particular focus is this undergraduate non-teacher training course, my question about the antecedents is in terms of staffing and subject knowledge that runs into all those....**
10. Absolutely. And I actually think that, had we not had such a strong and diverse breadth of provision that has evolved year on year, we would never have got to the stage of having an education degree.
11. **Why did it happen, though? What was the motivation for it?**
12. The motivation was: a) that we see ourselves as having strengths in that area and secondly we wanted..... We're committed to widening participation and we're committed to breadth and diversity of provision and we didn't have a full-time undergraduate programme like it, and we felt that it would give people an opportunity to really get to grips with education policy: how does that affect our lives? What do we really mean by equality and equality of opportunity? How could people develop their skills in a placement setting? And we really wanted to be able to do that kind of thing without the constraints actually of things like the QTS standards, you know, in other areas, the professional standards of things can be limiting and we actually wanted to develop something that *was* different and innovative and would take people *into* education, but in different directions, not within the constraints of a particular profession.
13. **So quite an ideological thing to do, really?**
14. Yes.
15. **You believed it would be a good thing? It wasn't that you had spare student numbers or.....**
16. Absolutely not, no. We had to fight for those!
17. **Can you tell me about that: where the student numbers came from?**
18. Well, the student numbers were HEFCE numbers and what we do in the university is that we must..... in the validation process the first thing that happens is that it has to get an Academic Development Committee approval, and at that stage you have to identify where those numbers come from. So that's agreed at the strategic planning unit and they agree to give us some extra numbers for this development because they thought it was a development that would enhance the work of our school. Had they not thought that we wouldn't have got the numbers.
19. **So they took on your ideology, really....?**
20. They did.
21. **The next question was, how does it fit into the university's overall mission?**
22. (Pause) I think it does easily. Erm.... in that, I suppose, the underlying agenda is the concept of every child matters, and, you know, that people..... there will be people needed to understand and be able to be effective in an educative setting, wherever that may be.
23. **So it's part of the university's broader educational .....**
24. Absolutely. And there's also, I think, a very strong commitment from the university for widening participation..... and we also felt it would provide opportunities for those individuals who are..... especially those who are local,

those on the access courses, who want to do a traditional undergraduate programme but who need to see some kind of career potential at the end of it. So we're not talking of people who want to read English or History, perhaps, but people who are genuinely interested in education and will eventually want to be employed within that sector, but the breadth or possibilities are fairly wide.

**25. OK, so it seems to have a more vocational - more *direct* vocational .....**

**26.** To a certain extent, yes, but within a breadth, so not as narrow as teaching. And most of our other courses have got those obvious outcomes, you know: youth workers, teachers, and we want to give them something a bit broader.

**27. Yes, what about its relationship to teacher training and teacher training courses?**

**28.** It doesn't really have one.... It doesn't really have one in that.... we have placements, but the placements are very, very different to the kind of placements you would have on an ITE programme. However, you could be eligible to apply for a PGCE primary course with your qualification. So I think that there are people on that course who might end up being teachers. But that isn't the main thrust of the.... That isn't the main thrust of the programme. It is about enabling people to understand the education process, policy, practice – you know, some of the underlying principles and philosophy.

**29. And you didn't build into it things that would be helpful for PGCE students?**

**30.** No, we didn't. We actually took a conscious decision not to do that, because so many other education programmes, especially when they're called Education Studies, lead *onto* the PGCE and they're designed in that way and we didn't want to do that.

**31. One of my other questions was, was it determined in any way by the TTA standards? And the answer is, not at all?**

**32.** No..... I think at first we were perhaps one step too far in that we definitely did discourage people who said they wanted to be teachers from having anything to do with it; and I think in retrospect that was a *little* bit of a mistake, because I think we do need to make the connection that they will be doing relevant things, though we haven't necessarily linked them to the standards, that clearly, if the student does a placement in an extended school setting, or if they do a placement in a play-work setting, the kind of experiences they have would be very valuable experiences for them.

**33. But you're not marketing it as a preparation for teaching?**

**34.** No, we're not.

**35. And staff teaching it: I gather they're teaching across ITT courses, aren't they?**

36. Mm.

**37. And how does that go? Do people want to do this, or do they have to be coerced into.....**

38. No, they don't have to be coerced at all. In fact there was a development group and they all wanted to contribute to it, and they don't have a problem with teaching it. And, in fact, that's a kind of mark of the school really, that we encourage people to teach across courses so that they get a broader view. (Pause.) Quite what will happen in the future, I don't know. But it is a course that I think people genuinely feel that it's an interesting course and one that would be interesting to teach. And I think some of them, if I'm truthful, quite like the idea that they don't have to meet the standards. I know they have to meet other standards, but there's something about the ownership and content of that course that's a little bit more..... precious, I suppose, because it hasn't been determined a set of specific outcomes....

**39. It's been grown by them.....**

40. It has been, and we've used things like the QAA code of practice and what have you... discrete criteria.... But that's somehow different; it's not as restrictive.....

**41. And are there some staff who are *very* keen on it? Do you have staff who would like to get out of the teacher training altogether?**

42. One or two (laughs). One or two whose expertise actually fits better this programme, yes.

**43. And what about the subjects: Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy? How do you see those in this?**

44. Well, they're not identified as subjects, so the disciplines and the modules are underpinned with..... Yes, I'd say that the modules are underpinned by those disciplines, but we don't..... the modules are not identified as Psychology or Socio.....

**45. But you use the methods and the.....**

46. Oh yes, and we've got a strong tradition there, so that's.....

**47. And links with other subjects? Has it connections with other....?**

48. It has connections.... It has what we call 'elective modules' or option modules and that's where..... Yes, well, I suppose it's possibly where students who are interested in teaching possibly might identify particular kinds of modules, so I think Mel's finding a lot of them want to study our ITE modules, but we've also got another school on site called the School of Social Sciences and there are lots of modules there, so they can look into those. So the core of the course is very much shaped by the notion of equality and such like, that the elective module the students then can start to shape what they're doing and certainly Mel knows what those choices are for those students.

**49. This sort of programme could be in Social Sciences, couldn't it?**

50. It could, but it isn't.... (laughs),,,,, I suppose it's our very strong commitment to learning. It has a very different focus than it would do if it was in Social Sciences.

51. **Can I ask you – and this is a hard question – what is the theoretical model, then? If it's not Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy, it's not the social sciences. What is Education Studies? It's not the theory for teaching now, is it, in this?**
52. Well..... (pause)... it may not be the theory for teaching, but it certainly draws a lot on the theory of learning and theories of development and..... the concept of equality issues and the significance of those issues in terms of society.... And how that all relates to a particular geographical position that we're in. And that's what I think distinguishes it. And that wouldn't fit within our School of Social Sciences.
53. **OK, so that makes it distinctively educational; so you could claim that that's an educational theory. Because one of the things I'm doing in this is struggling to determine what Education Studies is....**
54. That's the beauty of it that you can pull together a coherent range of contexts which, for students, are interesting and intellectually challenging and what have you.
55. **And what you're doing here does look to me quite distinctive really. How does the market.....?**
56. The market was difficult last year because I don't think we marketed it properly, although there's a lot more interest in it this year.
57. **Was that in your thinking, though, when you devised it.....?**
58. It was. We thought it was. I don't think we were.... I think that was an aspect of the development that I think perhaps.... wasn't interrogated sufficiently well. And also, I think, when you do something new, and when you do something that quite deliberately doesn't match the kind of Education Studies degrees that there are, it's not easy to recruit to it. Because it's not recognisable.
59. **But it's getting going now, isn't it, and taking off.....**
60. Yes, I'm sure..... and we've got this very strong reputation for ITE, and that's the thing, isn't it, that suddenly you offer an undergraduate programme full time that doesn't carry QTS – so what's going on at (Institution name), then?
61. **You've not considered converting the undergraduate programme into Education Studies and PGCE....?**
62. Absolutely not, no.
63. **Why is that?**
64. Because I believe that that is not what all undergraduate teachers need and I would really not want to do that at all. It wouldn't be a direction in which I'd want to go, not with the model of Education Studies that we've got here. I mean, I would have to reconceptualise what that means if it were to be relevant to ITE students.
65. **Yes, it would have to be different from this that you're doing now?**
66. It would be, and I do believe that, because we've got such a big undergraduate primary programme, I do believe that they need to be able to articulate with the curriculum and what lies beneath their teaching, their understanding of the curriculum. It's very important and I don't think that marries very well....



67. **About staffing: what's the policy on staff? Might you appoint someone to Education Studies that perhaps didn't have QTS?**
68. Yes, and we have got people in the school who work on our CPD programmes without QTS and we've got the version of QTS for FE teaching multicultural programmes; so yes, definitely.
69. **And when the students come to apply possibly for a PGCE, do you think they'd be well received on a primary PGCE course?**
70. (Pause)..... I suppose what..... They wouldn't not be well received.... I suppose our PGCE primary..... We're very, very fortunate because it's completely open to us, so we only get very high calibre students anyway. So, if they didn't get a 2.i, they probably wouldn't be considered anyway. We're really, really pushed, so..... It's an interesting question, that one, and I really don't know. But we also look very hard at the relevant experiences of the PGCE, so, I guess, depending on what they do on their placements, that could really bring something, but I wouldn't say they'd be *disadvantaged*.
71. **But you might be looking for someone with a 2.i in Medieval History...?**
72. We don't necessarily look for the subjects, but we look for the relevance..... We look for the academic rigour.... Well, we do at the moment, but what will happen when the fees system comes in, I don't know.
73. **And the last thing: I know you're at the beginning of it, but how do you see it developing in the future?**
74. Well, I think it's got the potential for the basis for a joint honours programme in other schools in the university. I had a conversation with the Dean of the School of Science and Engineering who said that a straight science degree doesn't necessarily mean that his/her scientists are particularly good at communicating. They're very good at communicating *scientific* knowledge and understanding, but in a broader context, and s/he does a lot of work where those scientists go into schools, or go into the community, and teach, or interact with people in terms of science. And s/he feels that those kind of skills are very important for scientists and that, for some of them, and Education strand within their degree would open up opportunities for them. I think it has got a huge amount of potential.
75. **I'm interested that you started as a single honours programme, because lots have started it as combined and then they've grown into single honours.....**
76. Done it the other way round, yes. We must be different, you see (laughs).
77. **And I guess you had a view of it; you had a clear view of what it was.**
78. I think we had. It was a real desire to do something different.
79. **And you spent quite a long time on the planning, Mel said.**
80. Yes, the development was – and Mel knows more about it because I wasn't actually part of the planning team – but the development was very different from the kinds of developments we'd done for QT. But it's been quite liberating in some ways; you know, it's something we can do. We're not just about professional and CPD; you know, we developed something quite exciting, but I think it has got potential and, especially with the difficulty with TTA numbers

now and we're going to have to face an increasing reduction year on year, I'm sure, that actually you need to balance that with other kinds of provision.

**CASE 5 TRANSCRIPT**

**Subject Leaders SL5A and SL5B**

**11 March 2005**

**A and B refer to the Former and Current Subject Leaders**

- 1. How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents, where did it come from?**
2. (A) Actually, that's quite difficult..... It originated in a hotel room in Wales on one of our staff week-ends this idea came up about establishing an Education Studies programme that was separate from ITT. But its antecedents, its true antecedents, were probably the BA Ed, which was a programme I set up to salvage the degrees of students who'd failed their teaching practices. Because we had a four-year degree programme and if they got to the end of their third year and they didn't.... they blew their teaching practice, then they were lost, they didn't have anything; so I had this thing where they could get through the fourth year doing a set of dissertations. So, in a way, that's the antecedent.
- 3. So it started out as a default thing for people who'd not been successful..... It was a residual.....**
4. (B) Well, you'd also got the other driver, which were the national drivers for Education Studies and it was a combination of the two, I think, really. I think that probably underpinned it.
5. (A) It was probably..... yes, a collision of the two elements. I think somebody was probably alerted to the notion of these Education Studies Benchmarks coming through and the fact that it was being offered in other institutions. But there were absolutely no links with any other institutions in terms of models.
- 6. So you started it yourself from that....**
7. (A) Yes.
- 8. But it's got 600 students now, so you started out with a few who'd come off the QTS course.....**
9. (A) Oh, in the very beginning, a small pilot group – you know I sent you the critical appraisal; it's kind of summarised in their – but there was a very, very small pilot group – I think it was 27 or so students – who had opted as an elective as part of the BA Combined programmes this elective they took on in order to try out Education, so there's that route as well.
10. (B) And then rapidly took off, really, and I think in the second year you went up from 20 students to round about 80, didn't you, from what I've read?
11. (A) Well, no.... they were kind of year minus one that group. So in their first year they did this pilot as part of their other degree programmes – an elective – but then in the very, very first year we were first to get 25 students, but we actually recruited nearer 200, well 170, so it was just like a huge demand we uncovered.
- 12. Which you hadn't anticipated because you were looking for 25 and you got 175?**
13. (A) Yes.

14. (B) But it's this link to the Combined Honours that drove it, isn't it? That it was *a* strand of the Combined Honours and in part was driven by it being one of a range of programmes that they could pick up.....

**15. In the Combined Awards?**

16. (A and B) Yes.

17. (A) We never did any research to see whether they were just picking it up as a make-weight, or anything like that, but it didn't seem to be that way. Quite a number of students, even in the first tranche..... A lot of them were people who wanted to become teachers, but didn't have quite all the..... you know, those GCSEs that they needed.

18. (B) So really they were sold the idea of Education Studies as an alternative to the QTS if they didn't take the QTS route, which I think was a source of students, but then there's the other cohort that we talked about last week which was those that picked a-n-other subject as a core subject, if you like, as their primary course and actually picked up Education Studies, not by default, but as their second subject.

**19. What do you think the attraction is for those? What's making them choose Education? Those who, say, do Sport, or something, why would they do Education as a second subject? What's going on there?**

20. (A) Well I think - (to B) you may have different views – but I think to some of them it's kind of an unbounded subject - an amorphous subject – you don't really necessary have to be particularly prepared to enter it, because everybody thinks they know about education. So I think they felt that they had..... the underpinnings and understandings of knowledge that would enable them to succeed on it....

21. (B) I also think that there are vocational drivers in this which the Education Studies underpins. If we look at some of the options that they've got – Sport, Business Studies, IT and so forth – it's this broad concept of Education Studies is more than just compulsory education and they're looking at it as a training..... you know, as an arm of – if they're going to go into business – the fact that they've got some educational background, that they can look at training, they can look at..... they can look at it as a valuable sort of underpinning of whatever the core vocational route is as well.

22. (A) I think many of them see it as actually a kind of..... not QTS, but as emblematic that they've studied this subject and therefore they're in some way qualified to run with it. I can't quite phrase it properly.... But the sense is that their degree would bestow on them..... a qualification that they would somehow see as being like a QTS.

**23. It's a vocational.... sort of.... View?**

24. (A) It's changed, hasn't it, (SL4A), in terms of over the three or four years because as we've identified that the proportion of those that are people that come in and want to teach right from the start seems to have gone down as we've broadened the remit of Education Studies and sold it as a bigger thing than a failed QTS route, and as a route through to a PGCE. I mean it isn't a failed QTS route, but for some of them initially it was perceived as being ..... So where what.... the vast majority of the students in the first couple of years probably, er ..... teachers by another name, I think increasingly it's moved away from that.

25. (A) It's still a major impact, though, isn't it?

26. (B) Yes.

**27. Is it perceived by staff like that? Is there anything among the staff - the staff in the university - that perceive it as a failed QTS route?**

28. (A) It's actually quite difficult to second-guess the perceptions of staff. I'm never really sure, but I don't think anybody.... well nobody really articulates the sense that we're in any way inferior to any other programme, but I think there may be a touch of that. There's no real reluctance to teach on it. We've had.... you know, we've had a *wonderful* core team, but you don't often find yourself in the position of asking someone to make the choice between QTS or Education Studies; so there's no reluctance..... As to.... I really don't know; it would be interesting to research that one, what the perceptions are. Maybe that would be one for the BESA conference. (Pause) Yes, but you have this other dynamic going on in the College, which is that you have Education (Faculty), and then you have the other (Faculties), and there quite definitely is a sense in which the – maybe it's not quite so strong now – but the other (Faculties) think of us as being the Pioneer Corps, as it were: because we can't cut it as academics: we teach. Does that ring any bells?

**29. You mean.... So there's a status thing going on there with other (Departments.....)**

30. (A) Well, yes, and in a way there's something going the other way which is that we think, for God's sake, why are you working here if you want to be an ac..... not that you want to be an academic, but, you know, our bread and butter is Education and anything else is, well, why are you here? But that's changing as we're trying to inflate ourselves into this (Institution). But that's certainly a residual feeling.

**31. Can I ask you this one: What do you see as the aims of the programme?**

32. (A) Do you want to hit this one, (SL5B)?

33. (B) Do you mean what do we personally perceive them to be, rather than what the institution perceives them to be?

34. Yes.

35. (B) I think.... well, talking for myself for a few moments, I see the aims as being sort of dual....erm, that we're at one and the same time fitting students to progress if they wish to do so directly to education in a formal way, whether its compulsory education or post-compulsory education, and that's one strand. And the other strand is – and we touched on this I think last week – it's this meeting the needs of a broader cohort of students who want to do Education Studies from an academic perspective, but have no intentions of using it in that formal, driven way. So its...almost like a schizophrenia to me, which is that we are meeting those two very different strands and they're very different students in some ways. So take Sports students, for example; the majority of Sports students that I've come across aren't thinking about going directly into teaching, but actually want to use Education Studies to underpin their Sports careers in whatever form those take. And meeting the needs of those students is somewhat different from meeting the needs of the student who is thinking of going straight onto a PGCE and ultimately into primary or secondary education. So to me there's a..... to meet that broad span of needs, generally.

36. (A) We're not getting students of the first water, but I think we're all surprised at how.... what wonderful students they turn out to be. So I think that fits into the notion of what I think the aims are: the notion of widening participation. We are bringing students in - you know part of that 50% thing – I think we're at the cutting edge of that in many ways. We're bringing students in and we're giving them an academic sense and we're actually..... we're projecting them towards possibilities within the education industry. I definitely think we're doing that, doing it quite well But the only issue with that is that the ones you see as being most successful tend to be the ones who go on to Postgrad. It's almost like a badge of their success to get onto the PGCE, which is a bit unfortunate, but you know..... It's a miracle for us when we meet students in the yard who are getting towards the end of their PGCE. This is the first lot going through and it's kind of a skew of what we're trying to avoid – the notion that we're just a pathway onto the teacher factory, but at the same time we have rescued people from a life of oblivion really.

37. **You've both described the aims in terms of vocations, really.**

38. (A) Yes.

39. **So that's the prominent thing for you really: where it leads them?**

40. (B) Yes, because I think, putting myself in the position of a typical student today, there has to be a vocational rationale for most of what takes place in education. Now whether that's good or bad is a different issue and I think with the cost factors involved, its... you know, you're aware of the cost drivers the students themselves have, so if you can support them in actually meeting that, then I think you're doing a good job.

41. (A) Just one..... we do have more idealistic aims in the sense of giving them a notion about what education is, because a lot of them are very poorly read, even right to the end of their time with us, and we are trying to lift their horizons; so there's that as well.

42. (B) We're also trying to broaden those horizons, aren't we? Because we were talking about this great pleasure that we get from seeing our students progress on and do a PGCE when, maybe three years before they've not been able to take that route which they perceive to be the most important thing in their lives. So you get a positive thing from that. But, on the other hand, looking at the areas of development that we're now looking at, tying in with the MA in Education Studies which we have in-house, but which is not a traditional feeder route for our students because it's more of an in-service-type training programme, and looking at other postgraduate programmes, like the PGCE in Post-Compulsory Education which we're actually looking at as a logical progression for some of our students that are not looking at compulsory education. So we're looking to meet that academic need and to sort of enable them to progress up and out..... in a number of different ways, I think.

43. **And would you say that there any distinctive features of the curriculum that you're doing?**

44. (A) Well, it's distinctive from everything else at (Institution), I think, in the sense that you don't get that depth and..... you don't get that depth and..... you don't get that depth of teaching about what education is from any other source. The QTS don't get that. I know that because a lot of the QTS is driven from work that I've

done. So I know the levels that they're hitting and the depth just isn't there in the way that we're developing things.

**45. So it's a depth in the understanding of what education is.....?**

46. (A) It's an... it's an untrammelled kind of ..... You know you've used these terms that I've picked up from you that I've put in the (course review document)..... mostly about being fettered – teacher training being fettered by all this compliance culture and so on. But with us we can virtually teach what we like, actually, can't we? And it's exciting, but if you can keep the students with you.
47. (B) I think there are two aspects to it: I think there's the depth that (SL5A) has talked about which is that we can drill down further into looking at Education Studies and we can stand outside education and look at it as a discipline in a way the QTS can't do. But equally well we've got a breadth in there as well. So, I mean, in the first year we're touching on Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, the history of... Economics *in*... politics and so and so forth. And they can't get that through the QTS, or any other programme, I think, in the institution.
48. (A) We don't seem to have any limits on us, you know. This is what I understand about other programmes. There doesn't seem to be any limit on our numbers in the way that say (Tutor name) (from another local institution) describes in his ..... You know, you were the police..... person looking at our programme (in the review). Apart from you, there don't really seem to be any..... As long as we keep to some decent standard there doesn't seem to be anything that would hem in our visions, which is I think sort of makes it distinctive.

**49. Sort of boundariless.....?**

50. (A) I guess so....
51. (B) Well, we set the boundaries. That's the thing.
52. (A) This is why I think it's really good that we're having a change of leadership at this point. It's probably going off the target here, but it now needs another leap of imagination. I mean I've done the stolid stuff, let's say; you know, we've got it in place. It's like a Lada. Now I think it needs to become a Jag, because..... because there are so many..... You know at this point we have a lot of freedom with it, I think.

**53. Can I ask what the solid stuff is, then?**

54. (A) Well you've got some... We've got some kind of rock solid ..... the concept of the modules as they stand if you can recall them. They're all.... They're very, very stand..... not standard, but they're.... They've got their own level of imagination, but they hit all the buttons. So, for example, if we map our material to your book, I think you'll find there's quite a close linkage there, except that we probably have less about links with teacher training and so on. But erm.... So we're hitting everything in the benchmarks, but now I think it just needs a little bit of a leap of imagination, but responding more to the students we've found we're recruiting.
55. (B) I personally don't think it's quite as black and white as that and actually I want to give credit to (SL5A) because I think it's moved on well beyond that point already and I think appointing those three people eighteen months ago with a remit to look outside QTS, which is what was done. It was the start of that process and I think in the last eighteen months when I've been there I think that's exactly what's been going on, so looking at some of the modules at Level I and H, they just didn't

exist eighteen months ago and even this year we've got brand new modules that didn't exist, erm... and I think that process had already started, so I don't think he's doing himself justice in terms of....

56. (A) Well, I was ..... I just think the aim, going back to your earlier question, Steve, I think the aims and so on are shifting, but we actually need to be quite responsive, so that's one of the distinctive elements and we've got this freedom to do it....

57. **Responding to the students, then. So what the students want to do, to some extent, is determining what the curriculum is?**

58. (A) It has done. Absolutely it has done. In fact, if you want a very brief anecdotal thing...

59. **Yes, please.**

60. (A) Well simply that I took one of the students to Malawi.... kind of.... one of the most articulate students of the year went to Malawi with me and we spent hours in trucks just talking about what Education Studies should be about and, I mean, a lot of strands came from that. So, for example, one of the things he wanted was a lead into teaching that wasn't overpowering, so we set up these 'Bridge to Teaching' courses. So it was, as (SL5B) says, drilling down to get some sense of what they did want. But we're not enslaved to what they want, because a lot of them don't know what they want.

61. **No, no. but you respond to.... Because I'd got this question: How far does students' choice determine the curriculum content? So you'd say that's..... Well they're not just getting what you give them?**

62. (A) We have a lot of evaluation going on, so....

63. (B) I think the modules are in normal – I wouldn't say a constant state of flux – but certainly on an annual state of flux in that we evaluate them on that sort of time-scale.

64. **And the modules students choose, does that effect it.....?**

65. (A) We've never ever set any boundaries on that, so we've always, haven't we, (SL5B), I think we've only ever cancelled about two or three..... this year we had to cancel a couple, and caused a bit of bitterness, but only mildly. We have a real staffing problem, and I don't know if that comes through (in the review) and that has affected things.

66. (B) But, I mean, picking up on part of what you were asking there, Steve, is that if we have modules that are not proving as popular, then they don't run. So in that sense the students do have a direct impact on the thing and we will then... we will continue to look at what the market needs out there – the bigger market in education....

67. **Do you write modules that you think students would like to do?**

68. (B) Mm, and also that are relevant from a vocational perspective.

69. (A) We are actually quite flexible in that we could change.... We could introduce modules quite quickly, couldn't we? Another undercurrent with this is that we've never had the chance to build up a sort of critical mass of content. So, in essence, whichever person has to take on the role of module leader has quite a job making sure the content's in place for each..... for a number of reasons. You know,



somebody doesn't inherit a body of work that they can transmit.....

70. **It depends on who teaches it.....?**

71. (A) Yes, it's still quite dependent on that, which is probably not different from any other .....

72. **Yes, I think ours is very much like that; certain modules depend on individuals. There's one person who runs this module and if they go you've....**

73. (B) Yes, we're trying to move away from that now. We're using the virtual learning environment in a number of ways, but one of them is this concept of a data repository, so a sub-current of this is that we're getting this material out of the tutors and actually planting it in there, then it will be available for the next person who takes over.

74. **Here's a hard question, but what would you describe as the theoretical framework for the whole programme?**

75. (A) (Pause) Mm, I think that's one we'd have to give a written answer to..... I'd have to have it in front of me, I think, to look at all the modules, to see what that was..... Erm.....

76. (B) I mean I've got the Critical Appraisal in my bag here and there will be a paragraph in there that describes the theoretical framework and that you can relate to.

77. (A) Yes, I don't know, Steve, give us a ..... Pass!

78. **Well, what about Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy? Where are those in it, say?**

79. (A) Oh, OK, well in the very first year we embed all the isms there, all the ologies. Erm, and then in terms of the theoretical framework you could say then that first year sets out a kind of palette of all the issues and the ways of looking at education, the perspectives as we call it, and really every other module probably, in the rest of the programme, is amplifying one or more aspects of those.....

80. (B) I think the title for the Level 3 Programme, which is 'Perspectives and Practice' for me is the key theoretical framework, because we've got those two strands running all the way through the whole programme. We're dealing with the theory of education through a number of perspectives, whether it's Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, History, whatever it may be. And we're also dealing with the practice of education – and training if we take education in the broadest sense, rather than in the narrow sense of pure education – and so we're looking at the two strands, and I think if it has a theoretical framework it is the need to integrate those two things and see them as being synergies.

81. **So different perspectives on education – on this subject of education – and those perspectives are partly through the disciplines?**

82. (A) Oh, yes, yes, all the disc..... well, all the humanities, probably, because how would you categorise them? Certainly Sociology, Psychology.... You see one of our efforts has been to try and draw in people who teach in those programmes in the main.... in the, you know, the pure forms elsewhere, but it's quite difficult to recruit people from outside Education and when you do get them they're probably

not of the first water. So there's an issue there.

83. **Sorry, you mean the staff?**

84. (A) The staff, yes. So, erm, we always have problems with that. But we are trying to..... I guess you could say it's fairly traditional to start with in those terms: we're addressing how do sociologists view education and so on... what's the psychological....

85. **You see that as traditional?**

86. (A) I don't know.....

87. **But can I ask you, do the students *know* that they're doing Sociology, Psychology and Philosophy? Do you tell them?**

88. (B) Yes, in Year 1 their lectures will be entitled 'the sociology of....the philosophy of .....the history of.....'

89. (A) I think it gets a bit blurred, though, doesn't it? The whole thing gets ragged in terms of conceptualising it.

90. **I suppose what I'm trying to get to is, what is Education Studies as a subject, you see. That's what I'm trying to find out.**

91. (A) You know I find that so..... When you stand in front of applicants and you say.....

92. (B) Well you could turn that question round and say, is it a subject?

93. **Well, exactly, so er..... or is it lots of bits of subjects joined together.... So that's....**

94. (A) Well this is going to emerge from our conference....

95. **Well, yes. And it's difficult, isn't it?**

96. (B) And if we look outside giving them a notion about what education is, because a lot of them are very poorly read, even right to the end of their time with us, and we are trying to lift their horizons and how we're doing things, I think from my limited experience of what's going on in other institutions and including your own, I suppose you might more easily describe it as a subject because of the remit that you have, unless I've misunderstood it, that most of your students, if not all of them, will progress, subject to satisfactory completion of the Ed Studies Degree Programme, onto the PGCE. Now whether it's been dislocated since last time I spoke to you, I don't know, but there is that driver behind it. So I would imagine it would be easier for you to conceptualise what Education Studies is through its.....through that process.

97. **You could describe it like that as preparation for teacher training.**

98. (B) Exactly.

99. **Which you said in your document yours is *not*. So can I ask you a bit more about how it relates to teacher training? You used that nice phrase 'it's not the ante room to teacher training'.**

100. (A) Yes, well, erm... Did I use that? I don't think.....

101. **Well it's in there!**

102. OK, OK, well right. I was speaking to the Senior Careers Adviser about this whole thing. He was saying that teaching defines *everybody's* choice at (Institution). Doesn't matter what programme you're on; they either want to teach or they don't want to teach. Do you know what I'm saying? So it's either a positive or a negative so that everybody's career choice is chosen.... is affected by that. So Education Studies is almost replicates that tension in a smaller, more contained pathway. So quite a lot of our students don't want to become teachers, but they want some sense of how education affects the world. So er.... What was the question again, Steve?
103. **(Laughs) It was, what's its relationship to teacher training?**
104. (A) Well, yes, I think that kind of covers it, that teacher training is an influence on everybody's career choice in that sort of a college and that erm.... I think that probably you'd find about 90% of our Education Studies students, if they were offered a PGCE place on a plate, they would take it...
105. (B) At the start of their first year.....
106. (A) Well, I still think, I really do think that that's still.... you know I think that in many cases that those at the end of the third year don't want to go into teacher training are..... you know, could be persuaded if that were part of our mission, which it isn't, but erm....
107. **Are you saying that they start out thinking school teaching is for them, but then they broaden out their view of things as they.....**
108. (A) Oh, they broaden out their view, but I think then some of them can be resigned to realising they haven't got the academic equipment, but, I don't know, I think you disagree.....
109. (B) Oh, yes, I only disagree from the point of view of the feedback from students that I have had in the last eighteen months, which is a significant number have come forward to me to say they were thinking seriously about teaching at the point of entry, and actually through what we've done, we've broadened their concepts of what education can.... how education can be used outside that narrow framework and actually they're looking at all sorts of different things and so, for example, the module on the health economy as that operates several students have come forward to me to talk about education can be used through....
110. (A) But do you not think, then, (SL5B), that we owe it ..... we need to be setting up these FENTO postgrads... and we need it some way to be proactive about making stronger the next step forward.....
111. (B) Absolutely.... I couldn't agree more. And to me.... that was my understanding when I joined that one of the things that you were doing and that we were brought in to do, which was broaden the concept of what Education Studies was to this cohort of students, and if we were brought in to that you have a responsibility really to look at, you know, those that want to drop out – not drop out, wrong phrase – but move out into vocational... a vocation at the end of their first degree, or ultimately go on and do a PGCE, Masters or whatever it may be. So I.... the next phase is we should seriously be looking at the.... that broader range of postgraduate alternatives.
112. (A) But it's actually quite..... those are major machinations, aren't they, to put in place, and we don't get the space at this point to do that, do we? I mean you have never had the space to develop the FENTO Postgrad....

113. (B) But there's a senior management thumbs-up to the principle of what we've just talked about there. The snag is there isn't the time allocation or the resource allocation to be able to develop it and I don't think it yet has sufficient senior management driver behind it to make it. When it does, we'll know about it and there'll be a push to do it. I think it could be quite soon, actually.
114. **Can I just pick up on something that you said that it was to understand how education affects the world: that sounds like, er, a sort of, if you like, idealistic or not vocational.....**
115. (A) Well we would always lead with those idealistic aims, wouldn't we, (SL5B)? But it's just the recognition of reality: these poor kids are going to be.... you know they have to find..... they've come to university or however you're going to describe us..... they've come there in order to make a better life for themselves. It's a luxury for us to have some notion about ideals, but in many ways they're coming..... I, I..... some of them are actually quite well qualified, so we can't, I don't think, even make blanket statements about them being,,,,,, you know, of a lesser water to other students in terms of their qualifications.... but, erm..... Yes, we would always with the students project the idealised issues, aims of the programme.
116. **Rather than the necessarily vocational?**
117. (A) Yes. OK.
118. **There is a question here that says, do the teacher training standards have any influence over the choice of content?**
119. (A) No, but maybe they *ought* to.
120. (B) Well they do through Bridge to Teaching (a module)..... but, I mean..... I think....
121. (A) You've worked on that, haven't you?
122. (B) Yes. Yes, but that's one module of six to eight modules at one level.... that relates directly to the QTS standards.....
123. (A) I found a website that did all this, you know ..... for teacher training students. Went in detail against these standards..... issues about racism and so on, that really opened them up..... God, I wish we could, just one space to do that sort of thing..... But I don't know, they would offer, I think, a good structure for us....
124. **You see, I've got to say that I was just expecting you to say 'no' to that question, because I thought you'd come away from..... Your course had developed from people who were not going to go into teaching..... and so I thought you'd be negative about that, but you actually replied 'perhaps it should be'.**
125. (B) Well, I don't mean.... I don't think either of us thinks that it shouldn't be. You could put it the other way round..... which is that it shouldn't be about *us* predetermining the outcomes for students in that sense.... that we have to accept there are a significant number of students are either those students who wish to do a QTS course and couldn't get on it at that point and came to join us, or ultimately decided to do Education Studies because they wanted to do a PGCE as a form of route into the.....

126. **So you're not against the course offering something for people who will go into teaching?**

127. (A) Well it's there..... Our concern with this particular programme is that it's quite under-developed, isn't it? Quite unambitious. In other words it's..... I suppose it *is* a criticism really, but we're..... It's difficult to persuade say the person who's running that course (the Bridge to Teaching module) they go beyond the filling in of forms and applying for GTTR. What we had in mind when we set it up was almost a glorious notion of the idealised side of teaching: why would you want to be a teacher? But that hasn't happened and, I don't know, you probably had the same issues, Steve: how do you coax somebody without..... without becoming confrontational, actually to run with a..... you know, run with a vision that they're not comfortable with, or they just hadn't been inspired towards. So we have got a lot of issues about how .....

128. (B) There is a limited element of visioning in Bridge to Teaching, and it *is* limited..... erm, but there is an attempt to.... I think, (SL5A).... what we're both pointing out really is that probably the balance is not quite right yet.

129. (A) No, but maybe it will get there.

130. **Does staff interest affect the content of the curriculum?**

131. (A) Well, now we've had (SL5B) and Joe come on, and one of the things I wanted to bring to this was the notion of the way that work-based placements have taken a..... have developed hugely and there a wonderful... a real sense of possibility came to me yesterday when I was working in the (Local industry name) where (SL5B) is taking students and the person there is.... there are undreamed-of links, you know, with widening participation and so on going on that we haven't quite got our heads round yet.... or I haven't. So erm... staff interest? Joe came to us with quite a strong record of generating work-based placements, which is a skill that I don't have, and (SL5B) has brought all his industry links and so on, so yes.

132. **Was it developed to avoid state intervention?**

133. (A) Oh, no. The way yours was, you mean?

134. **Yes.**

135. (A) Oh, no, none of that.

136. (A) Well it might have been in the sense of trying to increase our quotas. *Yes....* I don't know, for some reason all those underpinnings have passed me by, but I think there's probably very, very..... there was a need to increase our student numbers across the college.... and to involve Education, but not to be hemmed in by... because we have been crippled by these quotas and so on..... Because there is a huge over-supply, isn't there, at this point.

137. **Yes. Market forces.... well you've answered that really, because you said that student choice affects that. The political dimension of education: do you treat that?**

138. (A) We do....

139. (B) Apart from the politics of what we're doing...

140. (A) We have a dedicated module about politics, but we couldn't staff it this year.

141. (B) But we do introduce politics as a thread at Level C so they've got a thread introduced at Level C and then it should carry on as an option at Level I, is that right?
142. (A) Yes, but today's students are.... well we find our students politically quite apa.... underdeveloped, say. And if you saw that thing that indicated that about 70% of the student population are going to vote LibDem.... I mean, I do think I get a sense of that from our students.
143. **Last one: how do you see the programme developing? You've started on that one with Jaguar metaphor....**
144. (A) I think it could go from strength to strength. Now if you're talking in practical terms we see our numbers increasing by involving more part-time and mature students through the Network of (Institution) (the partnership with FE colleges). Because they're quite a demanding group of students, but at the same time it's a growth area.
145. (B) We're vulnerable with the full-time students because this year experienced a slight drop in... well a significant drop in our student numbers because the QTS were given extra numbers to take students on. So in that sense we may be the float for those that don't get onto QTS; when they can take greater numbers, our numbers go down. So there's a degree of vulnerability in that. We don't have the same vulnerability and also we have a widening participation remit which makes it that the Network of (Institution) is a major potential area of development for us.
146. **Can you just explain that 'Network of (Institution)'**
147. (A) It's a web of colleges that are sympatico with us.....
148. **That's further education colleges?**
149. (A) Yes, around the (Region name), because there are all these cold spots, HE cold spots where nothing is going on and people would have to travel a long way to get to an HE site. So these visionaries within (Institution) have set up these teaching programmes in a number of areas, in (Place name), for instance, (Place name), (Place name), all these kind of - I don't know, I always think of them as quite dingy-sounding places, but they're not (laughs). So, anyway, this one where we work at this point is (Place name) and the students are wonderful there, but I think you and me are quite keen on going beyond that. One of the areas is (Local place name) where we want to get it going, it's (Institution campus) and have an evening course for part-time students.
150. **You've talked quite a lot about the widening participation, this course being a..... a function of the course being about widening participation. Is that..... because you're (A) moving on to that job in widening participation. Where has that come from? Is it your interesting in widening participation that's made the course as it is, I wonder?**
151. (A) No, I wouldn't think so.
152. **So it's the other way round: you've got this widening participation job because you've done this with this course and it's.....**
153. (A) Yes, I know, erm..... We're having this big erm upheaval and all the jobs are being change in the Education (Faculty) because all the times are running out, you know. But - I don't know, I'm going off the target here – the more and more

- I'm getting into it the more I can see we could be a focal point for widening participation. You see, we were used ... erm Education Studies was used as a kind of flying picket to open up (Place name) when we took over (Another institution name). We just couldn't recruit. I mean there was me up there on my own in this huge great – I don't know if you've ever been there – fabulous, fabulous place, exquisite, and just me in a little classroom trying to teach the three or four students..... you know, and it was going to be the flying wedge that opened up the whole of this thing. They had it a couple of years, but, erm it didn't take off.
154. (B) Except that it then led to the Network of (Institution) indirectly, did it?
155. (A) Well, no, the network was already running, not as big as it is now, but.....
156. (B) If I can just pick up on that question through another way, Steve, I think the nature of our Education Studies programme leads itself to fulfil a widening participation remit. I think the broad nature of it, that it isn't just about training people to go into schools, in part encourages a cohort of students to come and join us, and it's sufficiently broad in nature to meet the needs of those kind of students as well, who are not thinking of going on into teaching, maybe that wouldn't be suitable for them. So we can pull students in.....
157. (A) But we've never actually actively sold it like that, and maybe we should start to project ourselves as.....
158. **Or is it that the course is like that and it happens to *be*..... it happens to appeal to those, or did you design it to be like that? It's which way round it goes.**
159. (A) No, I don't think we.....
160. **No, you just found it to be attractive to those sort of students?**
161. (A) Well, as to whether our course is more attractive to any other pathway..... we just don't have that sort of data, but erm no that's never been.....
162. **But you said you thought the broad nature of it appealed to .....**
163. (A) Yes, it's the nice open phrasing of the name, I think, and the fact that it's.....
164. (B) It has so much that can..... now if you think about the range of modules that we can offer, and how descriptive they are, and we inform the students prior to entry about all three levels and what's on each of those levels. I mean when you talk about the Sociology of Education, the Psychology, the History, Economics in Education, Global Citizenship, Education and the Health Economy and all of these things, you've going to touch base somewhere along the line. You've got so many things going on there, I think that actually clicks with students than saying, this is an Education Studies course in a way that would be a Sociology course.
165. **Yes, I see. Anything else that you want to say that I haven't asked about?**
166. (A) Well, whether we've passed or not!

Senior Manager SM5A and SM5B

1 March 2005

A and B refer to the Dean and Assistant Dean

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. (B) It originated out of a desire to give opportunities to students who were not successful on entry to a BA QTS programme, or who wanted a different route into education professions, or into the PGCE.
3. **So there were people dropping out of the QTS, were there?**
4. (B) There were some people who were dropping out, but there were others for who it was not appropriate at that time, although they may have had an interest in teaching; they hadn't confirmed in their minds that was what they wanted to do. It was seen as creating, I suppose, flexibility and other opportunities for those who wanted to go into education, but who weren't absolutely sure they wanted to teach.
5. **But those were small numbers, weren't they? And you've got big numbers now.**
6. (B) Yes, yes, and they were, erm.... I don't know that they were small numbers. I think that we anticipated them being small, but from the very beginning they've been much larger than we anticipated.
7. **So can I ask where the student numbers have come from?**
8. (A) They're HEFCE numbers.
9. **They're HEFCE numbers, but how do you get them?**
10. (A) Well because we recruit right across the college, we don't have targets for particular areas. There're not targets that we stick to.... so what's happened, to be honest, is that Education Studies they've taken more students because we haven't been able to recruit in other areas. So that, dare I say it, has contributed hugely towards, you know, saving the college.
11. **So it's not that you've had to pinch them from other subjects: they've been available from other subjects that haven't recruited.**
12. (B) They're additional students who may not have come to us otherwise, and the very first cohort that we had, of which there were about thirty students who were already at (Institution) doing a BA combined degree of two other subjects. They were given the option in their second and third year of doing a pilot project which allowed them to do Education as a pathway and that way we sort of tested the water.
13. **So it's been a success in that way, hasn't it?**
14. (B) Yes.
15. **And so, how it fits into the university's overall mission?**
16. (A) You answer....
17. (B) I mean the mission's all about educating the whole person and we see Education Studies as part of that because it's both academic and vocational;



there's an element of theory and practice and it's about.... it's about rounded individuals and our mission is very much about not just training teachers – its sort of historical origins – but about training other practitioners and professionals to work with children in schools and other settings.

18. (A) Can I elaborate here, because I find it very interesting. I think it was about fifteen years ago I led an MEd in Health and Social Care and it was the first MEd that was not targeted at teachers and we ran it very successfully for about three years and then the then Education Department said, you can't do that; Education is just schools-based. I fought hard, but I lost it. And now we've come full cycle and now we're really looking at Education in the way it should be in its widest possible sense.

19. **So you'd already had a taste of it in that broad view.....**

20. (A) Yes and I'm very excited by it.

21. **And how was the curriculum for Education developed?**

22. (B) I think in the initial stages the curriculum came out of teacher training and was very much focused around children learning, child development, that sort of thing. Erm, it always had strands, that I suppose linked back to our mission statement. One of our early modules was looking at beliefs in education, which is appropriate for a church college. That's then been, erm, modified as we've responded to student needs in terms of what might students want, what are their aspirations over and above teaching? But I think the curriculum's also developed as both as the pathway to.... and the (Faculty) has developed its understanding of what we mean by Education Studies and what sort of careers might our students be going into. Very much now we're looking at re-modelling of the workforce, Every Child Matters, and so it's a coming together of government needs and policy, our own growth and maturity in terms of what it might look like: student needs and interests.

23. **I think you might almost have answered the next question and that's, what is the theoretical framework for Education Studies?**

24. (B) Do you mean, sort of, in terms of, erm, subjects?

25. Yes....

26. (B) Well I think, you know, I think we'd see it underpinned by a number of subjects, one of which would be Education and Education as an academic subject in its own right, but also, erm, in terms of Sociology and Psychology and how they relate to it and I suppose in..... sort of.... It's touched on.... It touches on a number of, erm, subject disciplines and so theoretical underpinnings.... There's obviously an element of some of the humanities subjects. I would see it as having a very broad base, but at the same time in being focused on what it's doing.....

27. **The thing I'm struggling with is, is Education a subject or is it bits of these other things? Is it bits of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Humanities as you said, or is it something.....**

28. (B) I think it's something that is itself, but I think it's able to draw on subject areas to, erm, to help develop it and shape it. Erm, so although we wouldn't look at pedagogy in terms of teaching as much as we would on a teacher training course, it would still be drawn upon.... (laughs).

- 29. How is Education Studies perceived within the institution? How is it perceived in relation to other subjects?**
- 30.** (A) Perhaps I can talk about that one because, you know, I've been outside the Education (Faculty) for so long. Erm, I think it's looked on quite enviously in some ways. Here we have a subject that started off, and all of a sudden was so overwhelmed with students that other subject areas looked in very enviously. They were desperately trying to recruit students and Education Studies just seemed to be pulling them in. Added to which, I do think (SL:4A) has got a good reputation throughout the college. If you look at the figures you'll find that his retention figures and progression figures are good and I do think that it did.... and it does create a little bit of envy elsewhere.
- 31.** (B) I think it does, and I think as well that when it was being set up, I think there was some concern perhaps by other areas in the college as, well, was it an academic subject and should it be part of our portfolio at (Institution)? And then, in a sense, the envy of having a subject that, you know, perhaps doesn't have a sort of long tradition as an academic subject, suddenly comes on board, does recruit well, does retain students well.... has been an interesting one.
- 32. Is it, then, slightly negative, the envy? Has it had a negative effect on things?**
- 33.** (A) I don't think it's had a negative effect on anything.... It's just a fact that other people feel, well, why can't my subject be like that? In fact, because most of our students are on combined subjects, so they're combining Education Studies with another subject, the subjects who are in the same grouping as Education Studies, and therefore couldn't be combined, couldn't benefit from that surge in student numbers and therefore were disgruntled about the timetable arrangements....
- 34. Ah, but the other subjects who could be combined, they benefited from.....**
- 35.** (A) They benefited from it, yes.
- 36.** (B) I think the other thing though is that at (Institution) it's been developed alongside our Early Years pathway, and so you had two new subjects that perhaps aren't regarded as having a strong academic background suddenly being developed and recruiting extremely well between the two of them, because Early Years recruits as well as Education Studies.
- 37.** (B) I do think as well that that's been in part our success at recruiting to Education Studies in that we offer Early Years alongside it. For a lot of students that makes a very popular, coherent package.
- 38. I see. Are there links with any other subjects? Are there any other subjects outside the (Faculty) that have been popular combinations?**
- 39.** (A) I don't have the figures off-hand....
- 40.** (B) There are a whole range of subjects that students do combine it with. I don't know the figures off-hand, but I suspect that subjects like IT and Sport are probably the most popular. But there are one or two students that are doing all sorts of combinations: Education Studies and Theatre Studies and Education Studies and English Literature's quite popular. Erm, you know, Education Studies and Business, Education Studies and Health.
- 41. But there aren't any staffing links in those? Are there any staffing links with Psychology, for example?**
- 42.** (B) Yes, there are.

43. (A) And with History. (Tutor name) teaches on it, for example.
44. (B) Yes, with (Tutor name) and (Tutor name)
45. (B) I mean (Tutor name) teaches on it, but I don't know what subject area you'd class that as.
- 46. But they wouldn't teach on the teaching training courses, would they?**
47. (B) No they wouldn't....
- 48. So it's brought them into this field....**
49. (B) Yes, it has.
- 50. So it's good for links in that way, is it?**
51. (A) Not as good as it should be. I mean, essentially, the bottom line is resourcing and because of the additional numbers that have come into these programmes it's meant that fewer students have gone elsewhere. The difficulty you've got is that you can't suddenly say, right well let's get rid of staff over there and staff here, because it doesn't work like that. So (SM5B)'s worked hard to try to get these links going, but it's not been easy, has it?
52. (B) No, and the people who contribute at the moment contribute very willingly, but I mean..... well I'm hopeful that we can expand on that next year, but, you know, at the end of the day, we want people from other subject areas to contribute willingly and give the students a good experience, and who are not going to contribute because their dean tells them they have to. And I think that's always a concern of the team when they're working with new colleagues from across the college: what is their level of commitment?
- 53. Within the (Faculty), the staff teaching Education Studies, it was said today (during the review meeting) that staff do that willingly – and I'm sure that's right –but how was that? How did that go? Were there people who didn't want to do it or people who *did* want to do it.....?**
54. (B) I think in the past..... I think originally there was a notion that the only students we would recruit were the ones that had failed to get onto the QTS degree. People weren't aware that they might choose it because it gave them longer to make up their mind, they were interested in other..... I think that.... I think there have been people in the (Faculty) who have always been very positive about it, who were always very keen to contribute to it from the beginning. There were those, too, who perhaps needed to be convinced about the sorts of students that we were recruiting, the quality of what we were offering, erm, and the reason for them as teacher trainers to be involved in it. Erm, and I think as well that's partly about, you know, change and how individuals manage change themselves.
- 55. But some were keen on it? Did you have the sense of liberation for some people? Did you get those people who wanted to get out of teacher training? Were there any of those?**
56. (B) Erm.....
- 57. Escaping from the TTA?**
58. (B) Erm... I don't know. I think that people who are on it, or who do a significant amount on it, recognise that. You know, it gives them freedom to create modules that they're interested in.... erm... so I think there is an element of that almost in

retrospect. I think the other thing is that, erm, you know where people already have a pressured timetable in terms of teacher training, asking them to contribute on another new pathway, although they have hours for it, sometimes they see it as an additional pressure and something else to juggle, which isn't about their attitude to Education Studies, but is perhaps about the workload that they have at that point in time. But I think, in respect of retrospectively recognising that they have scope to develop modules that are of interest to them, it's quite encouraging and powerful.

**59. One thing you haven't said is, we had staff who couldn't do QTS teaching and you needed to deploy them somewhere else.**

**60.** (B) No, I think we've almost come at it from a different angle. Because it has come out of the Education (Faculty), at the time it was set up, all of our staff had QTS and we had sufficient number of students that we required them all to teach on teacher training, whether primary or secondary....

**61. And they were all happy to teach.....?**

**62.** (B) Yes, and they were. However, since having Education Studies and Early Years, we've been able to recruit staff to the (Faculty) who haven't got QTS, and that has been one of the most positive benefits of having Education Studies. It has brought diversity to the staffing of the (Faculty). Erm..... and so, no we haven't been in the position that you described; we're almost living the opposite way.

**63. And its relationship to teacher training.... I know we've been talking about that today (in the review meeting), but can you just say something.....?**

**64.** (B) Erm, I mean it is linked to teacher training in that students are interested in teaching, erm, obviously Level C, the first year, has a very strong element of looking at schools, how children learn and develop, and we would see it as a good foundation for a student who want to go on to a PGCE, but we don't see it as being governed by teacher training, and in that sense, I suppose, year on year it becomes more liberating as we're able to diversify..... away from the sort of perhaps strict focus in the beginning. I think it gives us new opportunities, new opportunities to staff and the (Faculty) colleagues elsewhere. It's not taking us away from teacher training, but it's not governed by teacher training.

**65. It's not governed by teacher training?**

**66.** (B) No, we make links to it, but not governed by it.

**67. Yes, and what about the idea of making links to..... what was it, a compact? (Discussed in the review.)**

**68.** (A and B) Yes.

**69. You're interested in that are you.....?**

**70.** (B) (Laughs) Well I'm very interested in it, yes. You know, we have a lot of Education Studies students who are very good students; they demonstrate that through their assessment; they've developed a range of experiences in schools and other educational settings; they've demonstrated their commitment to education and they are very strong candidates for a PGCE anywhere. I think, you know, partly in terms of looking at our mission, the sort of institution that (Institution) is, we ought to be supporting our students in further study. It's not about lowering our

requirements that we have of them, but it's about supporting them in their future professional development.

**71. How do you see the subject in relation to government policy for universities?**

**72.** (No immediate response.)

**73. Any thoughts about that? Here's this new subject and it's in the university collection of subjects that are..... Chemistry departments closing down, Education Studies springing up.**

**74.** (A) I think that's quite an interesting question, and certainly it fits in with government policies that relate to - if I'm using the right terms - joined-up thinking of, you know, the social services, the health service and all the rest of it. From that perspective, I think it's very timely..... I think also..... one feels slightly insecure about the future of the TTA side of it and so we're looking to make sure that if that reduces the (Faculty) itself has got some sort of security.

**75. Because you expect some reduction in TTA numbers over the next few years?**

**76.** (B) Yes.

**77. So Education Studies strengthens that?**

**78.** (A and B) Yes.

**79. What about market forces and universities? Did that play a part in your thinking?**

**80.** (B) Erm, well in terms of ..... The college was reviewing all of its undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum, and so it was part of a wider review of that, and looking at changes in market demand: what sort of subjects were popular? Why might that be and how would (Institution) respond to that.

**81. So it was part of your thinking?**

**82.** (B) Yes, it was.

**83. And lastly, how do you see it developing in the future?**

**84.** (A) I must say I've found today (the review meetings) very interesting because you get much more of a feel for something when you hear it discussed like that than just reading of the document.

**85.** (B) I mean I think that..... erm, one thing we haven't talked about today and which we will start to look at is postgraduate provision. We have a taught masters in the (Faculty) that's aimed at practising teachers. How does Education Studies want to be represented in postgraduate provision? Where might we go with that? Erm..... I think as well in terms of new subject areas that are coming on line or on stream within the (Faculty)..... for me it's about creating coherent packages, pathway combinations. So while, yes, students do want to come to (Institution) and study Education Studies and Sport, Education Studies and Business, I do think we need to be able to offer them very coherent packages.... erm, which perhaps they might not always be aware of if they've got to select two pathways. So it's partly about, erm, revising the curriculum that the (Faculty) offers and looking at Education Studies within that. I mean other future possibilities are looking at a three-plus-one route into teacher training that would have Education Studies sort of as a..... a pathway of Education Studies, different to what we've looked at today with some

- commonality, but that would be more clearly linked to teacher training because it would specifically link to a PGCE.
86. (A) It would also be linked with a curriculum subject...
87. (B) So that wouldn't be throwing out what we've got, but .....
- 88. Might you use some of your current undergraduate TTA numbers to do that?**
89. (A) I don't think we would at the moment, because we don't have any trouble filling our TTA places; we do have some trouble with the HEFCE places. So we'd be using those numbers....
- 90. Yes, and it's an attractive package, isn't it, with a guaranteed place.....**
91. (A) Yes.
92. (B) I think as well it's about that notion of creating a coherent package for students at the point of which they're looking in the prospectus, so they may not look at Education Studies and think about taking a National Curriculum subject; perhaps if you package them as a whole it might be more attractive.
- 93. And I guess that if you had that three-plus-one model, that means you could have the ones that definitely want to be teachers on that, and it would leave another course – another pathway –that was for the ones that didn't want to teach necessarily. So would it be as clear-cut as that?**
94. (B) Yes, it wouldn't as clear..... that's interesting because I hadn't thought of it from that point of view. It wouldn't be quite as clear-cut because you'd always have the ones who are fairly sure they want to teach, but they don't want to commit themselves to the other side. It might free up more flexibility in terms of, you know, other opportunities for students....
95. (A) I mean, when you devise the programmes, you're thinking of where students might go that is actually feasible and worthwhile and putting that in a way that students, in just reading a web-page or prospectus, can envisage and is immediately attractive to them. And sometimes it's packaging it so that they can see their way through to something like teacher training. At other times it's packaging it so they can actually see the breadth and the fact that it isn't tying them down to anything ....
- 96. The different possibilities.... And that's what we got from the students today, I think. Anything you want to say that I haven't asked?**
97. (A) Well I was going to ask you to tell us a little bit about what you're doing at Bath Spa.

**CASE 6 TRANSCRIPT**

**Subject Leader SL6A**

**28 April 2005**

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. Well, I arrived in (Year) and my understanding was we'd been offering a combined degree in with Education Studies right from the first go when the University was first established. When I arrived in (Year) I think we combined with about twelve or thirteen other subject areas where you could do a joint degree which was two thirds a main subject, one third Education. And that used to recruit quite well. I think we probably had an intake of about fifty, or something of that order; that would be our average. Erm, now after (Date), we noticed that our recruitment numbers were beginning to drift downwards and I think by the mid sort of (Year)s, early (Year)s, we were beginning to think well this isn't really very healthy; what can we do about it to bring our numbers up? And I'd been the Director of the Undergraduate Programme a few years at that time and so I was sort of thinking about things and so on. And.... I don't know where the idea came from, but I thought.... erm that there might be a market for people doing a single subject degree in Educational Studies and I think that came from the fact that some of the students we'd got sometimes said to us that they were enjoying the Education Studies part of the joint degree more than they were enjoying the main subject. And sometimes they would say, what a pity we can't spend all our time doing Education; you'd sometimes see that on feedback forms, and so on. And I think that sort of implanted an idea in my mind. Now when I first started to sound people out on the possibility of launching a single subject degree the point was made, well, what would somebody do with a degree like that because it doesn't involve a teacher training qualification, so what purpose does it serve? And my view is that – that I took at the time was – well Education is an interesting area of study in its own right and the vast majority of people that study a degree at university don't actually go on to do jobs specifically related to that area of study; what they do is, they build up the skills that you get from being a university graduate and they can apply that to all sorts of careers. So my view was that it could attract people who were interested in educational ideas and issues for all sorts of reasons, possibly because they were mature students, had young children, were interested in what goes on in schools. And then I thought there might be sort of careers related to education – maybe the Youth Service, probation work, working in a school library, working in educational administration, going into educational research. I thought there might be people like that who, if you like, didn't want to become teachers, but were interested in an education-related career. So I thought, well why not give it a go? And the other thing I think was quite significant is, in the period from (Year) when I joined the department and (Year)s, there's no doubt that the literature on education had grown. I mean the number of journals, educational research articles, books on different aspects of education, has mushroomed. So my view was there was actually now a massive field of knowledge about educational ideas and issues and practices that could underpin a university degree. In other words, the field of education had actually grown as a subject area that went well beyond simply servicing teacher-training courses. Erm, so I think it was about in the mid-(Year)s we just took a chance and launched the



single subject degree.

3. **Something that comes from that is you said, 'it was worth a go'; the University presumably thought it was worth a go. How did it work in your getting student numbers? The University agreed to that?**
4. Right. We had to prepare a paper for the University so it could become part of its policy and that includes, er, having to them have a quota within the University's numbers for the degree. Erm, and in that paper, I think we just highlighted the point that I'd been making that a number of our students on the combined degree had said that they would be interested in doing a single-subject degree had it been available; we did a little bit of marketing with our current students. We then made the point about how, erm, there is a clientele out there that could be interested in Education, even if it wasn't as a preparation for teacher training. And we just asked for a very modest number; we said, well we'd be looking for an intake of about fifteen to twenty students. Now, the other thing that I think might have helped swing it was in the early (Year)s I think there was more pressure on universities to have links with the local community and to be trying to attract mature students, and at that point I think the (Institution name) was trying to sort of think about how it could get more students in who had non-conventional backgrounds. And I think that we also said something along the lines of that a degree like this might appeal to a number of mature students with young children or had had involvement in schools as governors or something. And they could have thought, yes that..... er.....
5. **It would have fitted in with the mission of widening participation?**
6. That's right, yes.
7. **Because is would be..... as a university, you don't *need* to be attracting widening participation students.... I mean, you're a very high-status university and in general you can get students without difficulty .....**
8. I, I think the University has always had to adapt to pressures that come from the fashion of the time. And I think at that point in the University's career in the mid-(Year)s I think there had been statements coming from the Government much more to do with, if you like, the beginnings of widening access and so on. What are you doing for your local community? What are your links with the local community? And so on. I mean, you're quite right, (Institution name) has established a reputation for itself as it were as an elite university with a very, very good intake, and I think our initiative was seen to be slightly at the margins; in other words, it was contributing to these other things the University ought to be trying to do. But it wasn't going to be doing that at such a significant level that, for example, the University's average intake 'A' level was going to start to drop, because we were just making a small contribution. But we did have to convince the University, and they did ask us questions along the lines of, Are you sure this is viable? It will recruit? Well I think the message we got back from them was - to be honest, if my recollection is accurate - it was something like, We're not totally convinced, but if you feel that this is the way that you'd like the Department to develop and you are confident that you can recruit, then they were prepared to back us.
9. **It was quite a liberal view, then?**



10. I think it was, yes, definitely. This University has always been very supportive of encouraging departments to try and flourish in directions that the Department felt would be healthy and I think we were allowed to do that, yes.
11. **Another of my questions lower down, but I think you've already suggested it, is how much it's determined by the market – market forces – so are you saying that what students wanted to do very much determined.....**
12. I think we had to indicate, yes, that it would be viable.....
13. **And you said in your thinking about it that you found that students wanted to do it....**
14. Yes, we had to do a little sort of exercise of saying to our current students, How many of you would have applied to a single-subject degree course, had it been available? And, you know, quite a few said that they would, and that helped contribute to that idea.
15. **So the market did contribute to that.**
16. (Nods).
17. **Can I ask you this: it's going back a long way, I know, but how did you see the aims of the programme then? Can I just pick up on your saying you saw it not as vocational in the sense of if being preparation for teacher training; I am right in thinking you didn't see it as preparing for other vocations?**
18. Right. Well, at that time entry into teacher training courses was being made stricter. They were saying things like you really needed to, for example, have done a significant amount of a main subject at university if you then wanted to go on to do a PGCE. So the paradox we faced at that point was that by doing a degree in Educational Studies you almost couldn't go into teaching. So we had to sell the degree as something that would appeal to people who were interested in Educational Studies as an area of academic work and who had a variety of careers in mind, everything from that which was entirely *unrelated* to education – you know, like entry into the Civil Service, or something like that, where they have a graduate entry scheme regardless of the subject area - at one extreme to ones that were educationally related at the other. But we actually had a key phrase, because we were very worried that we might get people onto the course who wanted to go into teaching who would actually want to sue us at the end for saying we didn't make it clear enough that they couldn't do that. Well, we had a key phrase that this is not a teacher training course and you need to be aware that if one of your thoughts is that you want to become a primary or secondary school teacher you really ought to do a first degree that involves a main subject, or go down a BEd route. So I think.... we had a phrase at that point that we really borrowed from the Combined Degree course. When we had the Combined Degree courses, and we still have those, we had a phrase along the lines of: People who would want a Combined Degree with Education would have a major interest in their main subject, but also like to complement this by exploring education as a field of academic, er, study where they could develop new skills and interests. So when we looked to the Single Honours Degree I think we borrowed that sort of type phrase: Education was an area where you could develop new areas of interest and that, erm, that could lead on to a variety of career options.

**19. But including teacher training for the combined ones?**

**20.** Well... yes, For the Single Subject Degree we tried to emphasise that that *couldn't* be for teacher training purposes. If you were interested in teacher training you could do a Combined Degree.

**21.** So, actually, it's a funny turn-around, isn't it, in that as I gather that, in the (Year)s when the Combined Subject was introduced, it was introduced for people who were considering teaching – so you could do, say Music and Education.

**22.** That's it. Absolutely.

**23.** Whereas with the introduction of the Single Honours that closed that off, so that moved you away completely from it as a preparation for teacher training.

**24.** I thought at that point it was like an incredible irony and paradox in a way. But that was something imposed upon us and I'm not saying we felt very bitter, but.... erm....like... I think it was something like – it was called CATE, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education – they had pronouncements that made it look as though if you didn't do part of a National Curriculum subject at university you couldn't go into teacher training. Since then the Department for Education – I won't say they've backtracked – but they said that was never a ruling, never a ruling. But at the time it certainly felt like that. Because in recent years – I mean our students can now go on to train in primary.

**25.** It was the 2002 Standards that removed that....

**26.** That's it....

**27.** But it certainly was there before, although I think some universities.... I mean, it was the same for the people with Psychology degrees, who couldn't be primary school teachers...

**28.** Exactly. I mean what we did was, when we were planning on launching the degree, I wrote to a number of PGCE courses, both primary and secondary, to say would you be prepared to interview any of our students who did a BA in Educational Studies with a view to becoming a primary or secondary school teacher. Now virtually all the secondary school training courses said, No, they need the main subject. And there wasn't enough of English in particular that would be acceptable. The primary school PGCE courses, I would say about 70% of them said no and about 30% would say, Well we'll look at each case on merit, but we wouldn't rule it out. So, for us, if someone did a BA in Educational Studies we would still consider them and we would look to see whether, as part of the Educational Studies, er, they'd done things that might relate to teaching in schools, so they might be able to accept them.

**29.** So how much has the programme been affected by teaching in schools? I mean, although there was the problem of people not being able to go on to teach, how much of the programme has been determined by people possibly being future teachers? Has that come into it at all?

**30.** Right. Very, very little; it's quite interesting because the..... What actually happened is that when we had the Combined Degree Courses, you know, well established, one of the things that really struck me was how much those modules

were studies of education that weren't related to teacher training. I mean, that was a revelation to me when I came in (Year). You know, you had courses on the Psychology of Education, the Sociology of Education, how education is portrayed in works of literature, and so on. And when you looked at the content of them, they were very much educational research and educational study based. And they only very tangentially related to things that were preparation for teaching in schools. Erm... now when we launched the Single Subject Degree, what we did was – it was very simple, it could not have been simpler – which was to say, well, at the moment we had a modular structure; you know we had a lot of modules that lasted –all our modules lasted – for one term, and it was half a term's workload, roughly- something like that. So for a Combined Degree you had to do seven Education modules. So we said, well if you have to do seven Education modules for a Combined Degree, er, we'd be looking for you to do about twenty for a Single Subject Degree. Now for twenty that sounds a bit too sort of.... that sounds quite a large number of different things. So we then thought, well instead of asking for twenty modules, how about having a third-year research project that would count as two modules? And also a second-year dissertation, and then that would reduce the number of modules and, you know, might be a little bit of progression. But, when we put the Single Subject Degree Course together, basically all we did we had a pick-and-choose cafeteria system. We already had about forty modules on offer for people doing a combined degree, so to do the Single Subject Degree all you had to do were the same.... you'd chosen the same selection of modules, but you just did more of them, plus two dissertations, and that then gave you your Single Subject Degree.

**31. And I see you've got those themes in it....**

**32.** That is a *really* interesting part of the story. I must just tell you that, when we launched the Single Subject Degree, we had a lot of intense debate about should we group the modules together so that people had to do modules that fell into a certain category? Should we introduce some new modules, er, that we would need to have if it was now a Single Subject Degree? So we had to make sure that certain things were covered. When it was part of the Combined Degree we were more relaxed. And people sort of said, Well, would it be acceptable for someone to do a three-year honours degree in Educational Studies and to never have done something on the Psychology of Education? Shouldn't that be compulsory, or something? And initially, you know, I was in the camp that had a very liberal view and said, Well why don't we let the student just put together those modules that make sense to them? So I took a very, very relaxed view.

**33. And was that successful?**

**34.** From the students' point of view it was absolutely successful....

**35. And that was the view that prevailed....**

**36.** Oh, yes, it won the day....

**37. Because you said there were people who were against that.....**

**38.** I think there were at least..... There were about fourteen members of staff in the Department at the (that) moment... at that time. There was one person that, I think, took a strong view that it seemed a bit too choice-driven and that there should be some restrictions on the choices. Erm... I think there were about five

people that were indifferent and I think the vast majority thought that let's stick with the sort of liberal free choice.

**39. So the student choice.... One of my questions is, How much does student choice determine the curriculum? So do you have modules that run or don't run depending on student choice? How much does student choice determine what goes on?**

**40.** Well, erm.....

**41. You've allowed that, haven't you? You've got a system that allows that?**

**42.** Yes. Part of the problem with the first system that we allowed which was absolute free choice is that you could have some modules that recruit a large number of people, perhaps..... I mean the most that did any one module was probably about forty. And at the other extreme you could have some modules that didn't recruit and, consequently, didn't run. So, in terms of allocating staff loads and things like that, erm... it had drawbacks to it, because it meant that some members of staff had a lot of essays to mark and another member of staff might have a small group, and so on. And then the experiences of the students would vary, because they often used to say things like, Well, if you do a seminar and there's about ten or twelve of you in the group that's great. When there's more than twenty it turns into lectures. And when it's less than about ten you sort of feel it's more like tutorials, but you don't get to....

**43. No dynamic....**

**44.** Yes, no dynamic, that's a good phrase. Erm, so I think there was a drawback to that free choice system. But as (SM6), I'm sure, will tell you later, I think when erm... when things like, erm, the Teaching Quality Assessment Exercise started to come on stream, erm, I think the University started to ask each Department questions... about the courses that it offered. What was the degree of progression if you went from year one, two and three? Erm... to what extent are there core courses and option courses, and things like that? And although we weren't TQA'd for a long time – Education was quite late in the day – I think we were getting messages from the University that every Department needed to get its act together to start doing things that were regarded as best practice. And so I think things like modularisation came in where the University wanted to have a consistent module pattern across all Departments. Up 'til then, you know, modules varied in size, in length, in weight from Department to Department. So that was imposed. And then on the back of standardisation for modularisation we were asked to sort of think how do different modules relate to each other; are some modules pre-requisite to other modules? And we said, Oh no, not in our Department; we have a free-choice system. And they said, Well does that mean that a first-year student can do the same modules as a third-year student. And we said, Yes, you know. And I think they started to think, Well, you know, when you are TQA'd don't you think that could be an issue? And I think that, erm, that pressure started to come in when I was Director of the Undergraduate Programme and we spent about six or seven months discussing the ways in which modules could be grouped. I mean, it's worth saying for the record that up to that point we'd gone for a spread of module topic areas that was very much based on what students said that they wanted. So if students said to us, it's a shame that you don't do a module on, let's say, the impact of ICT on education, then we asked people would you like to do something

on that? Is there an outside person we could bring in? And also when we had new members of staff join us we'd say, Well what module do you fancy teaching? Well, we've never had a Geographer in the Department, but if we did they might say, well how about Geography in Education and we'd have said, Yes fine. So it was all very relaxed and easy-going.

**45. And knowledge of staff expertise would determine to some extent what you were doing....**

**46. Absolutely.**

**47. Rather than saying Education Studies is this so we must appoint someone who can do this; it was the other way round rather?**

**48.** Well, what happened in my last year as Director of the Undergraduate Programme is, er, that I didn't like the idea of grouping of modules; I thought it looked a bit artificial and we couldn't get something together that I was comfortable with. But (SM6) became the new Director of the Undergraduate Programme and I think s/he saw the imperative of going down that road, whether we liked it or not, you know; that it was strongly hinted that we had to do two things: we had to group modules together to make sure it covered Education as a *discipline* and we had to think about progression from years one, two and three. And that's what really transformed a completely free cafeteria system to a system of groupings, differentiation between different types of modules – intermediate and advanced – and a new thing that (SM6) brought in which was an introductory course, like at the beginning of the three years that tried to present an overview of the area.

**49. Sorry if this sounds like a TQA question: how would you see the theoretical framework of Education Studies as a university subject?**

**50.** Well, I mean, when I first joined the (institution) I tended to think of it as disciplines, as the traditional ones of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy being applied to education. When I came to (Institution name), as I said earlier, I was quite surprised to find that there were other types of modules that weren't strictly discipline-based; they were quite inter-disciplinary. People took a theme that cut across lots of different disciplines. So, er, I thought that was a revelation to me. So now my feeling of Education is that it's a field of enquiry that combines both disciplined areas of studies *and* areas of studies that are much more thematic and completely inter-disciplinary. So, for example, a few years ago we had a member of staff who had a module called 'Images of Handicap' and s/he looked at the way in which people who are handicapped, and attitudes towards people who are handicapped in education, how that's portrayed in different ways from advertising at one extreme to how it's portrayed in films, what schools do to improve attitudes towards the children that are handicapped, all those sort of things. And this was totally inter-disciplinary: there's bits of Philosophy there, Sociology, Psychology and there are things that, you know, you almost can't regard as discipline-based at all; it's treading new ground. And there were quite a few modules like that that took an *area* and then brought together our knowledge and understanding from all sorts of directions.

**51. So there was a..... And that was happening when you came, so that was originally in it?**

52. Yes, there were already modules like that. I mean, in (Year), I would say about half the modules could be categorised as clearly having a discipline base with a title like 'the Sociology of Education' and I'd say the other half were inter-disciplinary, sort of thematic topic-based.
53. **And how do you see the disciplines in the current course? Or, when you did the Single Honours Degree, how did you see the disciplines? Are they still there?**
54. Yes, they are still there. I mean, I think we sort of, to be honest, i think that when we launched the Single Honours Degree we just kept the house-style of what was already there, which was about half the modules were discipline-based and half were inter-disciplinary or thematic. And I would say, looking at what we've got now, I would say it's probably about the same, I think.... It's always hard to decide whether something is discipline-based or not, because we tended to move away from strictly calling a module, let's say, 'the Philosophy of Education'.
55. **There is one.**
56. There is, yes, but we tended to, like, we could have a module called something like – I don't know – 'Conceptual Issues in Education', something like that, and then you'd have to sort of think, well how much is that philosophical as against other things. So sometimes the titles could be sexed up if you like and essentially it's still a discipline-based course.
57. **Is that a response to student demand? How do students see the disciplines, I guess, is the question?**
58. I think they probably just look at the range of modules that we offer very, very impressionistically. They may get a sense that, ah yes there are certain modules here that are like doing bits of Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology....
59. **And they're not put off by those....**
60. Oh, no, definitely not. I mean, I think they're attracted by that. I mean, it's worth saying that all our modules our open equally to the Combined Degree people and the Single Subject Honours people. So any one module could have people that are doing a main subject linked to what they're doing in Education. But I would say erm....that... student choice is really driven by their own personal interests. I think they just look at the course description and they think, ooh, I'm interested in that and I'll go for it. I don't think they tend to feel they need to cover modules in particular areas, or that some modules are more worthier than others because they're discipline or not.....
61. **There's no sense of them being put off by something called 'the Sociology of Education'?**
62. No, I don't think so, actually. I'd say if anything that's actually almost a bit more attractive. (SM6), you know, had a module called 'Education for a better World', you know, and that's always recruited very well. I think it draws on things like Citizenship Education and that's been very popular. I do something on the psychological aspects of teaching; that's always been very popular. Erm, I don't think if you were to sort of list the discipline-based ones and the non-discipline-based ones I'd say student choice was equally spread across the two.

**63. You're not having to conceal the disciplines.....**

64. No, no.

**65. Because I think there is a bit of that in some universities.....**

66. That's interesting. Well I wonder if that's more true on a teacher training course where they're a bit worried they're going to get too much of the discipline and not enough of what's going to be practical help to them as teachers.

**67. What would you say the distinctive features are of this programme?**

68. Er, I think the most attractive feature of it is that it gives an incredible range of choice, even though we've grouped the modules together under different themes. I think that's more just to enable the students to get a sense of erm how their programme is looking across the different themes, but we don't insist that they have to do at least one from every theme. So I think that the distinctive feature is that free choice still dominates. Erm, I think that fact that there is a strong research element involved is good, so they have a compulsory module on research methods in the second year and the third-year research project. I think that is something that's very valuable. Erm, and I think, in a funny sort of way, bringing in the skills portfolio's quite interesting. I'm not quite sure exactly how well it works, but in a way, getting people to make a list of things that they've done that addresses each of the skills that they will develop over the three years.... In a way, it's like us declaring that that's what we're trying to develop in students as well as a sort of an interest and enjoyment in the subject: that there are transferable skills that they're picking up as well. And that's probably had an input on the way we teach as well. So, for example, I build in student presentations into my sessions, not just because I think it's a good way of teaching, but because it helps develop those skills that I think would be useful. Erm, I think the other distinctive feature is how widely disparate the different types of modules are. I mean, I haven't really looked at other Education modules available in other universities all that much, but when I did do the comparisons I did get a very, very strong impression that most university courses that had modules called Educational Studies, well at least ten years ago, did look very traditional and discipline-based. They had modules often linked to main subjects, say a module on Maths and Education, Science and Education, and so on, Psychology of Education. And I think we offer a lot of very, very interesting, innovative styles of subject areas that can be the base of a module.

**69. You mentioned the students you were getting when you talked about it as widening participation. What would you say the profile of your students is, then? Are they strong students, or are they the ones who are not getting onto other things?**

70. Right, the erm..... When we first launched the course about half the intake were mature students and I actually went around a lot of FE colleges in the region where they had Access Courses to sell the subject, because I thought that one of its major intakes would be mature students. And in the first couple of years about half the students that came in were mature students, or had come through some other slightly unconventional view: they might have done a Higher National Diploma or something like that, and so on. But, I don't know exactly when it happened, but fairly early on in the system the maintenance grants for lots of mature students were knocked on the head and it suddenly became a lot more financially expensive



for mature students to come to university. So our mature student intake has started to drop, and now we look a lot more like a conventional undergraduate degree with a lot of eighteen year-olds coming. We still get a fair number of mature students, but nothing like fifty percent.

**71. So your eighteen year-olds have got good 'A' Levels?**

72. Yes, and our entry, at least until recently, it was three Grade Cs and I think that's been increased recently as the pattern is slightly higher now. But yes, they're good students. I mean, I was just talking to a friend of mine who works at St John's College and they have a course that's similar; I think it's called a BA in Childhood Studies, but it had a lot of similarities with Educational Studies, and I think they ask for two 'A' Levels, something like a B and a C. So you know, there's quite a range, if you like, between the new universities and colleges and a(n) (institution) like (Institution name). Erm... and I think that.... yes.... I think that, compared with other main subjects at the University, we're probably at the lower end in terms of our intake and I think it's not so competitive to get onto our degree as it would be to get onto some of the other main subjects. I mean like English and History and Psychology at (Institution name) are *really* competitive, you know, really hard to get in. The 'A' Level grades they ask for are very, very tough and they're quite elite places to get into, and I think we're probably on a par with more the sociology, social policy-type ones, the second tier, if you like of subject areas.

**73. How would you see it developing? Do you have a view of that?**

74. Well, that's a very interesting question. From when I started the programme off I've always had a soft spot on it and always contributed into discussions about it. I'm not sure what developments are on the cards at the moment; I suppose one of the things that we've never quite cracked is progression. In other words we don't make any module a pre-requisite of another module. Erm, so that might be a.... we might try and think in terms of pathways. If you're interested in one area, you might be able to do that at an intermediate level and then follow it up doing the same thing at advanced level. We haven't really got anything like that, not a direct route-type thing. The other thing that we've toyed about was when I got the Single Subject Degree launched and we had this sort of like an introductory module, I thought the simplest way of doing it would be that you did one topic each week, so every week you do a different topic. So for the first two terms a different topic each week. More recently, (SL6B) has tried to group topics together into sort of themes within the Introduction. Someone in the Department said, Well it's still very much on a weekly basis, but couldn't we sort of teach it in three-week blocks? So instead of doing things on a weekly basis you actually *teach* over a longer period and really explore an area in greater depth. And I think that might be something we could develop in at some point.

**75. And you do feel the freedom to do that sort of thing?**

76. I think that that freedom..... er.... is harder to do now. I'm now the Director of Graduate Studies and we have to.... all course changes and modifications now need to go through a University Teaching Committee, that seem to be acting as gate-keepers and asking very, very difficult questions about what you're doing and why you're doing it in the way you're doing... and justifying it. So I think that if we were to do something that would count as being a major course change we would have some very difficult questions to answer. But I think that if we do



things that are regarded as minor changes, and I think that might be regarded as a minor change, then I think we simply need to inform the University Teaching Committee and not require approval.

**77. Chris that's covered everything.**

**78.** Oh, great.

**79. And it's been very interesting.**

**80.** Oh thanks for saying that.

Subject Leader SL6B

28 April 2005

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. Well, I suppose (SL6A) will have given you most background on that. I mean, I don't know what he's told you about my context on this....
3. **No, s/he hasn't.**
4. Well, I've taken over now from (SM6) about a couple of years ago after the Subject Review. So, erm.... in terms of its antecedents I think..... We were one of the founding Departments, of course, of the (institution) and I think one of the key principles as I see it is the idea that students could work across a series of disciplines and also the other principle of extending access, I think, too, throughout the community and bringing more mature returners into education into the course.
5. **Yes. Is that one of the aims of it?**
6. I think so. That's one of the strong aims of the Department. Yes, to bring back people into education who perhaps missed out the first time around. And it's one of the things we do try to state in our prospectus and in our Programme Specification.
7. **I'm interested in that. I was slightly surprised at that because this University you wouldn't expect to need to attract Widening Participation students. You're an elite University; you can attract any students you like, I would have thought.**
8. I don't think it's a question of *needing* to; I think it's the principle of *wanting* to extend participation.
9. **So it's an ideological principle?**
10. I think so, yes. I think I'd be comfortable in saying that. And every year we do get a number of mature returners into Education who come on, of course, and do make a success of it. That's something, I think, we would feel particularly pleased about.
11. **So that's one of the aims for the subject. Any others? What do you see as the aims?**
12. Gosh, well.....
13. **I'm sorry if that sounds like a TQA question..... (laughs)**
14. (Laughs) That's right..... Well, I mean, where do we begin to answer that? I mean there are aims for the subject itself and transferable skills aims that we would want to equip all our students with. I mean, perhaps if I take those first: the way we work through assessment of course work, by very much seminar work and er one-to-one work with tutors, I think really it's to empower our students with the ability to be confident, articulate, to argue, to make a case.... to present work with other people. We also want to give them a good overview of Educational Studies in its broadest philosophical sense: What do we mean by education? Where does it take place? Must it always be institutionalised? And, I think, in the range of our modules we would try to cater for students who have that particular philosophical

interest in education as a whole, OK? But at the same time, we're aware that Education can be a vocational course for some students. And so we would have a strong thread running through our courses of vocationally orientated educational courses, designed often for people who are thinking of becoming primary school teachers, or working in the educational sector in different ways. So in that way it's a very broad subject, feeding into many other disciplines, which takes me back again to the idea of a combined course.

**15. Because I understand the original combined course was for those people who were interested in teaching. Was that right, back in the old days?**

16. Yes.... I suppose that's right.

**17. So you were doing History and you wanted to be a teacher so you did some Ed Studies?**

18. Yes, I suppose that's fair to say, but it's broader than that really.

**19. Can I take that vocational thing in two bits: first the teacher training as a vocational outcome and then others. Can I ask you.... So it can be for people who.... One of the aims is it will equip people who are going to go into teacher training?**

20. Well, I would say that every year we get a significant number of applicants who see that as a career route and they would have an eye on going on to do a PGCE in Primary Education .

**21. OK. And does that feed back into the subject in the sense that it..... that there's stuff in the subject that prepares them, that's relevant?**

22. Yes, again, I think to go back to the principles of the course, I think one of the founding principles was to be able to give students a sense of autonomy and control over the intellectual path they wanted to take through their degree. So that a student could take a series of modules which fitted into a particular career choice that they might wish to make.

**23. Which might be broader than teaching?**

24. Yes, they might be broader than teaching.

**25. Do you have any views of what those are, or is it just in a sort of generic sense that it will equip people with skills that could do various things, or do you have any particular vocational outcomes in view?**

26. Well, with a student who was aiming in that direction, they would work quite closely with their tutor in plotting their module pathways through it and I suspect someone like that would take the kind of modules we run are more that are more classroom based, for example, Issues in Primary Education, Perspectives on Literacy, How Children Learn Maths, Psychological Aspects of the Classroom, and so on.

**27. Right, so there are some modules that point towards teaching....?**

28. There are, but within that brief we also have – I'm sure (SM6) (ha)s talked about the six key themes which generally bind the course together – and we want at the same time our students to get a range of experiences across those themes, so that, although we would want to encourage them in their vocational pathway, we

wouldn't want their degree experience to be too vocationally narrow.

**29. And do you have..... Other than teaching, do you have a view of other occupations people would go into?**

**30.** Yes, we work quite closely with the Careers Department here and, er, it's quite interesting to see the kind of work some of our students go into. Some go into teaching, some go into other areas associated with education: Educational Psychology, Educational Welfare, working with children in other ways. But a certain number take those transferable skills beyond the whole world of education.

**31. And those themes: can I ask you how you got to those? Why did you have themes and how did you derive them?**

**32.** Well, I don't know if (SM6) has talked to you about that, because s/he was involved more in the development of that, but I think the feeling is with Education that it can be quite an amorphous subject, really, in a way that it might be perceived as not having the coherence of a degree in English Literature or Physics. And so we wanted to sit down and think, well what are the fundamental issues... that we're looking at in our degree structure? What are the key issues occurring throughout a whole module pattern. So we might have something like issues in educational establishments, or a module on teaching and learning; an interesting theme on learning otherwise and that's things about the whole issue of education, not only in different societies – how might it be organised by other cultures – but what might it look like beyond the conventional educational institutional construction of educational systems.

**33. Yes, so how did you get to those themes, then? What was the process of that?**

**34.** I think it was a question of taking a look...an overview of our whole module structure and seeing how they cohered, and also to think, well what are we trying to do with our course? So I mean if I just show this to you, for example, here they are and how... I mean in some ways the modules set themselves into particular themes, but you can see here in our theme four, Research in Education, if I come back to your original question about what is the principle behind our course, one of the aims would be to encourage our students to be active researchers within the educational system. And so we have a theme set on researching education, and as part of the Degree each student has to write an empirical dissertation in the final year, which is based on empirical work in the classroom normally.

**35. Would you describe the six themes as a theoretical framework?**

**36.** (Slowly) Yes... I think so and like any other framework it can be contested and challenged. And we could say, well there are themes there that might not be there. And there are all sorts of influences feeding into the establishment of these themes. For example, to go back to the start of the course, there were strong links in the beginning between Education and the Arts at (Institution name), particularly the English... So you'll see here we have a particular theme which relates to Literature and the Arts, where one might say, well all right why's that there when there when we haven't got one on Education and the Sciences or..... So there are some historical reasons behind this as well conceptual, theoretical ones...

**37. Well everything's got to be a selection anyway, hasn't it?**

38. Absolutely so, that's right. And I suspect some of them like Learning in Education and Issues in Educational Institutes, Thinking about the Meaning of Education, one would see comfortably in any construction of an Education Degree Course.
39. **Can I ask where the disciplines are in this, then, because I notice that one of two modules are called... there's one called 'Philosophy in Education', isn't there – Philosophy of Education?**
40. Yes.
41. **How do you see the traditional disciplines, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, in this?**
42. Well, again, we've... When you say you do we see them.... Sorry I'm....
43. **Well, erm... It's not just a discipline-based.... The disciplines are there in some kind of way.... ? Do you.... Is it evident to the students that they're doing those disciplines?**
44. So they're doing the discipline of Philosophy – is it evident to them to do that?
45. Yes.
46. Yes, well I suppose it is, but it's also applied to an educational context particularly too. But again there's a variety of modules. I mean you might have one that might be looking purely at what are the educational philosophies which underpin Education. But again it's got that educational slant to it. So, whether you're saying that they're going to come out of a module and they've got a clear grounding in Philosophy, I'm not quite clear whether that's the case.
47. **That's the tricky thing, isn't it? Do all Education students know some Psychology, some Philosophy, Sociology.....**
48. Absolutely, and I don't know if that's an issue you're finding as you go around?
49. **Yes, well it's very different. Some people try to ignore them, or pretend they're not there really because they look difficult....**
50. Yes.
51. **And how do students respond to.... Are students happy to take a module called 'Philosophy of Education' or are some put off by that do you think?**
52. Yes, it's as you say. Some are put off by it and some are happy to do it. And I suppose... I'm thinking of individual students that we've had on the course and some who would have been interested in that side of Education could take a pattern of modules through the course which allowed them to... and would thrive on it; others would find it difficult. For example, we have a module on Sociology and Education and students who haven't studied Sociology to some degree before they take that would certainly struggle when they do.
53. **Yes, so it's OK for people to pick and mix, or not those.....**
54. Yes, with guidance, and with the proviso that they're trying to get a spread across the six themes, as guidance. But with working in collaboration with their tutor who's trying to plot their educational development with them. But then the principle is we do want them to be able to choose to make autonomous decisions

to work and where they want to go....

**55. So student choice is a big thing in this....?**

**56.** It's a very big thing, yes, very big thing.

**57. So how much does student choice determine what the curriculum actually is? Because you.... What I'm trying to get to is, what is Education Studies? Is it what students want to do?**

**58.** Yes, yes

**59. I suppose all university subjects are like that to some extent now, but would you say it's (Education Studies) strongly like that?**

**60.** Yes.

**61. So the market, how much do market forces play a role?**

**62.** Well I think it would be fair to say they would do, yes, because I mean we want our students to have enriching empowering modules which they enjoy and which they're engaged with and they learn from. But at the same time in our first year we would begin our students with an introductory module which they all have to take. And we would hope there that they got some kind of grounding in some key issues of Education. So they think about the philosophy behind education, education and the law, some of the great educational thinkers, some of the issues in education. And we would hope that by doing that introductory course that would some sense of the coherence of the subject, but also of its diversity....

**63. With leads into things they can explore later?**

**64.** Yes. But I suppose at the same time, that's one of the exciting things about Education, isn't it, that it can lead in *so* many directions and be constructed in so many different ways. And yet on the other hand you can say, well what actually is it? What is the *core* of what you're trying to do? And what core subject knowledge, for example, might we expect our students to gain at the end of an Education Course?

**65. And do you think that you've got an answer to that, or is it something that's continually changing?**

**66.** I think it's something that's continually changing, but I think it is an issue that does exercise us and something we need to think about. So we need to say by the end of the third year, what would all our students... would we expect our students to have done and to know?

**67. That's interesting for me, because lots of us in universities who are doing (Education Studies) in the last five or six years, I suppose – seven years now we've been doing Ed Studies – and we sat down with a sheet of paper and said, right what are we doing?**

**68.** Yes.

**69. You've been doing it since (Year), so it's reassuring that you... (laughs) simple answers to it...**

**70.** (Laughs) But whether we should have.... Things grow, then they become organic, don't they? They develop, they evolve. And models change. I mean, something

that might have been appropriate in the '(Year)s....

**71. How much did the QAA Benchmark affect things? Did that have any effect on it?**

72. Erm... Oh, goodness.... Well, what kind of effects are you thinking about there?

**73. Well, when that came out did you think, oh gosh, we've got to put on modules on this or....**

74. No, I don't think so, no. I think we felt in good shape in that sense, yes. And I don't know if..... We had the QAA assessment two years ago that (SM6) talked to you about.....

**75. Wasn't it 2001?**

76. Yes, but we came through that in good shape, I think.

**77. Oh, yes, I saw that. But you didn't have to change things for that? It was all.... It didn't sort of shape the curriculum in any way?**

78. I mean not in the sense of..... There was a lot of drying paint as we desperately scatted about to add things and change it. But of course it made us review our practice and to think about what we were doing.

**79. It was (SL6A) who talked about the levels and ..... but not particularly the content of what you were doing.**

80. Yes.

**81. It's pretty generalised, isn't it. I mean it's hard to know what you'd be doing not to comply with that .....**

82. Yes.

**83. What about your students' qualifications? You said in relation to it being widening participation, do you get students who are not as strong as students in other parts of the University, in other subjects?**

84. Well, we get a mixture. Our 'A; Level typical offers would be BBC, BCC, and if we were to compare that with the English Department which is demanding straight As before they'll take a look at you, obviously we have lower requirements than that. Yes, so I would say possibly we do get a stronger mix of students.

**85. How does that feel in the University for you? I mean, do you feel like lesser beings in the University?**

86. Well that's an interesting one. I..... It raises issues with our Combined Courses I suppose really in the sense that, for instance, if we wanted to attract students to our English and Education combination, somebody that we might feel has a lot of potential as an Education student, but wouldn't meet the high grade, the high grade, the host department wanted. So there is that little bit of.....

**87. How does that work, then? Who has the say over whether students are accepted?**

88. Really the host Department. The combination works two thirds main Department, a third with us. So they really have the final say.

**89. So you might get some strong students because of that: the ones who are qualified to do English and happen to want to do Education....**

**90.** Yes, absolutely, yes indeed so, that's right.

**91. Whereas the Single Honours ones, obviously, you're the host Department for that so you can select them?**

**92.** Yes, but in terms of.... It seems to us there's no lack of students interested in doing Combined Courses with us. In fact we had about 130 applicants by January this year, so we could take on more than we can actually.... because of the Departments....

**93. Can you give me the student numbers?**

**94.** Yes, we take 30 home students on the Single Honours. And then for the Combinations that could vary between 20 in one year or I think it's 14 at the moment. So the numbers vary between.... partly for the reasons I've indicated to you of the requirements of the host Department.

**95. Has that been a number over the years? Has that been constant?**

**96.** Seems to have been fairly constant over the last several years, yes.

**97. And how much does staff expertise determines what you do in the curriculum? Is it a matter of people can do this, therefore you do....**

**98.** Well, yes, I mean it's coming back to this issue of coherence and continuity of progressions, which I think are issues, can be issues in and Education Degree Course. But the benefit of that is an expert in the subject, top-flight researcher who was prepared to teach a module in that area... So in that sense we do try to play to the strengths that people bring with them. And if there's an area that we feel needs to be covered and we can't offer that expertise ourselves, then we will invite other people in to provide it.

**99. What would you say are the distinctive features of this programme?**

**100.** I think the very close pastoral support which individual students get from the tutors. The autonomy and choice they have in mapping a course – a pathway – through the programme that suits their particular needs. It's interesting too.... I don't know how many Departments you're finding now that assess the work entirely by coursework. I don't know if that's something you've seen elsewhere....

**101. I've seen that elsewhere, and that's what you do here?**

**102.** Yes, and I expect that's increasingly rare now in universities.

**103. Yes, it is. And again, does that give you any difficulty with the University as a whole, doing that...?**

**104.** No, not so far.

**105. There's no move to make you have exams?**

**106.** Not so far, but things might change.

**107. Right, the last one, Nick, is, How do you see it developing in the future?**

**108.** I think..... It's got to change, I think, and develop to meet the demands of the Twenty-first Century, hasn't it? And, interestingly, the way that our course is



going at the moment is that it's moving more towards a vocational base, experiential model where students are going more into schools and to educational institutions and working that way. And I wonder whether the philosophical element that we talked about at the start might start to fall away a little bit.

**109. Yes, because there's that general pressure on universities for vocationally-related...**

**110.** Sure, absolutely, yes. And first destinations and what our students are doing.... And I just wonder whether the idea of pursuing the study of education as an intellectual pursuit in its own way is going to change a bit.

**111. What's your feeling about students' own views of that? I mean, going back to the market thing, do students *want* to have vocationally-oriented things or is there still a desire amongst students to study Education for its own sake?**

**112.** Well, I think that's one of the delights of working in this Department, that we get this wide range of students and we can still cater for them. So I can think of one of mine from a couple of years ago who just loved the whole philosophy of education and had no desire to turn it into a vocational course, whereas others are very much waning to do that. And I think at the moment we can accommodate both those.... both those students.

**113. And you've got quite a lot of modules that you run for the number of students you have. Are any of them ever threatened by not being able to run?**

**114.** Yes, particularly new ones that come on stream. And I think that's partly because students need to try them out and become familiar with them. For example we have one at the moment that we've introduced on vocational education, which looks very interesting on 14-19 provision, and that's had a slow start because... partly because our students see themselves oriented more towards primary education, but it's gradually building now as a subject.

**115. Because the ones that are interested in secondary teacher training, they can't be on your Single Honours Course really, can they?**

**116.** No, that's right, yes. But our Combined students certainly could be.

**117. And do you have a number going into secondary? I suppose you will do.**

**118.** Much smaller than the number going into primary.

**119. So there is that secondary element?**

**120.** There is a little bit of secondary element in it, yes; yes there is.

**121. I think that's everything, but can I have a quick glance over to make sure I've covered everything?**

**122.** Yes, sure. It's been a bit like a viva again (laughs).

Senior Manager SM6

28 April 2005

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents.**
2. OK. Well, I expect a lot of that I don't *really* know because that would have been right back to the founding of the (Institution) in – whenever it was – (Year), but from what I've *heard* and bits I've read, erm, I think essentially..... I mean the first (Head of Institution) was a former headteacher, (Name), and his notion of Education was that it should be at the heart of everything, the (Institution) should be concerned with it and so – and one of the things I've always found quite attractive about (Institution name) – is that Education is right there, literally, at the heart of the campus. But also educationally, erm, things were set up so about a dozen Departments had joint programmes at undergraduate level with Education. Now all the thinking behind that – I'm not really sure – other than to say Education was, if you like – I don't know whether this is the right way to put it, the sort of subject and object – all Departments are interested in Education, but all Departments should *think about* Education as a separate entity, as well as the educational process that each Department itself was concerned with. I think that was some of it, but all of it I don't know.
3. **I wonder where the student numbers came from, because you got new numbers for a Single Honours. The (Institution) responded well to that?**
4. Yes, I think so. I mean, I think, as a subsidiary Education was in place as a subsidiary; it was a third of a degree. So it was in place from the early days up to.....(Year) I think. And then from (Year) onwards we had our first intake of Single Subject students – I think that's right - with our first graduates in (Year) I *think* those are the right dates. And yes, I think the (Institution) responded quite well to that. I think we were able to argue that, erm, you know, we were sufficiently important as an academic area to stand in its own right as a degree. Erm, and I think with, you know, the associated benefits as universities expand so numbers can expand in new areas and new courses. It already was established and so it wasn't so much of leap to go from a subsidiary to a full. And maybe as well, I expect if we were looking at it in the round, there might be other things there too, you know, as Educational Studies develops I think the nature of Education in universities has changed quite a bit really. I mean without ploughing through all the background of it, I think once we're into the '90s and (Circular) 9/92 etc has a particular potential *impact* on (Institution) departments. And if they're not going to be doing what they had been doing quite to the same extent, then they've got to start doing other things. And one of those things could be the development of full programmes in Educational Studies. So I don't want to say that erm, you know, cynically, oh well it was just a job that could be done by people who were no longer doing as much PGCE work, or whatever. But nevertheless, I think that's all part of the picture; I think we should recognise that concept. You know, why was it being introduced at that particular time. I think there's range of reasons: you can do more research there, universities expanding their numbers, the base is already there and also there's a need, really, to diversify in particular circumstances.
5. **So it's a basically benign view of Education in the (Institution), then? It's not seen as a low-status area?**

6. Do you know, I don't think so; I really don't think so. I think, as I was saying really, Education is at the heart of the campus and we've never been in that situation which you can see in a whole variety of places: you know it's there at Durham, Exeter – lots and lots of places - where Education essentially is the old teacher training college down the road. We took over them with some discontent a few years ago and, oh well now.....I mean, we've never had that at all. Now, whether Education is erm..... I think a lot of Departments probably go around with a bit of a chip on their shoulder. The Historians are constantly complaining about the Philosophers and the Philosophers are complaining about the Politics Staff, you know.....
7. **So there isn't any particular micro-politics about Education?**
8. Erm..... I don't think so, I don't think so. I think we've got particular challenges in an (Institution) like this, because I think have got to..... It's driven by research interests, I think, and I think there's sometimes not always, you know, a proper understanding of the need for us to keep several balls up in the air at one time. You know, having a good foot in professional practice as well as having a good foot in academic issues and research and all that... But no, I think it's very positive, actually, and interestingly, I think, until fairly recently, I think we were classed – I think wrongly really – I think we were thought of – we don't have faculties here, we have sort of loose groupings - and for a long time we were thought of as an Arts department. I think that wasn't quite right, actually, and I think we're now seen as a Social Science, and the Social Sciences here are quite strong really, quite varied, with social policy and social work, lots of things that are health-related - Politics and Sociology. So we fit in quite nicely in all of that.
9. **I noticed in your paper - for which thanks – you referred to widening participation, to Educational Studies as a good module for widening participation. Is that part of the (Institution)'s mission?**
10. I don't know, really. I don't know. Erm..... I think it's easy to demonstrate that the sort of students that go on Educational Studies courses across England are part of that very positive process I see of widening access. I think this (Institution)... I don't know what its attitude is really. I mean it does from time to time, quite proudly and quite strongly, assert, Students here do very well, and we are not just existing in the same way that Oxford and Cambridge do; we have a very balanced intake. So they like to play that card, when it suits them, OK? They also like to play – and I haven't really heard this from the current Vice Chancellor, who's only been here a couple of years – but the previous one, there were some discussions with him about what we were all about. And he made it pretty clear that he thought there was a place for widening access, greater participation, all that sort of stuff. *But that's just not what we're about.* What we're about is teaching and research and that's....
11. **Well, you're an elite (Institution), you don't need to be looking for.....**
12. Well, I don't know, that's probably one for debate really, but I think – what I'm saying is – I think there are certain contradictory things there; that they like to say – maybe it's not a contradiction; maybe it does fit together – what they like to say is, We achieve that sort of level by having a balanced intake. But they're not really, I don't think, necessarily saying, Oh yes, this would be a wonderful thing for widening participation. Mind you, having said that, when Subject Review

came, somewhere round 2001, that seemed to be a subject that they were quite keen on having answered: you know, are you doing your bit for widening access etc? You know, we were very keen to say, Yes, absolutely we are and you know you can see the types of students we get and the way we bring them on and what we do with them etc etc.

**13. And you are taking students with low-ish entry qualifications?**

**14.** Compared to the rest of the (Institution) we are, yes. But I think when the Degree began we had – I don't know if (SL6A) spoke to you about this, because he was the Course Director at that point where it all got under way - the standard offer was three Cs and we also had a number of – what do you call them? – ‘partnership agreements’ – with various schools to say that if you think that there are people who would have achieved more had they had different circumstances, then, you know, of course, point that out and we're willing to, you know.... etc etc.... In practice, though, very few of those people came through, I think. So that didn't really turn out into anything. But we do have students with a range of backgrounds, no question about that. Since the early days of the Degree I think there have been students, but that I think is mainly due to the change in the funding arrangements. That's a national thing, rather than what we've been doing. We did have a lower offer relative to other Departments, and we did have discussions about do you think people are coming to Educational Studies because it's a way of getting a (Institution name) Degree with lower grades than some other Departments. *But* then the standard offer has increased, actually, over the last few years. And in a curious sort of way, both because we were getting, I think, more applicants, the size of the group we were looking for expanded – the (Institution) put the numbers up from its initial target of fifteen to, I think it's now, thirty a year and also curiously because it was thought that – you know the old cliché – the more you pay, the more it's worth. So if we were offering.... We thought that by offering a relatively low offer that might, actually have the effect of putting some people off. They said, Oh what we'll do is, we'll go for... We'll have the higher offer that we hold as our firm, and the (Institution name) offer, the low one, well that will be our insurance. So we were losing some of them, so we thought we'll try and push it up a bit. And by pushing it up that will get us in line with other Departments, it will erm.... and it will mean we don't perhaps lose some of the ones that we had.

**15. So, as you've said, you've not come to Educational Studies from a teacher training background; it's always had a life as an academic subject, from its origins.**

**16.** Definitely. Although, the PGCE.... The history of the Department really has been for a long time it was undergraduates and PGCE. And that was about it. And if you did a little bit of something else, OK that's fine. And the long-standing members of the Department – I think there were only ever two, I think, who hadn't been teachers. So what you got is there heavy involvement in PGCE and they did undergraduate stuff. And then, as time went on, MA Programmes developed etc etc, and they were increasingly much more on research.

**17. Right, so first of all the staff teaching: are there staff teaching on the PGCE and on Educational Studies?**

18. Now?

19. Yes.

20. Yes, yes, I think so. It's curious, really, though. I think what's happening now is there's a much clearer delineation of roles than I think there's ever been before. I've been here since '89, but actually – I don't know if (SL6A) mentioned this - but I was an undergraduate here in the '70s, doing History and Education. So I've sort of experienced it from a variety of angles really. Erm, and I think it was always the case that everybody did everything. So when I first came here in '89: Yes, yes, you're here to do the PGCE course, but we've got some MA students you can supervise. Then, Don't forget you're teaching on the undergraduate programme and if you can write a few things now and then, that's great, OK? Now, the people who are coming in now, increasingly they're new staff they haven't been teachers. And they'll.... Specialise, I think, a lot more than was previously the case in particular areas of the Department's work.

21. **So Educational Studies is developing as a *more* non-related to teacher training subject?**

22. Well, I think that's a really difficult one to answer. I don't think that's really... You know it's.... I don't know. I don't know about that, because any of our students do want to become primary school teachers. OK, they can't become secondary school teachers because they haven't got the subject knowledge. But they do want to become primary school teachers, so that's a big part of it. OK. *But*.... but it is very clearly pointed out to all candidates that it is *not* a teacher training course. It never has been.... and, OK yes, I expect I *sort* of agree with what you're saying that now as well perhaps.... perhaps more they're pushed in the direction of an exploration of academic issues. *But* those students still do want insight into practical situations.

23. **OK, so one of my questions is, What is the relationship between the course in Education Studies and teacher training, and is there one?**

24. There's a number of connections, I think, because the students themselves, some of them at least, want to go on to primary teacher training. OK? So there's one connection. Another one would be they do, I think – and maybe I'm just saying this because I was a teacher for ten years in different parts of England, so maybe that's just how I do it when I work with the undergraduates. But I think they do want bit of insight into what's going on in schools. So that's a connection. *But*.... we can't say anything else other than it's an academic course. Anything else would be misleading. If we were to say to people, Look, you can come here and you can get a real insight and preparation.... into teacher training, they'd be unhappy. I think it's the other way round, really. I think we say, Look this is an academic course, and as we explore this academic course we'll give you insights into professional issues and that could well be useful for you, if you want to go and do a whole range of careers, including primary teacher training.

25. **OK, so this is the hard question now: So what is the theoretical framework for Educational Studies if it's not....**

26. Well, to be honest with you I think that's a constant debate, OK? And actually we're having it now, again, have we got a course that's dependent on the expertise of the staff? So you say, What can we do? And let's put that in. There you go,

you've got a programme. *Or*...has it been worked out in some more fundamental way? Now.... I don't know really about this, OK, but I... was Director of the Programme after (SL6A). Can't remember exactly when that was really, but anyway.... I took over at the time that we were running up to Subject Review and I think (SL6A) had started it, but I, with others, continued saying let's get a clear rationale for this. So it is not just, or doesn't appear, to some people to be based strongly around academic interests of particular members of staff. So we got going and a working party was set up and – I don't know if you've got our handbooks -

**27. Yes and I've looked at what's on the website.**

**28.** Great, OK.

**29. And seen your paper, of course.**

**30.** OK, so you'll see that we've got those six themes. So we say, then, well what is Educational Studies all about? OK, so it's about those six themes and then, oh, you know, all the other stuff about skills and what not. But I think we've got.... we've had a number of new members of staff recently and in one or two meetings that we've had just lately I've noticed one or two people saying, you know, We need to review this programme because it's just based around what people can do. What's *really* the underlying..... And I must admit I sit there quietly thinking, No, no, we've done all that! It's all worked out and declared..... but.... So I think it's probably a process of needing to declare it and re-visit it and as we re-visit it get a bit of ownership of it and then understand where the links could be and put more links in that they themselves would be happy with. But if you say to me, What's the academic underpinning for it, I would say that it's erm.... it's in those six themes and I would say that there's something about Educational Studies that there's always – quite healthily in a way – going to be an ongoing debate between those who will say, in inverted commas, *merely* an area of study. OK, so it's not a discipline, it's an area of study and we investigate contexts, and as we investigate those contexts we draw upon the discipline from other areas. OK? Or the other way round to say, actually, because of all these new degree programmes, because it's such an important thing in the life of the economy and so on and so on and so on, it is becoming an academic discipline in its own right. And that might be very broad and vary like other academic disciplines. You know you get historians in very different schools, etc etc with different skills and insights. *But* it is becoming a discipline in itself now... and I don't know really; I hedge between one and the other really at times. I think I do see... erm.... I think I do see Educational Studies as being a bit more than an area of study. I think it's got something.

**31. It's not just content?**

**32.** No.

**33. So what? This is the Holy Grail I'm searching for....**

**34.** Right, OK. Well.... Well perhaps I should say that one of the areas that I'm very interested in is Citizenship Education, OK? And that suffers – or enjoys – the same sort of issue, really. What is it, you know? What is it about? You know, we can.... So.... because of being interested in that area I think trying to think about it – this is going to sound terribly pompous – I think things become meaningful and distinct when some sort of relationship can be established between what I think people call the procedural and the substantive. I don't think that is just worked out

in content terms, but I think it's a conceptual matter really. So I think that's fairly clearly worked out and reasonably well-established disciplines like History, where they say, What's History all about? Is it just looking at things... the content of the past? And clearly it isn't. It's something to do with, erm.... looking at... not content, not just *contexts*, like the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century or whatever, but looking at certain sorts of concepts. And then I think the historians tend to say that their substantive concept would be things like monarchy, power, revolution. And when they are looking at particular bits of content, they're doing so to explore those sort of substantive concepts. So they're not *really* interested in the French Revolution; they're interested in revolution, of which the French Revolution is an example. But then the way in which they look at those concepts – the procedures that they adopt – give you another sort of concept, the procedural concept which for the historians which I know reasonably well...the Scheffs... you can choose different ones at different times to suit your own preferences. Well, you know, there are things like causation, evidence, enquiry, whatever it is, chronology, interpretation. And so if you're a good historian, if you've had a good historical education, you end up being reasonably well versed in substantive concepts and being able to develop an understanding of those concepts because you've got procedural understanding. Now, in Citizenship I've been trying to play around with that and thinking what kind of thing is Citizenship Education going to look like? What would be the concepts that you'd have to explore? What would be the procedures that you'd have to use to explore them? But I think the same thing can be done of anything, really, and I think we can do it with Educational Studies. So what are those key substantive concepts for Educational Studies and what are the procedures that we would use to explore them.

**35. But how is that different from, say, History, or are they the same things really?**

**36.** OK. Well I think ultimately as they're worked out they would prove to be different. OK? I think it would be different. So erm... you can just feel that really in the way, you know, you have conversations with people in the History Department or whatever, you know. And they're not looking at the world in the same way; they use a different set of reference points, really. So I think it *is* distinctive. But I think, confusingly, at times much of the same language might be used, so anyone across the (Institution)'s going to be interested in interpretation, or analysis, or.... you know, whatever. But, you know... I think.... Well I would say for myself I'm absolutely hopeless at scientific analysis, hopeless. But historical analysis, social science analysis, analysis of Education works like that, I expect. So I think there are particular ways of thinking that develop, even when the same language is being used. And what that thinking is all about is about identifying substantively the area that needs to be addressed in conceptual terms and identifying the ways in which work takes place to explore those areas. Now if you're going to say, well go on then, what is it for Education, well (phew) I'd have to think... that's another...

**37. Well, yes..... thanks. How do you see Educational Studies developing in relation to Government policy with universities and what universities are allowed to do, or being made to do, now? How do you see Educational Studies fitting in that?**



38. (Pause) Erm...Can you be just a bit more precise about what you're after there?  
Because I can think of a range of ways, but just before I launch into something...
39. **As subjects are developing in universities: Cultural Studies, Theatre Studies, Chemistry Departments closing down....**
40. Yes, yes.
41. **Where are we in that?**
42. Where's Educational Studies?
43. **Yes. Are we one of those new market-driven subjects?**
44. (Pause) Well, a bit; I expect a bit. You know, I don't really mean this, but in one way universities are shops. People come around, buy knowledge, buy a course.... That's all right. And people are increasingly entrepreneurial etc, and that's all right. Erm... in another way I think it's.... - you know the proliferation of new courses – isn't just about markets and customers. But it's about... when people are going to get together in institutions like this, they're going to be thinking about, you know, how the world can be represented and there's no reason.... It's to be expected in that context that people are going to say, Well actually this doesn't quite cover what we're interested in, so.... It's not English, it's Theatre Studies; so let's develop this. OK, so it's a new of looking at things and it's all very respectable and fine. And I think in terms of erm our relationship with the Government I think it's probably..... You know, I think it's a bit more..... It's going to have a bit more..... force..... Education's going to have a bit more force than something like Theatre Studies, just because, you know, it's such a massive part of the economy and everybody's life that I think there needs to be something like Educational Studies and at times that's going to be.... erm, just exploring what it is, preparing people to help develop it further..... Sometimes just to, erm, ask what it means, sometimes to raise difficult questions about it really. I think, yes, I think responsibly the proper responsible way the role of the Education Department is to just say, Is that right? Do you think that's OK? Let's ask some questions about that..... So I think its got a range of..... Partly it's market-driven, you know and we're part of that, and I think that's fine; you know that's the nature of universities in the market place; I don't see any huge problems with that. I don't see.... I think there's a lot of, er, very positive stuff that we can do in widening access, and that's another way of relating to Government initiatives. I think we've got a role to play in – putting it pompously – the knowledge economy, and new strands will develop. And I think we've got a role to play in the political and economic framework that education is by clarifying things and asking difficult questions about some things.
45. **Because you wonder if the Government knows about what's going on really. I mean it knows very clearly about what's going on in teacher training, whereas in Educational Studies we're left alone, aren't we?**
46. Well, I think, up to a point. I mean, you know, Subject Review Exercise....
47. **And the QAA Benchmark. How much did that affect you?**
48. Erm, well, the Subject Review was a big thing for us. You know, that had a very significant impact, erm, and there was a lot of... Actually within the Department there was a fairly small group of people... erm, I think, you know, who took most



of the responsibility for it. But the Head of Department at the time – very good Head of Department – he was... he'd sorted it all out, so it was his job really, which he did very well, but erm.... So whether beyond that small group everybody else felt it was *as* significant, I'm not sure and you'd have to ask them really. But I think it did have a big impact and then I think what's happened – it's hard to see because I'm a bit out of things now, no longer the Undergraduate Course, no longer Chair of the Board of Studies - but I think the quality assurance systems seem now more (Institution)-based rather than departmental-based. So, erm, maybe they are leaving us alone. Maybe we could just get on with things, but....

49. **It's the way we're able to argue things..... You said we could raise questions and make critique...**

50. Oh yes....

51. **In the way you can't do in teacher training. Well it's very difficult to have critique within teacher training, isn't it? You've just got to get on with equipping them with the standards.**

52. (Pause) Erm..... yes. Generally, I'd say yes to that. But I think, erm..... I think the framework within teacher training is quite restrictive.... And I think Ofsted I regard as almost wholly negative... pernicious influence, OK? I've got no time for them, all right? Erm.... but the standards that we've got at the moment are actually, I think, much better than the previous set of standards and there are, I think, always ways in which you can say things and do things which are quite creative, and which are not necessarily going to, you know, fall foul of the system, but when Ofsted arrives I've got to say I'm not interested in having a conversation with them. I'm interested in getting the tick, which is pathetic, you know, which is just pathetic.

53. **Policy for staff appointments in Education. You did say something at the beginning about people are now being appointed to perhaps either to teacher training or to Educational Studies....**

54. I think it's still the case that people have er.... the operate across a number of areas. But we're less flexible than we once were. And I think we've had a number of new staff recently appointed recently, and I think most of them – I think this is right to say – they've not necessarily been teachers and they're appointed principally for their research expertise. But that said.... You see a lot of the PGCE team.... It's just becoming a different group of people really. You know what I mean? And the PGCE will be, er, staff who have got a great deal of professional expertise, and they're expected to get on with that, and they won't have as much as they did in days gone by into the other areas.

55. **But you still want that professional role in Educational Studies? I think I heard you say that.**

56. I think that's vital really. I think it's important to have a bit of flexibility and personally I wouldn't just want to be within one particular area. I think I can't pretend, just because of limits of energy and limits of expertise you can't operate across all areas equally well, definitely not. But, I like going to schools, I like teaching the undergraduates, I like supervising the PhD students.... you know, and I find that very useful for operating in the different areas, because you can talk about when I was at school I did this, you know? Like with the PGCE, you can get

some activities that you can do with the undergraduates. That would work well, so....

57. **The last thing is how you see it developing in the future.**

58. Erm.... I'm pausing really because I think.... I remember... I don't know if you know – it's almost like a textbook really – you know the one that (SL6B) and I did that (Book reference) thing?

59. **Yes.**

60. I remember writing the thing for the proposal for that and going on, you know, in completely positive terms about how it was just about to *explode*... ..

61. **Well, they're certainly selling a lot of text books, aren't they?**

62. Definitely, definitely, and generally speaking I would say that. OK? I believe that and I think it's a very important area and I think more people should do it and I think there's evidence that more people *are* doing it and I think that's, you know, almost wholly a good thing. But erm.... when you asked me before about, you know, status of areas, I mean.... we'd just love to have as many applicants as they do for History. And it confuses me really, and I think, Why, because we're obviously more important than they are. So why aren't we being flooded out, and it's all because of status and if we can only get over that status issue then I think it's be really possible to push up.

63. **And would that be by improving your research.... The move to appointing more research-based staff, making it, quote, more academic? Is that the way to do that?**

64. (Pause) I don't know, because you could apply that really, couldn't you, to Sociology, which has gone down a heavily academic route, and I don't think their status is perhaps not what they'd want. So, I don't know, maybe it's simpler. Maybe it's Education is.... people have had a negative experience of schools, maybe it's contentious politically, you know. History is somehow comforting, you know: let's learn a bit more. ....

65. **We've got a low-status background, haven't we, because we've been training – I know not here, but teacher training colleges....**

66. Oh, I know, exactly, yes. Yes, that's right. I think maybe the experiences have been of school, low-status background associated with training, contentious politically, you know. We could be chopped at various points; you know, I mean, we're in the thing of never wanting to give anything up in case suddenly, five minutes after you given that thing up, they've decided not to.... (indistinct).

**CASE 7 TRANSCRIPT**

**Subject Leader SL7**

**29 April 2005**

- 1. How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
- 2.** Before I answer that question the first thing I should point out is that I was promoted..... well I was appointed here as the Programme Leader for Education Studies only in October last year. So I've been here for less than a year and in terms of dates.... In terms of this particular (institution) I've actually got some information here which I've written up, so I won't necessarily read it, but.... It seems to have started.. the process here seems to have started in 2001 when (Institution name) decided that erm.... in many ways, I guess for various different reasons, it used to run a four-year BEd Course and it decided that it wanted to change and it basically introduced a three-year HEFCE-funded course... specialist subject in Education Studies and that was allied to.... for students that wanted to teach that was linked into a one-year PGCE course. And so the notion of BGC's three-plus-one was formed and basically students that.... students came onto and Education Studies subject undergraduate degree that was HEFCE funded and then anyone that decided to teach they could go on to do a PGCE. Before that the Degree was called 'Teaching Studies and Subject Studies'. I think it's have various different.... It's been around in various different forms in the past, but essentially the move towards more Education Studies, if you like, happened in about 2001 until now. So that's really where it came from. It's.... Well I don't know how much information you want. It's BG's biggest undergraduate programme with about five hundred students, twenty full time members of staff. The Undergraduate Route was essentially Primary.... Well the Undergraduate Route was Primary ITT before it changed in 2001 and I guess one of the issues for the (Institution) is that when it became a *three* plus the primary focus – the primary education focus – sort of stayed with the three, so it never really became.... what you might call a fully-fledged, or fully emergent, Education Studies Degree. It would be too cruel to call it a HEFCE-funded ITT programme, but it was close. And its most recent erm..... I guess the (Institution) has decided that.... Well there are clearly tensions there because the (Institution) also then introduced the three-year BA QTS very recently. And that's expanded. And the issues then were quite straightforward; it seemed like we had two completely different courses on different funding streams that were very, very similar....
- 3. But one gaining QTS....**
- 4.** One was QTS and the other not. They were very different things in terms of their structure, and so on. But nevertheless there was clearly some confusion there, and some internal competition I guess. So the (Institution) knew it was going to re-validate sometime around about now and so they appointed a new Programme Leader, which was the post I successfully applied for, with a view to making, I guess, more expansive changes in the way the Programme was organised and the way it runs.... those sorts of things. Is that....?
- 5. Yes, that's very helpful. So I can see that what it has been and what it will be might be....**

6. I think it's evolving. I don't think for a minute that when we go through this phase of re-validation it will be.... *entirely* how I'd like it to be for all kinds of different reasons, but it's certainly moved on from a long way from what it was.
7. **Which is what you would describe as almost a.....**
8. But yes. Well, let's put it this way: it's certainly moved a long way from being something that you could almost.... take for a primary ITT course by mistake.
9. **OK, so two things really: what it has been and what it will be next year. What are the aims of the Programme, then?**
10. Phew.... I don't...
11. **Aims as they were and aims as they'll be.....**
12. Aims as they were.... Actually to be honest, the aims.... Because the aims, quite reassuringly, because the aims were set in more general terms, even as the Programme was they haven't actually changed that much. We may have just dropped some of the emphasis on the word 'Primary' where they cropped it, and so on, and reference to schools and training. You know, the usual sort of QTS-type language that pervades all these things, we've tried to pull back from that. But there are very definitely.... We now seem to have a very clear idea of some of the strands within the course and how they run within Education Studies and we've also... actually, we've made some significant steps in terms of bringing the *Subject Studies* component closer to the Education Studies. So that there isn't quite as clear a demarcation between Education Studies and the subjects as there used to be. Because, oddly enough, we have something quite unusual in a sense; it's actually a Single Honours Programme, although it very much looks like...
13. **(SM7) was trying to explain that. Because it looks like Combined Honours Degree....**
14. But it was originally validated, I guess, as a Single Honours Programme. So we've *kept* it as a Single Honours Programme and we've strengthened the links between subjects and Education Studies.
15. **So there is some subject content *within* Education really.... Yes, I see.**
16. Although the subject content is quite intense because we erm.... It's an eighteen-module.... it's an eighteen module programme. We don't offer very much in the way of optional modules at the moment, and that's largely because of staffing... But half of the course is Education – nine modules in Education Studies, nine modules as subject. So if you were doing Science and Education Studies you would be doing elements of Science up to Level 3 and Education Studies up to Level 3. I mean, in terms of aims – you asked me about aims – it might seem awful to have to read it. But, you know, it's what you might imagine (reads from course document) a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of the principle features of education and a specialist subject in the context of which education occurs. So it's pretty well tied into the Benchmark statement.
17. **It sounds as though previously it was very much to prepare students for teacher training.**
18. Yes, it was.

**19. Are you moving away from that, or would that still be an aim?**

**20.** No..... It cannot..... No, it *could* be.... The thing is there are all kinds of weird things going on there, you see. Because if you look at a degree in that way... If you were to say the Degree is a preparation for teaching, but it's not actually a teacher-training degree, then where does that leave you? So you have to decide which side of the fence you're going to sit on. You're either going to be a TTA-funded ITT course, or your not. Now that's quite black and white and there's a huge grey area in the middle there somewhere. Now, what I've tried to do with the team here is we've tried to go for something which.... er.... Well, even if we don't put the word Education Studies in there for the minute, we've tried to go for something which has pulled us further and further away from training, although we've retained classroom-based experience in there and we've.... Significantly, fifteen weeks, which is quite a lot.... We've done a number of things, so that if we start where we used to be, which is a primary QTS course, we've started to make some changes to the modules themselves; so the modules themselves are nowhere near as ITT-based as they used to be. For example, in the second year we used to have things like the extended professional, the National Curriculum, the core curriculum, the non-core curriculum, which are really not very imaginative titles; you know, they wouldn't inspire people to.... So what we've done, we've taken the core and the non-core and we've combined it into the National Curriculum, which is still there – we could have called it 'Curriculum Studies', but we called it the National Curriculum. Er, one of the modules which was actually called 'the Extended Professional', when I read the descriptor it was clearly inclusive education so we've called it 'Inclusive Education'. And that freed up a module, and we've now put in a module there called 'Issues in Education'. And we've done something similar in Year 1 and we've done something similar in Year 3. So what we now have is we've got some modules that form a continuous strand from Year 1 to Year 3, which still retain an element of education in a *school* sense, but we've put in a strand of modules which contain, which is more about education in a broader context. And then, of course, running alongside that you've got the subject studies and we've put some time into Subject Studies for work in classrooms..... We go now with the language of classroom-based experience rather than *school*-based experience as classrooms can be FE/HE. So we've done that there. We've adjusted some of the modules' subjects so we have a constant strand through there, so we have things like 'Learning through Science' and 'Contemporary Issues in Science Education'. So we've got some modules that follow a clear Education strand there to bring those together. So we're obtaining more coherency in the Degree... and some consistency in the Degree and we've also now looked at the content of those modules themselves, because you could still potentially look at those modules and think, This is primary ITT. But in fact what we're doing now is we're looking at..... If you take the National Curriculum module we're looking at, er, the National Curriculum in schools, but primary and secondary key stages. We're also within that looking at the history and evolution of the curriculum – different types of curriculum module – you know, all those different types of things. And the school... the classroom-based work that's attached now gives students the options of whether or not they want to carry out certain tasks in a primary school or a secondary school. And we've written those in a more generic sense. There are no QTS criteria any more to assess the students' performance there. We've replaced them with more Education-*type* activities, rather than teacher training-*type* activities. So they might focus in on in detail on

how schools function as learning environments and how the nature of children's errors and misconceptions.... Rather than plan, teach and assess a few lessons in the (indistinct)..... We're pulling back from that. And that sort of feeds all the way through. And so we've made some quite substantial changes.

21. **Yes, that's.... that's very clear, thank you. That's good. Look, this is a hard question....**

22. Oh, go on.

23. **Let's say your new model of Education Studies that you have, what's the theoretical framework?**

24. Pah!

25. **If somebody comes from Mars and says, What's this subject called 'Education Studies'? What is it?**

26. Well, I mean, that's the big question, isn't it? Do you know, I pondered this one because, when you read all the papers.... and you look at this stuff, I mean there's a huge historical element to this. So, you know, you've got the evolution of it all from whenever – the fifties... Well, I mean it goes back obviously a lot further than that, but, you know, through the fifties, sixties, seventies. Some people will say that Education Studies is underpinned by - its theoretical underpinning – is..... er... or has its roots in erm History, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology – the different disciplines. Other people say it *is* actually more about vocational training and all sorts of things. Some people feel that it should be atomised: you know, that you should do modules in the Sociology of Education; some people feel it might be erm more holistic, integrated and so on. What's *our* underpinning for it? I think our underpinning for it is somewhere in the middle there (laughs). Trying to articulate the theoretical underpinning is quite hard because.... and the reason I say that is because I have difficulties with it as discipline-based, but also I have difficulties with it in all the other senses. And I often.... I have given a lot of thought as to why it should be considered in those terms: why can't Education Studies be considered a..... You know, where is its own *pure* theoretical underpinning.... as a subject in its own right. In the same way that, you know, I was a geologist. Could I articulate Geology's underlying theoretical...

27. **Well, you could probably.**

28. Well, we could. Maybe not very easily..... Because, you know, they're good questions because you don't really give much thought to these things sometimes.....

29. **You just get on with it.**

30. Yes, and I know that's not good enough, but er..... No, at the moment, because we're revalidating and we're bringing about such sweeping change, I think we've got a sense that it's underpinned by all the above.... And as it unfolds over the next year or two I think we'll have a clearer sense of what drives it. But I don't see it as being underpinned by..... I suppose it's underpinned partly by the disciplines, because we do all these different things, but it's also.... we like to see it in a more integrated sense and it does have a vocational significance too.

31. **The disciplines, if they're in there, how evident are they to the students? How explicitly are they doing Philosophy of Education.....?**

32. Well, we don't have modules.... So if you look at in Year 1.... Erm... there are three modules in Year 1: The Child as Learner, Schools and Classrooms, and Education in Context. Now, if you look at Education in Context, which is a new-ish module, we pulled back from the first two modules the students do where they're really looking at .... well, The Child as Learner is underpinned by Psychology and it's supported by work in classrooms, Schools and Classrooms very similarly. When they come into Education in Context the story that runs through that module starts off with some of the great educational theories and philosophers. It then moves into how their work has impacted on curriculum development and so on. And then, erm, because we're trying to move out of mainstream-*type* classroom-based stuff, we then move that into education *beyond* the classroom. So we want to look at things like museum education, heritage, prison edu.... You know, all those things because we want to give the students a clear sense of, if you like, the philosophy and theory that underpins these things – the impact they've had on current and practical developments... and then the wider range. So they would be made very aware of it within the module, but the module isn't called.....

33. **But you're not trying to hide it?**

34. Oh, no, no, no, no. There's no issue of trying to hide it, and there's nothing subversive about it.... (indistinct).

35. **Some people say the students find Philosophy frightening, so we don't mention it....**

36. No, no, but, you know, it's balanced. Now you could say that... it's balanced and integrated. Now, course the disadvantage of that is that you may not have the opportunity to do the disciplines in depth any more. That's the trade-off of this.

37. **And what about student-choice? Did you say there aren't many module choices for them?**

38. Mm.

39. **But how much does students choices – or what they want to do - how much does that affect what's in the programme?**

40. In what respect?

41. **You do this because students like doing this, or you don't do it because students don't like doing this? Or module are on because students pick them, or they don't because....**

42. Oh, I see. Well, we haven't got much in the way of choice. In fact, with the exception of one third-year module, we haven't got any choice at all, because the course is determined in a sense by staff. We have no choice except in Year 3.

43. **It's large, though: you've got a lot of students.**

44. We have five hundred students across the programme as a whole.

45. **And that doesn't give you any flexibility?**



46. No, it doesn't and there's a very good pragmatic, practical reason for that, which you mustn't quote me on....
47. **No, no, it's all anonymous.**
48. It's all anonymous. The staff here were, to a person, all ex-primary teachers and that significantly closed down the flavour of the Degree, and it significantly closed down the options that were available to..... Now, we're overcoming that in the appointment of er.... Well, we've just advertised three new posts and we're looking for people with secondary, FE and other HE experiences to give that breadth. So, interestingly, I was saying to some of the guys earlier today that it would be nice to get some options in there.
49. **But you need people who can...**
50. We need people who've got the breadth and background. And also, because of its history, it was essentially – I mean up until now – it has been essentially HEFCE-funded ITT.
51. **OK, so one of my questions was, How far does staff interest and expertise determine the curriculum content?**
52. In the current course, yes.
53. **Quite, yes, I see. In a sort of 'this is how it's always been' and that's the start you've got, so that's what....**
54. Yes... I think that expression you used there, 'this is how it's always been' is quite significant in this (Institution), because the (Institution) has its own history; it is a small specialist provider. It's essentially... the Education Studies is essentially buried in ITT. It's geographically isolated. It's intellectually isolated. There are all kinds of....
55. **So you haven't got staff coming along saying, I want to run a funky module in radical education or something?**
56. Not yet. Not yet, but they are..... But, in fairness to them, now that we've worked through where we want the Programme to go, they're beginning to.... they're beginning to see potential, and I think that's very important.
57. **And what about appointment of staff? In appointing new staff you're looking for people with a breadth....**
58. We're looking for people with a breadth. I mean, ideally, I'd like to get somebody in... Even though this still sounds very school-based, I'd like to get somebody in with secondary, largely because we've got a gap for that, and I'd like to get somebody in from FE with a heritage background. There are all kinds of things I'd like; I only have three posts...
59. **Of course.**
60. But the (Institution) has made a very significant appointment only recently in the form of a new professor. The new professor will start in September and his work is thoroughly in Education Studies. I can't remember his exact title; he's very much into the Sociology of Education and minority groups and, again, that will make a significant impact on..... It's very difficult.... it's very difficult to think beyond primary teacher training when everybody around you is involved in primary



teacher training, and your degree's evolved from .....

61. **How much do you think – I know you weren't here, but – the decision to go to three-plus-one, how much was that to try and escape from the state control and the standards?**

62. To be honest, I couldn't comment. I couldn't comment directly...

63. **You haven't picked up anything?**

64. No, I haven't picked up on anything, but, I mean, I would imagine that the move there would be to try and break free from the compliance culture.... and all that sort of stuff. I mean, bear in mind at that time there was no BA QTS. That came along after, and so, given the Programme that I run now was the (Institution) - in effect, anyway - I can only assume it was for reasons....

65. **It's interesting, because what you've said implies that there wasn't among the staff anywhere a particular desire to get away from the standards, because they still want to do that sort of thing.**

66. Oh, no, it's not so much that they still want to do it, I think.... Oh, no, no, no, no, that's a completely separate thing. I think they're locked into that way of working, because that's *kind of* the way it was. It's not because they don't necessarily want to; I don't think we've had the right bodies here to actually move that... to move things along. That sounds awful, doesn't it? But that's...

67. **Well that's how much the standards have limited people and progressively narrowed...**

68. I mean if you talk to anybody here and ask them what they do, then teacher training is what they'd say. *That's* what they do. And one of my other tasks has not only been to try to move the Programme on, but to re-orientate the staff. And we've come a long way. We're beginning to think Education Studies now. The number of times I have to say in meetings that this is not a primary ITT course is... the gap between those is starting to get bigger and bigger. And staff development, you know we are looking at this. We're off to the (BESA) Chester conference in July and taking some of the guys up there because I want to have them meet other people and start to think....

69. **So others are going?**

70. Yes, myself and three other people will go up and, you know, to network and get involved.....

71. **How much did the QAA Benchmark play a role in...**

72. Ah, well, everything is under..... I mean it's all tied in, in the same way you tie everything into QTS.

73. **You don't find you're doing anything particularly that was driven by that?**

74. Erm, not especially.... No... I had no kind of personal ideological conflict or anything. It seemed fairly straightforward to me.

75. **It's so general isn't it, so....**

76. Exactly.... They informed everything that we did.

**77. Market forces: does that play a role in anything?**

78. That's an *interesting* question. I've just come from a meeting on recruitment, and so on. Yes, market forces helped bring about the change.... If you go back through the annual programme reviews and the external examiners' reports, one of the things that's interesting - going back to about 2001 – it has been noted that students on the programme have erm started to voice the view that, while they might have started out wanting to be primary school teachers, as things have unfolded they might change their mind, and of course there are no alternative exit routes. Sorry, are you talking about market forces in terms of recruitment....?

79. **Yes.**

80. That's been interesting for me really, because this year I've involved myself in all the interviews - all the undergraduate interviews – and I've asked three very direct questions: How many of you want to be primary teachers, how many of you want to be secondary school teachers, how many of you are not even remotely interested in teaching? And the outcome is not quite what the staff here would have you believe. We do get a number of students who are not interested in teaching; they want to do a degree. Or they're interested in the subject; we get people who might want to do secondary.... So there's a range of things there. Erm.... the students that we currently have have voiced their opinion that they don't have enough flexibility in terms of what they can do at the end of the Degree; so that's why I've been trying to build in a wider range of exit routes, and so on.

**81. Because it looks to them like a preparation for teaching.....**

82. It looks to them... yes, and I've had staff... I've had staff say this to me, and every time they say it .... I've had people say, you know.... the guys who come up on the PGCE next year and going to be not nearly as well trained. And when I've had my bad day, I might just say, I don't really care! What makes you think my course is a preparation for yours?

**83. You're trying to break that down?**

84. Yes, I'm trying to break those ties and links. But at the same time - and this is why we have to tread a very difficult line – we're a small, geographically isolated (institution); our recruitment is.... not as great as it could be in lots of different ways. And what I'm trying to do in a sense is to promote this Degree Programme much more nationally rather than regionally. We're very much a regional provider here and we want to look nationally, change the profile of people that come over time, but to get people to realise that when they do this programme it's not teacher training. But it's a very erm... it's a very fine line. So I never stand in front of the students when we have them in for interview and so on and say what the course *isn't*. I always say, If you're thinking about teaching you can go on and do your PGCE. Because we have plenty enough PGCE places here if you want to stay here and that's fine. If you want to go somewhere else you can go somewhere else.

**85. But you've stopped the guaranteed place?**

86. We've stopped the guaranteed place. Now that often surprised me, because I wasn't even aware you could guarantee places until I came here. And I raised the issue early on and said, well doesn't this kind of contravene equal ops and all kinds of things? I mean, how can we guarantee somebody a place? What if my

mate wants to come on the PGCE here and he can't, but I'm here and I can? And I do get a place because I'm here. Are we allowed to do that? You know, I could never quite get to the bottom of this in terms of how it was.... Because there was one thing.... It's one thing to call a course 'a three-plus-one'; it's a different thing to validate a course as a three-plus-one, especially when they're on different funding streams, and I could never quite get to the bottom of that. Nobody within the (Institution) could tell me how that arose. Now we still want to retain those options, because for recruitment purposes and exit routes we don't want to lose sight of that – the fact that students can go on to PGCEs. But we're.... As the three-year course has changed, we've..... I was going to say we've *severed* the links with the PGCE, but we haven't. What we're doing is that we're making it less obvious that the route is natural progression. So students will have to be interviewed at that point; they will have to apply to GTTR at that point. Whereas right now we interview them there and they run right through, and that's just crazy. I can't see any logic to that, or reason for that whatsoever.

87. **Well we've done that, and the logic is recruitment. We wanted to keep a four-year package for those, so marketing .....**

88. Marketing, exactly. So all I've tried to do here as Programme Leader is soften the language. So we don't talk about guaranteed places any more. We just talk about for sure there's progression within the institution, which is.....

89. **It's interesting that Grosseteste did that, because you've described it rightly as a local provider for.... with a very strong primary teacher training focus. Of all the universities that did that - of which there were a few, but not many – it was surprising that Grosseteste did it – broke away from the commitment to primary teacher training for its undergraduates. See what I mean?**

90. Oh, I see what you mean. Maybe it was a confusion about how the Degree has arisen, because in their eyes.... If you'd asked that question of staff maybe eight months ago.....

91. **They would have said we haven't?**

92. They would have said we haven't? Maybe my ideas are too radical, I don't know.

93. **But your appointment was a (Institution) policy, isn't it? That's what (SM7) told me that they intended to do.**

94. I guess it was a strategic appointment.

95. **That you were appointed to do that job?**

96. Yes. I mean..... and when I arrived I didn't..... I mean, as you do when you new to an appointment, I didn't..... I wasn't as aware of the *sense* of the history of the introduction to the (Institution) at that point. And we had a *very* short lead-in time to validation - revalidation. And it took a *lot* of graft.....

97. **You were appointed in October....?**

98. I was appointed in October and we went through the first round two months later. And, although the process had started, the discussion and the debate hadn't really emerged, and that..... But, you know, we've..... it's been *an interesting time* (laughs).

99. **What about the student profile? What sort of 'A' Levels are they getting?**

**Your typical profile?**

100. Our typical profile erm.... Well, we have a kind of mixed profile, I guess. We do have a reasonable number of mature students. I couldn't give you an exact percentage, but we have a reasonable number of mature students. We have an average selection of males. We're down ethnic minorities, which is the geography of the Eastern regions. And our average 'A' Level point score is 160, which is actually low in terms of our competitors, because I've scanned the net. Our basic entry-level requirement is two Cs, but we quite often get students with significantly less. So we are not..... we're not blessed with the highest academic attainers. But we have a spread.

101. **But a strong professional commitment, probably, within the.....**

102. Well, it's *changing*. I mean, this is why I erm.... this is why I'm, kind of, in some respects reluctant to pin that down because - I think I mentioned earlier- as I interview students and I talk to students on the course, yes, I think they do have a strong vocational drive; I think a lot of them do come in thinking they want to be teachers, though they're not quite sure. But we've noticed recently there's a slight trend in the last few years for students at the end of the course not to.... to not want to go into teaching. So we're beginning to see some shifts. And I think erm.... one of the things I'm hoping - one of my own personal hopes for the course - is that, while we don't lose sight of that focus - because that's what the (Institution) is - I'd like to see students come in to do the course for different reasons and I'd like to see them leave and go on to do different things. And I'm not quite sure what I'd like that balance to be, but I'd like to see that change curl back.

103. **So very last question: How do you see it developing?**

104. Well, purely and simply, I'd like to see the staff develop themselves more and Education Studies get more fired up about that as an area. That will happen through recruitment now and hopefully in the future. We've got a Professor of Education, which hopefully will help. We've got staff registered for EdDs which will help. Erm, I'd like to see that change in the flavour of the students who come and go. One of my big things is I want staff to get more engaged in research.... well to get engaged in more scholarly pursuits, but research. And we do have support through the Staff Development Fund and research funds and so on for that. But I think..... Yes I think all those things in terms of the course, but we do need to up our research profile. I mean, it may seem an odd thing to say, but it's quite big on my mind and that's a constant struggle. So yes, I guess all these things. I mean I actually think we've got a really exciting thing, and what we're trying to do now is to.... have it realised, in a sense. And I think the staff are, by and large..... confident in the changes, and I think they can see the potential. And I think that's what's really important.

105. **Anything else you wanted to say?**

106. No, no.

107. **Well that's perfect. Thank you.**

Senior Manager 7

29 April 2005

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. It was a four-year BEd Programme, I guess, originally. Erm, which I think when I arrived, which was, what, two years, three years – getting on for three years ago – had already... a decision I think had already been made to divide it into a three-year undergraduate programme and postgraduate that was, in fact, very closely linked to it and, in fact, I think the division was more originally just a structural... thing er really. It was not really reflected in any real sense in a change of content, or whatever. Erm.... I mean the.... It kind of moved on, I think, from there so that, in fact, it became seen that it was more necessary for the PGCE to take on a more distinctive form, and it kind of evolved, I think, really into two separate programmes. Possibly unfair of me to say this, but I think initially I think nobody realised what the full significance of making that change really was. And as those things sort of began to be assimilated, so the need to clarify things and really move things along really sort of er began to take shape. I think the point that you were involved obviously was when that validation the Postgraduate year was taking place and I think that some of the issues that were raised at that validation were very much part of that ... part of that process really.
3. **Can you say anything about the original thinking.... I know it's before you came ....**
4. It is really before my time.....
5. **Are you aware of the institutional approach.... why they did it? Why this split into three-plus-one from the four-year QTS? Because you've got a long tradition.... the (Institution) has a long tradition of good primary teacher training... undergraduate primary teacher training. It's just interesting that you made that move.**
6. I wasn't, as I say, really party to those discussions. I mean one of the things clearly was.... was the funding issue. I mean, I think clearly there was the HEFCE funding for the three years, but I don't think it was *primarily* driven by financial incentives, even so. I think there was probably a sense that the three-year programme was kind of growing – and indeed it had grown very rapidly and continues to do that – and probably having a three and a four-year programme that were perhaps running alongside....
7. **It was a three-year QTS programme?**
8. It was a three-year QTS programme. But I think, in a way, it was part of that sort of sense that these things somehow needed to be more distinct from one another. Why would anyone do a four-year QTS programme if they could do a three-year one. I think, again, behind that, and again discussions again that also sort of preceded my arrival here, was the sense that it needed, perhaps for that reason too, in a sense, kind of widen its focus a little bit. And erm certainly there was a sense, I think, that people wanted to at least make it possible for people whose main focus wasn't primary to that sort of Subject Studies and Education side of things. And possibly, you know to go over to secondary, but also people maybe who had

aspirations to enter teaching-related, but not necessarily.....

9. **Yes, I see, because before you made no undergraduate Education provision for those who were going into secondary PGCE? They'd just done their subject.**
10. No, that's right. It was purely a primary QTS qualification. I think there was a sense in which it could become something a little broader in scope than that.
11. **Do you think.... Did you pick up that getting out of Government control – TTA, Ofsted – was any part of that?**
12. It's possible. I mean I don't recall hearing that..... as an explicit part of the agenda. There may have been a..... that might have been present. I mean it would be wrong of me to.....
13. **I ask that because it certainly was in our institution. What made us start thinking about it was Ofsted, TTA....**
14. I suspect that was seen as at least a.... whether it was a real driver, I don't know.
15. **So the student numbers that you have came initially from your configuration of the ....**
16. Yes, the numbers were simply transferred from TTA to....
17. **And the TTA did that readily, did they?**
18. Erm... yes, they did. I mean, I think the process turned out to be quite *slow*, but I think that was just sort of inertia rather than any lack of willingness....
19. **There was no resistance....?**
20. Not so far as I know.
21. **So those were your initial numbers; and have additional numbers come along since then, so more than those simply converted from the four-year QTS?**
22. (Pause)... I don't believe so. I think the programme is broadly the same size.
23. **You're still working with the same numbers?**
24. We're still working with the same numbers, yes. We haven't gone in for any additional numbers from HEFCE on that programme in the last couple of years.
25. **Erm, and how does Education Studies then – as a subject – fit into the (Institution)'s overall mission?**
26. Again, I think well really a part of that same process that I was mentioning before that we now had a.... we now had what was clearly a Primary Teacher Education Programme in our three-year BA QTS Programme. Er, I think the question to be asked then was did it make sense in a way to have this other route running alongside that that was purely a QTS primary route. And I think.... the other aspect of this, of course, is that there are subject studies very much a part of that programme, and always was, and very much more developed in the sense that it is on the three-year route – sorry, I said 'three-year route', I mean the three-year BA QTS route – which of course is very much a generalist primary route. So I think, again, there's this issue of Education Studies also in relation to another specialist subject, and I suspect that in a way suggesting you know that in a sense too that

ought to be developing itself more as an academic area of study, rather than purely as a training.

27. **So would that be.... Do you see that as part of a sort of diversification from teacher training, because the institution originated, as we did, as a teacher training institution. Is it part of a diversification process?**

28. (Pause) I mean it's still formally an ITT programme, and it's recognised by HEFCE as an ITT programme.

29. **Is it? What, the three-year Undergraduate.....?**

30. Sorry, er... yes. Yes, and there are funding implications, of course.

31. **Is that.... Do you get Band C funding for it, then?**

32. Mm. And there is still a placement... within the programme...

33. **And that's why you get Band C funding?**

34. Absolutely. And it would be difficult for us for that reason.... I mean if we wanted to make it a purely academic programme it would be difficult for us in the sense that it's, you know, clearly it would be Band D, and the implications of that would be.... oh they would be serious, clearly. So we have to preserve, I think, that clear sense that it is classroom-based, to a degree. But I think, nonetheless, alongside that erm there is the er... there is the sense that, you know, we do want to develop it as an academic study. And I think that would raise all sorts of things, obviously, like being more questioning, not simply sort of er... you know, falling into that kind of compliance culture which tends to be er... predominant obviously in the QTS route.

35. **Is that....? I agree with you about the compliance culture. Was that a part of the rationale to move people out that?**

36. (Pause) I think it's taken time, should I say, for that to become established. I think people now are recognising that. As I say, my feeling is that that probably is a cultural change that has taken time to really take route.

37. **Yes, it did for us too.**

38. Now, you know, whether those who made the decision had that intention is something... I'm sorry, I'm handicapped here by not having....

39. **And the previous principal isn't here to.....**

40. And not having been party to that sort of decision really....

41. **I suppose it was Eileen... I remember I talked briefly to Eileen at the time she was doing it and it did seem to be her.....**

42. I mean, my impression when I arrived was that people were carrying on much as before.... you know seeing themselves as teacher trainers. And I think it has only been *gradually* the case that that .... sort of realisation that this was something more fundamental than just a nominal change from a four to a three-plus-one.

43. **So you've been conscious of that as a process that you've been....**

44. Very much so.

45. **Can I ask you what you've done to do that? I mean, have staff appointment been part of that?**
46. Yes, they have. Erm, I mean I think we've much more consciously, for example... I mean, quite simple things really, like now we are making much higher profile in terms of asking for research, higher degrees and so on when we advertise a post. I'm not sure that was the case formerly; I think the school experience then was probably seen as the predominant requirement. Certainly we now have moved away from that I think and we're more explicitly looking for other things. And quite successfully so, because I think in the last year – maybe eighteen months – I think the appointments that we've made – typically I think – have been people with a much stronger academic research background than perhaps would have formerly been the case. (SL7), him/herself, of course, being a particularly clear example of that. And clearly, I mean, he's brought that with him and I think that will again.... Now he's here and running that programme I'm sure that agenda will be something he'll follow.
47. **Do you have any staff who don't have QTS, who don't have any professional expertise?**
48. (Pause) Erm.... now just let me think. There certainly are some on the Subject Studies side who wouldn't....
49. **But not on Education Studies?**
50. I think I'm right in saying no. I think that they would all have that. But, as I say, I think that erm nevertheless they kind of erm... research complements that .....
51. **So all could teach on both the professional side and the academic Education Studies side?**
52. Yes, I mean some might be more comfortable on one side.... But they would be able to....
53. **But you have got cross-teaching? You don't have a separate team teaching Education Studies from those doing teacher training?**
54. Erm, well, again... we have two programme teams. Because we're a relatively small – well very small – institution we're organised on a programme team basis rather than on a subject department basis. And we do have a programme team for the three-year Primary QTS and we have an Education Studies team who contribute to this..... specialist subject, Education Studies – the undergraduate HEFCE Programme...
55. **But they're not discrete teams in the sense of being completely different sets of people....?**
56. They are different sets of people. There is some cross-over between them, but they are different teams of people. Perhaps significantly from this point of view, what we've done – because we're making some new appointments this year – what we did do before we advertised for those was to ask our own people whether there were.... for interest that they might have in terms of changing. And in fact we thought there were vacancies in both those two programmes. I think significantly perhaps two people have elected to move out of Education Studies into one of the more purely professional training, and I think that's probably a symptom of, you know, they do see themselves again perhaps belonging more comfortably in a



teacher training programme. So there are people making decisions on that sort of basis when they're invited to do that.

57. **Anybody going the other way?**

58. Er, at this stage no. I think we're probably.... in a sense that's where the new....

59. **Is that something people resist or find difficult, then, the academic Education Studies?**

60. I wouldn't go that far. I mean, the number of people who've decided they wanted to change, as I say, was relatively small. When we said that, obviously, there was nervousness about opening the door... everything will kind of fall apart and everyone will want to be somewhere else. In fact it was relatively small numbers. So I think from that point of view the majority of people on that clearly didn't decide to do that....

61. **Because I suppose the majority of your staff – in fact all your staff – would have been in the first instance teaching on the QTS Programme were then finding themselves teaching on the Undergraduate Education Studies. That had to happen, didn't it?**

62. That had to happen. That's going back to my earlier a point, though, in a way: I'm not sure that they would necessarily have..... sort of redefined that role in the early days...

63. **As clearly as we might do now?**

64. Mm.

65. **And links with other subjects, then..... so it's a combined award in effect?**

66. We've never called it 'a Joint Honours Degree'. Erm, there's been some sort of discussion about that, as to what kind of animal it really is. And in one sense, erm.... I mean it looks very much like that: they do sixty credits a year of Education Studies and sixty of Subject Studies and it's fitting almost exactly a joint honours degree. But I think we can certainly..... Early on when I arrived and that was the kind of question obviously that I was asking: Is this joint honours? And the answer that I got to that was always, no it isn't because the Education side of it, if you like, is the kind of glue that.... Actually, 'glue' isn't a very good analogy because in a sense it was something that they seemed to sort of think integrated this much *more* than would be typical in a joint honours programme.

67. **It's that they major in Education? Education is the lead subject?**

68. It's difficult to put it precisely. I mean, no I think they do see themselves as doing a specialist subject.... Erm, but that that specialist subject, although it's not wholly pedagogy, in some senses is not completely independent, if I can put it like that, of the teacher training.... education flavour of the degree as a whole.

69. **And so the students doing Education Studies and History, say, the History that they're doing is just within an Education and History degree, or are they with other students? Are they with students doing Single Honours History.....?**

70. They have been, by and large... well I think by and large almost exclusively they have been taught separately. There might be one or two module that have been

joint, between those and our more diversified courses, but they are relatively few.

71. **Within the Education Degree....**

72. By and large, those students are being taught separately.

73. **That must make a difference, mustn't it, that everyone has an eye to the educational....**

74. I mean, one question – and again you might want to put this to (SL7) – but I mean obviously we've re-validated, or are re-validating, this year; I mean, certainly one of the questions that the Panel put them very pointedly, I think, was, How do you see this programme? What are we looking at here? Er.... and I think what he.... certainly (SL7) I know has said again, No, this isn't Joint Honours. We are presenting this to you as an integrated whole....

75. **With some other subject in it. Yes, I see that, yes.**

76. But again he may be able to take you through all the thinking within the team in more detail than perhaps I can do.

77. **Look, this is a hard question for you, I know, and perhaps (SL7) would have more to say, but how would you see the theoretical framework for Education Studies? What sort of a subject is it? Do you have a view of that?**

78. It's a fairly broad church, isn't it? I mean, erm..... And I'm trying to sort of think now.... of the..... I think again it's not..... Looking again at the programme that I think we've just validated, I don't see sort of one.... the disciplines kind of emerging predominantly in it. So I think it's still a fairly.... a fairly broad kind of wide-ranging....

79. **It's where the disciplines *are* that's one of the questions about Education Studies. Is Education Studies the Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy of Education?**

80. Well I think that's.... what I'm clumsily trying to think really. I mean I wouldn't have said that one or other of those areas was predominant..... I think the practice side of it is probably still quite strong.

81. **So there's a strong professional element?**

82. I think there is.

83. **That's how it's seen here?**

84. Yes, that's right. I think it would be.... My impression is that it would be in that area..... rather, let's say, than people doing the Philosophy.....

85. **So its aims are..... It's about equipping future teachers?**

86. (Pause) ..... well, again I ....

87. **I'm putting words into your mouth.**

88. I suppose, yes.... But let's put it a *little* more broadly and say I *think* that (SL7) will say that it's about equipping future professionals who are likely to be working within the educational sphere....

89. **But broader than.....**

90. Many of them, clearly, will be teachers, and I think that practice side of it is strong for that reason. I'm sure he would also say that you know it's clearly a kind of fusion of erm... a fusion of theory and practice.
91. **Because there are Education Studies degrees in which this is definitely *not* about teaching. If you want to be a teacher look elsewhere.**
92. It would be interesting to hear (SL7)'s views about the future, because it has, as I say, over the last couple of years, I mean things clearly have evolved. Erm, it would be interesting to see whether his sort of view is that that's the direction which future evolution would take it.
93. **Another question was its relationship to teacher training, but I you covered that in that answer really: obviously it's *closely* related to teacher training.**
94. I think so. I mean, I think one of the distinctive things between that and the three-year (QTS) Programme is not so much the..... the practical side. I think it's probably the subject element which is much more important. But I think also yes, I mean to the extent that there would be, as I said earlier, that sort of freedom from the erm..... compliance side of training. I think it's kind of freed up in that respect. I know that's not quite the same as moving towards a purely academic study, but it probably does change the flavour of it quite considerably.
95. **Look, can I ask you one more thing about Government policy and universities now – higher education? How do you see Education Studies fitting into that? It's a growing subject.... Erm.... the Government controls teacher training very rigidly and strictly. It appears to have very little desire.... very little *effective* control over what's going on in Education Studies, as perhaps in other areas...**
96. In other areas..... I assume that... I mean yes... I don't think HEFCE or the QAA would, you know, have those kinds of erm..... interest in telling us what precisely we should teach. And there's a very clear distinction between sort of QAA processes which are about systems, I think.... and the Ofsted thing which is ticking the .....
97. **I wondered if you'd got an explanation for why it's developed so rapidly...**
98. As a subject?
99. **As a subject.... I mean here you've created it from your QTS course, but in other places it's growing very rapidly with large numbers of.... Universities starting it up as a subject and it appears to be very popular with students.**
100. I don't have a ready answer to that, I'd have to say. Er, I mean it.... I don't know whether those are students who would sort of see it as a pathway to a PGCE and whether they are taking it for professional reasons, or whether they are sort of motivated to study it as a purely..... I don't really have any evidence on that....
101. **There's a project to do in that. My impressions are that some students think it's a possible..... I might teach and I might not and this is something I could do that might help me vocationally, but er...**
102. I think there's also that thing that it's not a school subject, is it? And one wonders whether, in a number of cases, people do like to do things which are not

the same things that they've done for 'A' Level. But I am speculating and I'm sure you've looked into these matters much more than I have really.

103. **It's interesting: it's not a school subject, but, of course, they all *know* about education and schooling, so there's a way into it like that. Ian, the last thing is how you would see it developing? How do you see it in the institution? Do you want to see the numbers grow beyond what you've got now?**
104. I think if we were able to do that I'm sure we would, but one of the difficulties, of course.... in our case, I mean, we've moved, I mean we're getting on for half and half now TTA and HEFCE and this course is a big programme in that area. But what we don't have, clearly, is at the moment – like some large institutions – we can't.... we're at the top of our contract range as far as... We haven't got numbers we can shift into that area. So we would be absolutely dependent on additional numbers and at the moment that's almost entirely Foundation Degrees. So as far as HEFCE's concerned.... There's sort of a planning role there, but it doesn't look at the moment....
105. **But if supposing hypothetically you did get a hundred extra numbers would you want to put those into other subjects.... in your diversification....?**
106. I think, you know, there'd be a debate to be had about that, I think. I mean, I think all our energies recently have gone into the areas where we know there's a reasonable prospect of growth. So we've spent a lot of energy in terms of thinking about erm, about Foundation Degrees. So I think our thoughts about growth have gone there. If we sort of unexpectedly had HEFCE numbers that weren't tied to things like Sector Skills Councils and these sorts of things.... You know it's a good question. I mean I think we've got rather small diversified provision, so it might be that that's where we'd want to push the.... But I certainly wouldn't want to exclude growing this programme if it was something that....
107. **That's very helpful. Thank you.**

## CASE 8 TRANSCRIPT

Subject Leader SL8A

1 July 2005

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. Right. I'm not so clear on that. I expect that (Tutor name) explained that. Basically, it was really led by (Tutor name). When s/he arrived at the University I think it was part of a discussion – although I may be wrong – that s/he wanted to set up an Education Studies degree. So s/he actually talked to staff at the School of Education and found people that felt that they could contribute to an Education Studies degree. And I think to start with it was very much of a hotch-potch actually in the first year, because s/he was literally drawing on what people's strengths were, rather than – and this sounds critical – rather than actually having a plan for the actual shape of it. My impression is that it was, well what can people do, well let's have a module on it. That's how it started. Is that what s/he said? (Laughs.)
3. **Well it's what other people have said in other places, because there's very little structure anywhere....**
4. And personally it's evolved a lot. The Year 1 modules have been taken over by various people over the last couple of years and they've changed.....
5. **Can you tell me about that, then? How it's gone from a collection of what people could just do. How have you moved it forward from there?**
6. I think what's happened is, for example, in Year 1 it's not necessarily changed the focus in the Year 1 modules, so there are the four which you probably know about, which is ED1001 which was (Tutor name)'s Contemporary Policies and Issues and that was very much based on his/her *own* work in Education on School Effectiveness; s/he drew a lot on that and s/he examined the New Labour Government's policies since 1997 and, although s/he's now leaving the School, we're going to continue that and I'm going to be co-ordinating that module with another member of staff and we're going to keep the focus as post-1997. But we're actually going to give the students a broader foundation, and understanding, certainly at a superficial level because it's Year 1, *of* the different sectors and what the key policy issues have been right across the board from Early Years through to Lifelong Learning. And so the first semester will look at the different phases of education and what have been the key policy issues, and the seminars will pick up an issue and get the students to talk about it and think about, Has it been effective? What sort of factors have been influencing that policy being made? And so on. But that's at a fairly superficial level for Year 1. And then in Semester 2 we're going to look at, if you like, cross-phase issues or different sorts of issues. So faith schooling, sex education, citizenship, race and gender. So we're going to give a really brush stroke as a foundation, because we felt that that was missing in Year 1. Another module is Educational Change and Continuity and that will actually go up from looking back at educational philosophies as far back as Plato, which it has done, and it will go up to 1997. That module has been evolved over the last three

years. It's changed every year, depending on student feedback and it started off – because it was in a sense put together in a somewhat *ad hoc* way to start with – it had loads of inputs from all sorts of different people. Student evaluations were that there was a lack of coherence. They couldn't see where the common themes were; you know, they didn't know what the theoretical framework was; and that's now run by one individual who's actually doing it from a historical enquiry perspective; so it comes from a different dimension. Then we've got Learning from Learning, which is a more psychologically based module, and, erm, that stays the same for the three years. And we've got New Technologies of Learning which, as (Name of Head of Department) will have explained, looks at the way in which ICT is now affecting the ways people learn, and that's also evolved over three years. Every year we're constantly looking to improve the modules. So the subject areas have stayed roughly the same – the topics covered – but the modes of teaching, the staff teaching have changed over the last three years, since the Ed Studies course started.

**7. So, if you said it started off as what people could do without any real framework....**

**8. Yes.**

**9. .... do you think it now has one?**

**10.** I think it.... I think that what's happened is that we've probably got.... I think it's become more coherent. It was very much based in the first place on the individual coming in and doing the odd session, and I do think it lacked coherence, or any real idea of a theoretical framework. I do think that's being.... erm, we're nearer to that... than we were, but there's probably still a way to go.

**11. What would you say the theoretical framework is – and this is the hard question,**

**12.** It is....

**13. .... and what this conference is about. What is the theoretical framework for you?**

**14.** I think we're still grapp... struggling with that. I mean, we want to have, sort of, the sociological discipline in there somewhere; we want to have the psychological; we're also interested in the political aspect of it. So we've got various strands which I would say are now more representative than they used to be, or at least we're more aware of what they should be: we have a better idea of what we're doing; we're not just doing the odd topic. But it's something that, in our Review and Development meetings from September, we're going to be addressing, so that we can look at it again from 2006. We've got so much change in the School of Education at the moment that we're just having to survive into 2005/6, but we will be looking at the coherence of the degree programme over next year....

**15. Just remind me of the timing. (Tutor name) started it in ....**

**16.** Yes, we've just had the first cohort graduating next week, so it's three years it's been running. That will have been 2002.

**17. And you're having it reviewed in .....**

18. Well, we do keep reviewing all the time, but it...

19. **There's a formal review?**

20. Yes, we have twice.... no.... three-yearly.... three times a year meetings, review and development meetings for Ed Studies at which we raise issues to do with that. At the moment we've left it alone for this year, apart from having to take on staff changes because simply we can't cope with all the staff changes we've had and really re-thinking. And to a certain extent it does seem to be working quite well. What we need to do, I think, is to identify.... erm, more accurately, pathways *through* the degree programme for students who want to follow particular interests. So for example, erm, they get input to do things like special educational needs in Year 1; they can do that in Year 2. At the moment they could pick it up as a focus of their dissertation, but we haven't got a module that will take them to Level 3 on special educational needs; so that's an area.... And that's a very popular area with our students, so we need to look at expanding provision there.....

21. **Making threads through.....**

22. Making threads through..... because we do have a feeling that some of our Year 2 modules, again, are well, what do staff fancy teaching? And we've put them in there. And we are trying to get more coherence in Year 2, Level 2 modules, as well.

23. **So the overall theoretical framework is still something you're working towards?**

24. It is, definitely working towards it. I wouldn't say we've got one yet, no. And you picked that up in the CAYS Programme (Childhood and Youth Studies) when you externally examined..... and I would say exactly the same is true of Ed Studies.

25. **You mentioned the disciplines, Psychology Sociology, Philosophy. Say more about those.**

26. Mm. Well, they're not very strong. I mean, Psychology is probably the strongest discipline that runs through. Erm.... we don't really do much on Philosophy at all; that really just comes up in the Year 1 module when they....

27. **Looking at philosophers?**

28. Exactly, and their ideas on education. Erm, Sociology comes up I would say in a rather *ad hoc* way in different sorts of modules. But, again, this is something I'm not sure we're providing the students with a clear pathway through sociological theory, and I think we need to.

29. **Why is that? Is it because you don't have sociologists?**

30. Yes. It is, basically, yes. I mean really what we could do with, we ought to talk to our Sociology Department and say, is there anyone there who would like to come down and have an input.

31. **Is that a possibility?**

32. It's not something we've looked at this year, but I don't see why it shouldn't be.

33. **Is that something that might happen in the University?**

34. Yes, I think it might. Or I think it's something we ought to *explore* to see if we could do it. Erm... it really depends so much on the precarious situation that we're in at the moment in the School of Education anyway, and whether or not.... It's all to do with funding and whether the course is going to be viable and I haven't got involved in all that at this point, only to know that those are issues. But from next year, as Programme Director, I will become much more in touch with all those sorts of issues and will be responsible for drawing up the cost-school model that will be used to make sure.... to see how we fund the course and see how much the course is costing us...
35. **Costs and income.....?**
36. Yes, expenditure and income, yes, and it has to balance the books. Apparently there's not going to be cross-subsidy at all.
37. **Oh, really. A bit more on the Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy: the Psychology and Philosophy that they are doing Psychology and Sociology? Is it explicit?**
38. Erm, I think the Psychology is, because the tutors feel confident. Janet Draper's taught Psychology and Phil Bayliss is quite strong on that side of things as well. So, yes, I would say so. On the Sociological side of it, no, I suspect that staff are just drawing on their own bits of knowledge.
39. **There's no one standing up and saying this is Sociology?**
40. No.
41. **And there's no critique of Sociology?**
42. No, not at the moment.
43. **What about the Psychology? Is there a critique of Psychology? This is behaviourism, or this is a cognitivist approach?**
44. Yes, I would say that comes up. It's not necessarily dealt with in a holistic way. It will be in Phil's modules; it will also come up in other aspects of their work. So, for example, in dissertations students have looked at things like models of behaviour management and Skinner, and various things to do with that. So it comes up there and there'll be input from their personal supervisors on their dissertations at that sort of level.
45. **And what about the overall aims of the programme? How are those expressed?**
46. Yes, that's a very interesting one, because it should be in the prospectus (laughs).... Erm, how do we express them? I think it was something that was quite interesting, I discussed with my module coordinator in Year 1, because I haven't taught in Year 1 before; I've only taught Year 2 and Year 3, and I don't actually think that at any point at the moment at the beginning we set out the aims of the degree programme, I really don't. And it was interesting listening to Steve (Bartlett) talk about why we have Education Studies (at the BESA conference earlier in the day) and we don't actually make that explicit to the students enough. We need to have that in at the beginning. So it's something else we need to bring in (laughs). We tend to plunge straight in....



47. **And just do it.**

48. And just do it.

49. **How do you see it yourself?**

50. It's a difficult one actually. I think..... right at the beginning when I first came into it I did see it as a feed in, the link to, ITT: so providing the students with a good understanding of policy and practice in education, past and present; erm, an insight into models of learning.... all those sorts of things.... erm, giving the opportunity to experience being in learning contexts and therefore enabling them to make an informed decision at the end of their degree programme as to whether or not they wanted to be teachers or not. And I don't think that we've actually – because I wasn't involved with the programme right at the beginning – certainly we haven't actually sat down and articulated what we think our aims for the programme are in the last year or two. And I think that maybe we've got to the point where it's time to do that.

51. **But teacher training, or future teacher training, is a strong theme, then?**

52. I think it is at (Institution name), because.... If you ask our students why they come to (Institution name) and why they want to do Ed Studies – you'd probably get the same at other institutions – they say – will it's interesting, actually – the paper I was in in the first session this morning (of the BESA conference) which was the guy from (Another institution name) - s/he used to be at (Another institution name) - s/he said our Ed Studies students are failed BEd students, and I said ours aren't; they're not. They're coming here because they're choosing to come, for the very reason that I said because a lot say they might want to teach and so they choose that as an option, or they think that Education is just going to be an interesting thing to study in its own right. Now I've lost my thread; where was I going to?

53. **It's whether they're going on to.... if you see that as the aim....**

54. We don't. I mean we don't want ..... We don't see, well *I* don't see now ITT as the aim for our students. What we're trying to do is to give them sorts of learning experiences and the sorts of skills and knowledge that they can apply in a lot of different contexts.....

55. **Including teacher education?**

56. Including teacher education, but as probably Christine said, it's probably only nine of the thirty odd that have just graduated who are actually going onto PGCE. So that's only just over a quarter. What would have been interesting, and I think we need to do this as well – another thing I've been thinking about today – is we need questionnaire our students as they come in and ask them what their intentions are, and then find out how many actually do it.

57. **How are you marketing it, though? Are you marketing it as, this is a good course if you want to teach?**

58. We try to market it in a very balanced way. So the prospectus does say that this is a route into teaching, but it also says that this could lead into other sorts or public sector work, for example, the Police Force, you know, er, social work, and because they can also choose across the Childhood and Youth Studies modules then it gives them that flexibility as well. We try *not* to say that it's a pathway

through to teacher training because we don't want to put off those that don't want to teach. It's a difficult balance to get.

59. **But you've got rid of your QTS course...**

60. We haven't got the four-year undergrad...

61. **So those who want to come to (Institution name) to do teacher education would do this?**

62. Yes, unless they did a main subject degree, and then they'd just do the PGCE.

63. **But those who would have come on the QTS course before, who wanted to do undergraduate Education and come out with Qualified Teacher Status, then this would be the.....**

64. No, I'm not sure it would, Steve, because we don't guarantee them a place on our PGCE; we don't even guarantee them an interview in the future on it. So there's no guarantee that they can get on our PGCE course. And also we've got (Local Institution) just down the road that offers a four-year undergrad and actually who have a good reputation locally amongst the schools, so it would be considered to be a good alternative. I mean maybe it doesn't have quite the reputation of (Institution name), but it actually seems quite a good provider..... erm, and.... I think also, if they come on our Ed Studies course they won't be able to do PGCE secondary. Now, I've discovered – and we may be wrong on that – they couldn't do PGCE secondary at (Institution name), because our PGCE admissions tutors on secondary will only take students who have done a main subject like History or Geography....

65. **A major at least?**

66. No, single honours. So we've been giving out perhaps the wrong message, because I've discovered from talking to colleagues here (from other institutions at the conference) that their PGCE courses will take them if they've majored. Now, because we have the opportunity to give our students modular degrees we could have some of our students do 120 credits in History or something, and it may be that another PGCE course would take them at secondary. So I need to re-visit that.

67. **It depends on the recruitment to the subject.....**

68. It does, but we've actually said categorically you wouldn't be able to teach; you wouldn't be able to do PGCE secondary if you did this course, and that may not be right.

69. **What's the relationship between Ed Studies and the PGCE, then? They don't give them a guaranteed place, but they don't give them a guaranteed interview?**

70. They have until now given a guaranteed interview and that was because the first year group was only 34 and it was thought, well that's not going to be a great number to guarantee an interview to. But it was raised at our Standing Committee meeting yesterday afternoon by the PGCE Primary Humanities Coordinator that s/he felt no longer able to guarantee an interview because it's so over-subscribed at (Institution name) and if we have a cohort of 50, and say they all want to do Humanities, it's too much time and they know they're not going to be able to give them a place, so.... But some of the people who teach on Ed Studies are PGCE

tutors as well.

71. **So it's growing apart, really?**

72. Erm....

73. **Becoming a separate entity?**

74. I think it always was a separate entity. I mean, (Tutor name) sort of, almost promised them that they'd get a place on the PGCE, the first cohort.

75. **So he's set it up in that way?**

76. S/h had. That's right. And s/he hadn't, I think, formally discussed it with PGCE tutors. Well (Tutor name)'s quite like that.

77. **Well PGCE recruitment wasn't so strong then.**

78. Well it's always been strong at (Institution name) in English, Humanities, those areas. They probably would be guaranteed an interview if they had the qualifications to go for Maths or Music. But, you see, we'd ask for an A Level at A or B, so, you know.... quite difficult... for some of them.

79. **What is the student profile? What are you asking for?**

80. At the moment, if I'm right – Christine's got this. We started off with about.... Well (Tutor name) took them all off clearing the first year. The second year, I think it was three Cs and then we still had to go through clearing. Last year we didn't have to go through clearing we just took them, and this year for September we've asked for BBB to BCC, but we have looked at borderlines CCCs. And if they've shown a particular interest in the subject area then we've considered them.

81. **So quite strong, then?**

82. We're hoping to bump it up every year. The University's told us the aim is straight A students (laughs).

83. **Why do you think the University wants to have Education Studies?**

84. Because it's erm.... Well my understanding is because it makes money. Basically, it's a financial imperative. As far as I can see, ever since Steve Smith has taken over as our Vice Chancellor the financial imperative has been the main imperative, which is why various departments have gone to the wall. And there's a belief amongst staff at the School of Education that ITT may not survive, and they feel that Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies are growing areas, which obviously they are. It was quite nice actually, in the session with Steve (Bartlett at the conference) s/he said, which is quite right, Education Studies started off mainly in the *newer* universities, and now the old universities are jumping on the bandwagon. Absolutely right – a money-making opportunity. We don't have quite the same status as our colleagues. When you go to meetings on the Streatham Campus, you know, Physics and English rather look down their noses at the moment, which is another reason to push up our profile on entry qualifications.

85. **The University is keen on Education Studies. How much was there a top-down influence on what you do?**

86. As far as I'm aware, there's no top-down influence on what we do. I mean, (Tutor name) conceived the degree and s/he put together the module descriptors and as

individual members of staff we come up with ideas for modules, we put them through to accreditation panel and they get passed. We don't have any top-down, no it's bottom-up.

**87. As long as you're recruiting the students, they don't....**

**88.** They don't..... give a damn (laughs).

**89. So what about the students? Do student choices have an effect: the market?**

**90.** What do you mean by student choices?

**91. Student choices of modules. What you think students would study: does that effect what you have in the curriculum?**

**92.** I have to be brutally honest and say, no I don't think it.... certainly it didn't in the early days. We had to be pragmatic and it was staff areas of expertise and interest were.

**93. So in the new ones you're thinking, this is what's *needed*, rather than, this is what students would like to opt for?**

**94.** There's more of that. That's what I said about having to review it, really. Where are our gaps? And that's the point about coming to this (the BESA Conference) to find out what other people are doing. And actually talking to people we seem to be doing roughly what other people are doing.

**95. But the gaps are in what you see as the right curriculum?**

**96.** That's right, yes, well, in terms of making sure we've got the threads through the degree programme and also plugging any gaps in the actual curriculum content. I mean, we had some students who wanted to do a disability module in Level 3, in Year 3 next year, and it had been offered last year and only three wanted to do it. And it was offered this year and only five wanted to do it, and that isn't sufficient numbers to make it viable. So we can't respond to all student choices, even though we'd have liked to have run that one. It would have carried through another strand of special educational needs.

**97. But your doing special educational needs is something of a response to what students want do?**

**98.** It is. I suppose we are responding in a certain.... We're responding by putting on - running some - modules twice, because what we found is this..... We have two modules at Level 2 which are particularly popular. One is Early Childhood Studies and one is Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, and last year we had some dissatisfied students because they couldn't get to do those modules. So what's happened this year is that the tutors are running them twice so that we can take every student that wants to do those modules. So we're having 40 students, because we're taking some from CAYS (Childhood and Youth Studies).

**99. So it has some effect on the overall.....?**

**100.** It does, erm. Yes it does. But this is the first year that we've done that, because we think it's important to accommodate them. And I think as we come on with top-up fees it's going to be increasingly important to accommodate students' wishes.

**101. Yes, the market gets stronger, doesn't it?**

**102.** Yes. We don't know whether we're going to get the *money* from the top-up fees; we we're discussing this at the meeting. You know, how much of that £3000 is going to come to us? I mean if it all came we could do *loads* of things (laughs).

**103. What would you see as the distinctive features of your programme?**

**104.** Erm, well before today I wouldn't have known, because I wouldn't have known a lot about other programmes. But I think probably I think the point that Wyn (the external examiner for Education Studies) picked up is the amount of practical experience that the students get in learning locations, whatever they may be, whether they're nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools and so on, and the sort of research-type tasks that they get to do. So practical.

**105. So is research a strength, do you think?**

**106.** I think research is a strength. I think that's because staff have research as a strength. So we all feel confident in teaching research. And we have good links with schools through our own research as well. So we've got good networks. Yes, I would say that that's true. On the other side of it, erm, away from curriculum matters I would say that..... I don't know whether we're *distinctive*, but we feel that we provide a very good pastoral system for our students as well.

**107. That link with schools: does that work through the teaching practice placements?**

**108.** Not all the time. We've got the Partnership Office, which handles all the PGCE placements....

**109. But they don't do your.....**

**110.** They do on some modules. So for example they handle Early Childhood Years placements, but actually they were set up by the tutors that were running that and then they've (Partnership Office) taken over the administration of it. But, for example, I do a module which is called 'Evaluating the Curriculum' where I take my module group into a local secondary school, as a group. We negotiate with the school a focus for a research project and then the students..... the ownership of the research methodology is left up to my group of students under my direction and they will go and they will do questionnaires, interviews with students. They might do questionnaires with parents, interviews with teachers, whatever. And then the outcome of that is a written report which would actually, if the school had to pay for it, would probably cost them about £10,000. They get a written report which they then use for their in-service training, or whatever, or they flash at Ofsted when they come. And so... but that's something that I've built up by doing research myself previously in schools. And that happens with lots of our staff: because we're working in schools doing our own research we have these networks.

**111. That's very interesting. I would think that's definitely a distinctive feature.**

**112.** I think that is a strength, because not only does it develop good transferable skills in our students, by going out and carrying out research, but it also gives them a really good insight into the cultures of the local schools. It would be nice to be able to take them further afield, because (Institution place name) is very middle

class, well not all middle class, but, you know, white middle class or whatever, and it would be nice to take them further afield. I mean, I think also – I don't know about other courses – but, for example, in the Year 1 module, Learners and Learning, they go out and they look at the way in which..... places like the Eden Project or the Exploratory that used to be at Bristol, and places like that, approach education and interpretation. And they learn about those sorts of aspects of catering for young people's learning. So there are quite distinctive things there, I think.

**113. And are you thinking about vocational outcomes in that?**

**114.** Erm, well we see them as going into things like.... well going into museums, erm, other educational environments. For example, my (partner), s/he works for (Local organisation) but somebody who's done an Education Studies degree could actually go in and be an education officer there, because they would have an insight into the sorts of things that would be relevant. Yes, so there are other outlets within education, and also public administration. I think we had one student who said she was going to be a midwife; I'm not quite sure where that comes from (laughs).

**115. It's the skills, isn't it, I suppose.**

**116.** It's all those people skills.

**117. And the staff: you did mention that some people are teaching both teacher training and Education Studies.**

**118.** Yes, some do.

**119. How does that work, then? Is there a core of you doing Ed Studies really?**

**120.** Erm.... I tend to.... I teach Ed Studies only, but I do have some input on PGCEs because I go and supervise them out in school. I would say quite a lot of the Ed Studies staff..... Oh, do they now? They used to. We're losing quite a lot of staff. You see Christine used to be ITT, so did Chris Burns. It's probably less so than it was....

**121. Or it will be.....**

**122.** It will be less. But there are still some. (Tutor name), for example, who is going to take over, we hope, as Head of Undergraduate Studies, I'm mean s/he's had very much a PGCE remit that may go while s/he's head of Undergraduate Studies, but s/he will still probably have a foot in both camps. I mean it tends to be policy in the School of Education that people teach across the programme. It doesn't always work very well for the staff concerned because people don't know what people's workloads are.

**123. No, workloads are difficult. But do people like doing that really?**

**124.** My impression is actually I think they do like it; they like the variety. And I think also – I know we don't want our Ed Studies course as a pathway directly into PGCE – but it does help if you have people who are still at the chalk face, if you like, by being out in schools all the time. But even those of us that aren't doing PGCE, because we do a lot of research in schools, we still have good knowledge.

**125. You've said something about this already, but how do you see it developing?**

**126.** Well, I think that it is.... it's very much reviewing it over the next twelve months, looking at the threads that need to run through the degree programme. We're going to have to bring more modules on board because we've got increased quota for this September. We've got a meeting of Head of School next week when we might be getting even more quota than we thought we were getting, which may be slightly problematic – bit panicky. Can you imagine, you know, with about five or six weeks to go suddenly to be told that you might have another thirty fte. Erm, and the issue is - it's absolutely fantastic for the programme – but the logistics of it may be a nightmare because, simply, staff already up to hours, because we have this teaching grid thing. Have you heard about our teaching grid?

**127. No.**

**128.** Right. If you're a full-time lecturer you have to teach 425 hours of contact time. Now our modules on Ed Studies and CAYS courses are worth 60 hours in Years 1 and 2, OK? And then you get a marking formula for how many students that you have. So obviously if you've got very big groups you get more hours for marking. You also get hours for being a personal tutor and for being a dissertation supervisor, and so on. But the point is that no one's supposed to go over the 425 hours.

**129. This is about six or seven modules?**

**130.** It's probably less than that by the time you've taken in the marking. It's probably four, actually. So if we suddenly get a lot more quota, we've got to suddenly find some staff, and there answer is, well you'll have more

**131. And they'll be part-time...**

**132.** Well yes, and then it will be whether they're going to be a match for our modules, you know, so..... But apart from that, even if we don't, we're going to have a quota of fifteen Ed Studies next year and forty in CAYS. So we're going to have to run more Year 2 and Year 3 modules, and so we will be looking to, as I say, identify any obvious gaps in the curriculum and to talk to staff about emerging modules in those areas.

**Subject Leader SL8B**

**21 June 2005**

**Transcript deleted at the request of the interviewee.**



**Senior Manager 8****21 June 2005**

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. They've trained teachers here for a long time – 1840. There was a merger between (institution) and (institution) in the year (...). The backbone of the provision post- (...) was a large four-year BEd with QTS programme and that at its height had about a thousand students on it, so an intake of 340 or so, but if you needed an exact figure I could check that. But imagine a student population of that size. There was a period when in the late 1990s when (institutions) were wondering about the sustainability of large-scale undergraduate QTS programmes in the context of research-intensive staffing. There was a period where you could exchange TTA-funded student numbers for HEFCE-funded student numbers and that was the beginning of the set of decisions that led the university ultimately to abandon the four-year BEd programme which graduated its last students in (...). The running-down of the programme occurred in several stages, but in the minds of the (institution)'s Senior Management was largely brought about by a belief that the funding and staffing for the programme on that scale was incompatible with other higher education policy that was leading universities to become more specialised and differentiated. And that this .... (institution) should seek to exit from that form of undergraduate provision and, if appropriate and necessary and available, diversify into different kinds of HEFCE undergraduate programmes in the field of Education. Therefore the programme was run down as I've just described with the last students graduating in 2004 and a decision was taken that the phoenix that would rise from the ashes would be for the (institution) to relinquish that TTA quota and to use available HEFCE quota that was in the institution in order to launch a new small-scale Education Studies programme which was first recruited to in the Autumn of 2002. We started with a quota of thirty.
3. **You didn't get the TTA numbers converted to HEFCE, then....?**
4. There was a window that was open for a couple of years or eighteen months in the late 90s. And we did it in two stages, actually. In '98, I think it was, we converted some quota from PE into Sports and Health Science and started a whole School of Sport and Health Science off that opportunity to convert the student quota. And effectively we kept a PGCE in PE, but we swapped the undergraduate PE quota into undergraduate Sport and Health Science. And then with some of the remaining quota that we then relinquished to TTA – well not with that quota – with some of the space in the institution that was created by the relinquishment of the TTA quota, we started in 2002 with a quota of thirty Ed Studies students. University strategy then decided to add another thirty in the next year to create a parallel programme called Childhood and Youth Studies, which recruited its first quota in 2003. Currently those are the two programmes in place, but we expect considerable further expansion in the next three to five years, from mainly internal quota that we're going to convert from other uses, but probably through a small

amount of additional student numbers under the Widening Participation Rubric. So that's the context.

5. **OK. So a bit more on how it fits into the (institution)'s mission, then. I mean why is the (institution) interested in having Education Studies?**
6. In this particular university because it's very keen to, erm.... strengthen the budget for running all their Education programmes and HEFCE Band D students actually make some money. They're more profitable than TTA students. The University could have decided not to put any of the HEFCE quota against Education; it could have put it into other disciplinary areas, but it had taken a simultaneous view that the reputational status of the PGCE, which is a large-scale programme, was so strong that it didn't want to undermine the PGCE because it itself was under-funded. So part of the motivation was to provide more resources for a school that ran a very tightly-budgeted PGCE programme, but also to – and this is more my sort of gloss on it – this was the way to replenish the staffing. We were more likely to recruit bright, young post-doctoral candidates into lectureships under the age of 35 through this form of provision than we were to replenish the next generation of research-intensive ITT tutors.
7. **Mm. That's very.... well thought-out, if I might say. It's not just a contingency.**
8. No, no. It's got a lot of deliberative elements to it. So it looked to some short-run issues which is how do you bridge the problem that the TTA under-funds TTA numbers. It looked at the longest-range issue which is when the current staffing, the average age of which recently was 54. When those people all retire together, what replenishment options will you already have activated to ensure that there is continuity of staffing in an institution which is becoming increasingly research intensive?
9. **I'm interested that here you have Education Studies and Childhood Studies as separate, but somewhat linked. What was the thinking behind that?**
10. Yes. Erm, I think.... You said a minute ago that it all sounds very carefully constructed. I think we didn't know very much about the emergent student markets for either of those areas, but had noted that they were developing quite rapidly in the country in both peer institutions and in institutions with which we don't normally compare ourselves for sort of bench-marking purposes. Erm... we had initially the view that Ed Studies was the natural starting point; those very much were starting to appear elsewhere and there were other places that had a slight lead on them. But that was the discipline that seemed most centrally to speak to continuity from the models of teacher education that were developed in the 60s and 70s, which are now finally eroding away with QTS standards and that generation start retiring and so on. And then Childhood and Youth played to a number of interesting strengths of staff who wanted to launch new programmes and themselves teach both on undergraduate programmes and also on PGCE. We had, for example, quite a strong group of Early Years specialists who were increasingly interested in childhood as an area of study to complement primary settings in the other sense. And also we had a number of staff who'd done work in the area of youth, adolescence and the sort of PSHE elements of the secondary curriculum, who were attracted to a more multi-disciplinary programme within which to teach. And the ultimate decision was to see if the two markets could be

nurtured in parallel.

**11. So to some extent it was staff you have in place?**

**12.** Yes, to some extent, and probably a slight hedging of our bets, I guess. There'd be one or two other colleagues who remember the committees that made the decisions, but as I received them second-hand on coming into post, that was the rationale. The (institution) was in a great hurry to support the School at the time. It merely wanted the School to come up with quota options that looked as though they could recruit. Because they wanted us urgently to support our other budgets with this particular new funding stream.

**13. Was it (a tutor name)? I picked up that he.....?**

**14.** Yes, (name) was asked by the Head of School at the time, probably in 2001, to put together the original curriculum framework for the Ed Studies programme. So s/he was developing that ahead of the launch of that in 2002 and three other separate colleagues formed a small working group to develop the curriculum for Childhood and Youth Studies. One was an Early Years specialist, one was a primary specialist and one was an educational psychologist.

**15. Can I ask you how you see a theoretical framework for Education Studies? How do you see it? I've read your paper on the development of Educational Studies, so I just wonder what your views are.**

**16.** Well, I've got two..... You want the academic view as opposed to the sort of academic manager's view?

**17. You're right, there are two. Can I have both?**

**18.** The academic manager one is more on the surface of my mind, which is I, as a manager, was particularly attracted to the issue I mentioned earlier which is the ability to recruit this kind of new younger academic back into the field. I felt I saw an ageing staff population which had a lot of ambivalences around the nature of the TTA standards and all that QTS now involves; erm.... and therefore I thought it was attractive from a labour-market point of view to offer something that was more multi-disciplinary, but in an Education School environment; I thought we could recruit, and recruit well. And we've got good people and good young people incubating at the moment. From an academic point of view that's an interesting question. I haven't yet looked carefully at the curriculum offerings – and probably you have more than I have – of what other programmes are doing and this may be a dialogue we have in your examining role on another occasion. But, for example, (Tutor name) devised a Level 1 offering which had four compulsory two-semester units, as you'll have seen from your paper work. And so the first question was what should be the foundation studies - to use a phrase loosely – that should induct the new student into the field? And to be quite frank I would say that what we came up with was part-opportunistic: it was part about what we could teach at the time and part a groping towards a new model of foundation studies for the field. I've been quite struck in passing that when Geoff Whitty came into his Directorship at the London Institute he had deliberately re-instituted a school called 'Educational Foundations and Disciplines', I think it was called, which was around a very traditional model of the Philosophy..... It had Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economics.... and the label was 'Foundations'. And I also noticed from reading recent journal reviews that that term speaks quite strongly in

America still, the foundations of Education is a sub-specialism which academics understand the label of and it speaks to, I think, applying disciplinary understandings into the practical setting of Education.... in action.

**19. What we call the disciplines.**

**20.** Yes, and what was called widely in British teacher training in the 60s and 70s ‘the Foundation Disciplines’, which, as you’ll know, Hirst himself prosecuted in the early 60s.

**21. And the criticisms of those, of course.**

**22.** Well, the research that you’ve just referred to: I mean, it turned out that students on teacher education programmes had a very ambivalent attitude towards this kind of provision from almost the start, I think, and it wasn’t difficult for HMI to use student voices to undermine the academic propositions of why this was the obvious design. And the first question for us in thinking about what shall we provide in relation to who do we think will turn up was to try to understand who we did think *would* turn up. Who would these eighteen year-olds, or twenty-three year-olds, or even fort-five year-olds, be. And I don’t know whether this chimes with other experience, but I don’t think we knew until late on in the first recruitment round just what population would emerge. And, indeed, I think some of the people, it seems to me talking to the student group in the first year, they turned up quite accidentally; there were a couple of far-eastern overseas undergraduates who seemed to me to have just wandered in. It wasn’t clear to me why they wanted to follow this programme of study at all.

**23. So you weren’t marketing it at the old QTS undergraduates who would have done the four-year programme and who could now come and do three plus one?**

**24.** It didn’t work that way because it was in a great hurry, and the quota-release issue I discussed a minute ago were made late in the day, well after it was possible to advertise in UCAS. The decision-making in the (institution) was, do we want the School to have this quota and can they recruit through late advertising and clearing, just to get going, a plausible and credible cohort? So you could argue from that point of view it was highly reactive and opportunistic. And now, three years later, we’re still – I mean we might be in the early stages of understanding the student market that we really want to reach.

**25. And that might be future teachers or not?**

**26.** The assumption.... We had a lot of discussions at the start about progression into PGCE, and to build a programme that would allow progression if that’s what the students turned out to want, but we didn’t know that would be necessarily what they wanted. Progression into primary was always going to be much easier than into secondary because of subject-knowledge requirements, and it turns out that two-thirds of our first graduation cohort want to do a PGCE and, of that group, maybe two-thirds will stay here to do it, and the vast majority will be in primary. There are one or two who might be able to get into a secondary programme based on things they’ve studied. So no, we never built in systematically and sort of with great prior thought any assumptions about student destinations. And the (institution) wouldn’t have wanted us to particularly. They wanted a strong social-science degree, so they’d be looking for us to create – and this is quite

controversial amongst colleagues – an A-Level threshold which *speaks quality*. So at the moment, the talk of getting above three Bs will be probably our current discourse. Colleagues in the school aren't very happy with that who feel: a. it makes too many assumptions about the origins from which students come, ie traditional sixth-form A-Level environments, and b. they don't regard A-Level thresholds as proxy of potential; whereas the (institution) is very keen on it for benchmarking purposes and league-table purposes.

**27. And does that lead you into strong foundation disciplines, then?**

**28.** In terms of what we provide?

**29.** Yes.

**30.** I would want to say.... Well I will say that I think what we have provided was more opportunistic than that. It was partly what we were equipped to teach, but there was a diffuse, I think, and general view that the Level 1 provision should be based around broad themes and.... wide perspectives; I'd put it as loosely as that. So we didn't have epistemological assumptions, for example, that there must be certain kind of disciplinary orientations, or that the first year was designed deliberately and consciously to inculcate in the students an understanding of the field into which they had entered, because I think we felt the field was only at an emergent stage and we regarded, probably for convenience, all programmes as in their early stage of development elsewhere in the country and the programmes were by no means near maturity. That will harden.... Some of our options will both, in a sense, open and close as we make our first set of appointments against specifically teaching predominantly in this programme. And so to some extent I think we have not had an ideal model of the curriculum because some of the drivers in the (institution) – well a lot of the drivers in the (institution) – are around your job is to get really high-calibre academics in and then we'll work out what we want to teach.

**31. But there was some direction about it being Social Sciences? I mean, it's interesting that the (institution) had a view of it, rather than just get students. It was more than that, was it?**

**32.** Erm, well the first decision of the (institution) was to give it to this school, rather than, say Biology or History. The (institution) then said, we want you to use this quota to grow strong high-reputation undergraduate studies; you will know your markets better than we do, but it'll obviously broadly be – well I don't know about 'obviously' – but it will be broadly seen by us as set within Social Sciences and, as a result, there may well be combined honours options later, or modular degree options, but we can't do everything at once; maybe they will emerge.

**33. So did you give me the..... What about the academic view?**

**34.** About what the content should be?

**35.** Yes.

**36.** There hasn't been in the School extensive debate collegially about what this curriculum should characterise and you could argue that's either a sort of, erm, a timid stance which is betraying a lack of confidence about what it should display, or I think probably accurately a sort of pragmatic stance that we had to get a programme up and running fairly quickly and we will draw down the teaching

that's available to teach it. I'm speaking quite frankly, obviously. And, therefore, the question I'm addressing now in thinking about the next five years is still really focussed on a collegial agreement about high standards.... high-calibre students and stretching demanding teaching. And that is very much the frame of discussion, *not* we must have a bit of that and a bit of that and a bit of that.

**37. But what is it? What is Education Studies as a subject?**

**38.** Well, I think what I'm saying probably by implication is that it is a question that is up for grabs, because my starting point as a sort of manager was also.... there will be students, because learning – education and learning – in an economy such as Britain is becoming a more ubiquitous area of social life and one would expect in the long run for it to become increasingly important service industry for employment and one would therefore expect a steady supply of students who are motivated by a number of things. They're interested in working with young people, they're attracted to the professional characteristics of teaching or teaching-related work as a career, and education and learning, for as far forward as one can see, will be a key dimension both of prosperity, but also of national aspiration and culture. This may sound a bit grandiose, but I think it is a social movement. And, therefore, it was *very* broad-brush. The assumption was that this was a field that would develop strong undergraduate programmes over the next fifteen years and you should be in fairly early on, and as the market matures then the leading providers would rise to the surface in various ways. But that would all be iterative and by groping forwards and feeling one's way. And ultimately, I suppose, squaring the circle, it's linked to this big conundrum of the enormous demographic skewing of those who taught Education since the 70s: you know, the Commission on the Social Sciences and the ESRC study of endangered disciplines showed that Education, of all the Social Sciences, was nearest to a wave of mass retirements. And so in those circumstances you wouldn't necessarily expect an easy baton-passing from one generation to another of the verities of what the subject must contain. You would expect a more turbulent period of major adjustment as new degrees are formed and a whole new generation of people come in to teach it. So quite a long-run set of considerations there.

**39. That's very interesting that you've got that long-term view of it.**

**40.** Well, mainly because, as a Head of School, I'm wanting one of my.... We've had a lot of... sort of policy and budget reviews this year and my big strategy paper for the school talked almost exclusively about where the school needed to be in about 2012. Four years after the next RAE what will we will be doing? And this is probably one of the most important emergent things we will be doing, is the assessment.

**41. What I find striking about this is the status you give this, because in many institutions Ed Studies is very much a.....**

**42.** Status within the (institution) or status within the School?

**43. But the (institution) also has given it.....**

**44.** The reason it's probably our most important development in the School is *all* to do with staffing. This is where I can have a good chance of recruiting staff who will look like the kind of academics that you find around the rest of the (institution). I'm much, much more concerned about how to replenish PGCE staffing over the

next ten years. I think that there are some strategies, but they're going to need permission from the Vice Chancellor to be different, because we will still recruit professionals with ten years service who will probably merely be starting a home career off a masters. So that's one reason why to the School it's very important. This institution is very peculiar as a pre-92 institution in that Education is so big – I have in the School about 16% of the budget for the whole (institution) – so the (institution), given its very strong reputation for teacher education, doesn't wish to do anything other than continue to be very prominent in Education as a distinctive reputational good for the whole institution. Which is why it's such a great job, because when I go round the circuit very other few Heads of School can say anything like that; they say we're fighting for resource; that's all they say. And here, the VC and the Senior Management Team – we did a big image-survey last year of parents, students, employers and other stake-holders and so on – and the words '(Institution Name)' and 'Education' were often described together by respondents. So we *know* that this is an important part of the whole image of the institution.

**45. We're near the end of time, but any thoughts about government views of Education and teacher training? Where are we in that, do you think?**

46. Well, we've had a lot of discussions with the TTA this year, mainly arguing over money, and one of the things that's clear is that the TTA is a favourite agency of government at the moment and it is entirely different from anything that happens in the undergraduate hemisphere; that's not its remit at all. And clearly its main job is to secure teacher supply and retention. And we've had a lot of tussles this year about whether they're very interested in quality, because the history of the last five years or so has not displayed that as key touchstone of TTA policy. However, the allocations of quota this year, and some of the things that we're starting to hear, about the rationale for the key decision for us taken a couple of weeks ago to allow us to charge the full variable fee for the PGCE in 2006 does suggest that they actually want to retain more actively than in the past traditional academic providers, and not just the – some of the new - universities. HEFCE's view is that it is entirely up to the institution what they do with their quota. So the HEFCE view is social good in the broadest sense, institutions are sovereign, they decide. TTA view is, how can we best supply the profession with new teachers. And they're quite interested in some issues of scale, but in the main....

**47. And the government's going to allow that to continue? I wonder when this golden age will end when we're allowed to teach undergraduate Education Studies students anything we like.**

48. Well we in the (institutions) here will be allowed to do that for as long – I'm just guessing now – but for as long as our benchmark data on things like employability and student intake are equivalent to those of peer institutions. And that's why we've got a sort of rather open road: it's just another Social Science degree. So I think it's highly stable assuming our assumptions about how the market's going to mature turn out to be correct: ie good students will come into the field, we will get more discriminating about how to select them and how to target them. So I think, in that sense, we will have that permission and one can see no let-up on the teacher education/QTS side that there'll be *any* permission to move outside a highly prescribed set of standards. Now the cuckoo in the nest that we haven't mentioned at all is the SAS Scheme, the Students Associate Scheme: do you know, the TTA



undergraduate-funded (indistinct). That's a conundrum for us because we're very big in it, we're very large SAS programme, but it doesn't rival or threaten the other undergraduate Ed Studies. If anything, it puts a query over whether or not the model of the PGCE is stable for the medium term. What if SAS students encouraged by the TTA want *considerable* credit exemption from the PGCE. How would you tool-up a 5-7 month PGCE? What would it have in it? And would there be any staffing left for Ed Studies or would it be assumed that somehow SAS was going to deal with that through TTA funding at undergraduate level. So that is where the TTA makes us think a little bit about how we staff undergraduate teaching in the whole (institution), because we staff a TTA-funded SAS and the HEFCE-funded Ed Studies.

**49. On the teacher training, they have a guaranteed interview, do they, the Education Studies students?**

**50.** You'd have to ask Christine, I don't quite know what the mechanisms are. You mean if a third-year Ed Studies student expresses an interest in the PGCE?

**51.** Yes.

**52.** We've always said that you would have to compete with all other applicants to your programme, so there's no assumption that there's an ensured progression.

**53. So you've not created it as a three-plus-one programme?**

**54.** No, absolutely not.

**55. The role of the market...?**

**56.** Well, I think it's very fluid potentially, and therefore, you know, it would be interesting to know whether in – maybe you know more, probably do know more about this than I do – but already is it happening, or will it happen in the next five years, that the leaders of these programmes will have a national network where they will debate quite energetically a model for this kind of provision, because my assumption is that it's not thought to be the foundation stage for entry into the state schooling profession; it's broader than that. The incentive to characterise it nationally through an agreed network of professionals discussing content is quite small.



## CASE 9 TRANSCRIPT

### Subject Leader 9 (SL9)

3 March 2006

1. **How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**
2. It actually originated, as you quite rightly said, in 1999. There was a gentleman here called (Name) who masterminded that and it was seen as maybe one of the pre-professional degree programmes that could potentially lead into teaching. And because we had such a very strong.... (Name of institution) was a strong teacher-training (institution), we felt that.... well the (institution) at the time felt that that may be would be one way to go and at the same time a degree programme in Early Years Education was developed, which is a similar type of thing focussing only on early years. So the Education Studies that was developed was developed as a joint only for reasons of allowing students maybe to go into a PGCE. In (Name of institution) we only do Primary Education and Primary PGCE, except in the field of Religious Studies where there's a Secondary PGCE. But that's the only secondary element. But a lot of our students now, if they've done, for instance, Education Studies with Sports Studies joint, then they can go to UWIC to do a PGCE there where they specialise is Sports. But they've got this wealth of knowledge about the formal frameworks of learning through the Education Studies programme. So I think that's the main focus for .... that's where it came from initially. As I say, I wasn't here at the beginning of it, so I'm just picking up....
3. **So your view of it is preparation for professional training?**
4. Yes, and of course there are so many education officers out there now that are not teachers anyway, so it's a wonderful programme for people to go out to do other things, and linking that with the other programme that we've got in the school, the Social Inclusion element. Then we've got probation officers out there. We've got education officers in places like (Place name) and, you know, it's a wealth of experience: people who can be within a field of education, but not necessarily wanting to go into teaching.
5. **So what are the aims? What are you trying to do in it?**
6. I suppose it's to prepare a grounding for any type of education, cradle-to-grave. And, because it's a joint degree, they then can link that with their own specialist area: Sports or Social Inclusion or Early Years Education. We've got in Education, (Tutor name) will tell you, a very strong Psychology strand at the moment and there may be plans to sort of further develop that in future.
7. **Again, it's that preparation?**
8. Yes, it's all preparation. We want to prepare our students to be employable. It's all to do with employability in the long run, isn't it? And we're trying to work with the students now with the PDPs that are coming in now. We sort of build that into the programme as well. And (Tutor name)'s been instrumental in preparing a module particularly when they come to us first so that we start them off looking at what they do and then reflecting, which is a major part of the Education Studies

programme.

9. **This is a hard question, but what would you see as the theoretical framework for it?**
10. Depends on what you're looking at, I suppose because you've got so many different theories out there. You know, are you looking at a psychological framework or are you looking at a sociological or political.....? Coming from a social policy background myself..... You see, we're constrained by legislative frameworks all the time and these theoretical frameworks creep in in our everyday life.
11. **Go on, what are those? What legislative frameworks determine it?**
12. Well, I mean, OK, just a basic one, you've got the National Curriculum; we're all supposed to be doing this. So there you've got your formal framework there; so that's statutory, isn't it?
13. **So does that come into Ed Studies, then? Because you don't *have* to do that, do you?**
14. No, but we're constrained by what we do, what we deliver and how we deliver it and value for many of the students, which is my main focus because I'm sort of standing back from the teaching element at the moment. I've got the QAA guidelines, the code of practice is on my desk all the time. And you've got the 'threshold' the 'modal' and the 'best'.
15. **So the fact that, obviously, the curriculum is in the teacher training standards, that's what makes you have it in Ed Studies?**
16. Well Education Studies has got its own standards, hasn't it? The Benchmarks.
17. **You mean the QAA Benchmark, because one of my later questions was, has the QAA Benchmark had any effect on it?**
18. It's just there (pointing to desk).....
19. **OK, so what's in that that has, shall we say, has determined what you do?**
20. Oh, if you look at the aims in the first bit, you know, providing employability for students comes into it somewhere but I think you've got there five different aims offering them a broad and balanced overview of Education, and we don't just focus on the education system, you know. We look outside the box and we've got a variety of different modules which look outside the school situation, and outside things like that. So I don't think that its Education Studies as it used to be thought of, because we've expanded our portfolio now to..... we're looking at adventure therapy, forest schools and we're working outside what we deliver to our students to give them these experiences that there's education everywhere. We're not in the process now..... Our main focus isn't to train teachers from Education Studies. Our main focus is to make them employable in other fields as well. Otherwise we'll have too many teachers. Up until two years ago I could honestly say that 60% of the students that came to us to do Education Studies with something else said that they wanted to go into teaching. But at the end of their first two years, well, I think the drop-out from the teaching aim then came down and we've got somewhere between 15 and 20% now who still want to....

**21. Really? As low as that?**

**22.** Yes.

**23. Because you have a QTS degree running alongside it, so the ones who really want to teach are doing that?**

**24.** Yes, but what is happening now is - and this happens on a fairly regular basis – at least once or twice a semester I get students coming over from the BA Ed saying, ‘I don’t think teaching is for me. Can I come over and do Education Studies and Social Inclusion’ because they can see that their options are open for a little bit longer. And that’s not to say that teaching isn’t right for them, but at this time they feel they can’t do it. I always think a mature teacher is far better than a youngster because they’ve seen a bit of the world.

**25. You mentioned Psychology, Sociology. What about the disciplines, the foundation disciplines? How much do they play a part?**

**26.** Well the Psychology is quite a strong element in the Education Studies programme. You know, it comes into the language, the language development modules; it comes into Psychology as a strand, because we’ve got three years of basic Psychology, you know, so students could come out with a broad understanding of personal development through a psychological process. Sociology: not quite as much in the Education Studies programme, but with the Social Inclusion element, which most of our students in the school tend to do that joint - 80% of our students do that particular joint degree. They’ve got this social background coming into it as well, so we do link the two very, very closely. That’s our strongest degree programme, I think.

**27. So is it too simple to say that Education Studies is psychological, Social Inclusion is sociological?**

**28.** Yes..... well that’s a very broad way of looking at it, isn’t it? I mean, Education Studies isn’t just psychological. You’ve got philosophy, you’ve got historical competence. You’ve got all these strands coming through. And then there’s the culture of change, international perspectives. Got all that.

**29. Are the students explicitly aware that they’re doing Psychology, Sociology?**

**30.** Well, they know they’re doing Psychology because it’s called ‘Psychology’. They know it’s Psychology. No, they’re not aware that they’re doing.... that this is some kind of a sociological element, because it’s not called Sociology or anything. I mean, yes, it does creep in and you will say we’re looking at a socio-economic this, and whatever.

**31. But the Psychology is more explicit?**

**32.** The Psychology is a distinct strand at the moment and we do talk to them about the Philosophy of Education and that comes in some modules, but it’s not a strand of its own. I mean a historical element is in Year 1, but it disappears a bit then because we go off in different directions. But it does come in, doesn’t it? But no, there not a distinct strand like the Psychology.

**33. And does staff expertise play a part in that....?**

**34.** Yes, yes. (Tutor name)’s been able to since she came. She’s been able to develop the Psychology strand because she her background. She’s a clinical psychologist.

And we're very, very lucky.

**35. And it's because you wanted Psychology so you appointed (Tutor name)...**

**36.** Yes, there were Psychology modules here already, but they weren't taught by an expert as (Tutor name) is....

**37. So you strengthened it by appointing (Tutor name)?**

**38.** Yes, we strengthened it by appointing (Tutor name). We've also got people who taught in primary schools, so their strengths are in the field of primary education. My background is special needs in a broad sense, so although I come from a social inclusion background and social policy and all this, I take on board looking at diversity and things like that. Yes, we've got a wealth of expertise in the School. We've also got a Youth and Community Work degree programme here and Dr (Tutor name), who's the programme coordinator for that, s/he's passionate about education outside the box, education otherwise, adventure therapy, experiential learning and things like that.

**39. And the staff teaching it: are some staff teaching on teacher training and Ed Studies? How does that work?**

**40.** No, they belong within the School of Education Studies and Social Inclusion. However, we do dip in; I go over and I will teach special needs on the BA Ed. We very often go over and do study skills, which we find is a major part of our students coming to us. We've got a module in the first year that helps develop their study skills. All their study, then, is built around the skills that they can.... So we actually take that to the BA Eds because they've not got that within their framework. Yes, so we collaborate. And also if we are doing something to do with the National Curriculum which is very specific in one of our modules then we will ask the BA Ed team, you know, would you like to come in and do this as a workshop. And so there's a lot of overlaps, particularly between those two schools. We've also overlapped occasionally with the School of Early Years because we've got one module for instance in Year 2 that is called 'Early Years Education'. I'm not an expert on early years; I could give a very broad overview and read the book, but that's it. So what we do is get the experts in and I deliver a special needs module for them so....

**41. But Early Years is separate from Education Studies, a separate programme?**

**42.** Yes.

**43. Can I ask you, when you say it was started by the person in 1999, when you came in did you see something that needed changing and developing? How was it then?**

**44.** Well, when I came, I've been here – this is my... going into my fifth year now - and I could see there were..... It can be very dated within a matter of years unless you keep your eye on the ball. Plus, going into something you mentioned, if you've got different staff expertise well you build on your strengths, don't you. So I could see – well we could see, because (Name) was head of school when I came – we could see that there was the potential for us to develop the Psychology strand the, which is why (Tutor name) was called in, but there was the potential of further developing a special needs strand when I came, and things like that. But the School was audited in September 2004 and what came out of the audit was a re-

validation of the degree programme which we more or less re-wrote a substantial amount of it: one, to keep up with the current agenda, because, I mean, education changes as often as you change your socks, doesn't it? And the one thing that you really, really have to watch is that DfES will actually publish a document; well sometimes the Welsh Assembly don't adopt that. Now then, are we working to the Welsh Assembly or to the DfES and some of our students get very confused unless we are very clear ourselves in which way we need to go. So, yes, we can look at the two, and that's a wonderful debate, you know, comparative debate that we can use. And then if you look at what's going on in Scotland, and that's just within the UK.

45. **Yes, that's nice that you've got that built in, those alternatives. English students just get what they get.**

46. Well a lot of our students have the potential of going to work in England; a lot of them come from England. So they have to know what's going on there as well.

47. **What about market forces? How much is it determined by.... What you have here, is that determined by what students want to do?**

48. Yes, I think we listen to what students want and what they need, and I suppose you take a sort of a very relaxed audit of needs every so often because of the feedback you're getting. Yes, it is to do with market forces and you've got to look at what are the gaps out there, which is why we try to..... I personally think that the pre-professional degree is better than the BA Ed....

49. **The QTS degree, you mean?**

50. Yes, the QTS degree. Simply because you've got 18 year-olds making a decision for the rest of their lives and I think it's a difficult time for them to do it. Doing this type of pre-professional degree they can spend time looking to see what they want to do; they've got another two years, really, to keep their options open. So very much that depends on market forces and, you know.....

51. **Do you get a sense that, of the students out there, this is what they want to do? I mean it's why Education Studies is so popular. I mean it is popular, and what's going on?**

52. It's so popular. It really, really is popular. I mean I remember we've over-subscribed for the past three years and we've had our knuckles rapped for it, and I envisage that we may be over in September, although I've been told this year that we mustn't be, but..... you don't know until September who's going to come here, you see. I mean we're not one of the top universities in the country; we know all about that. We're a very, very small institution, but we do have something that the top universities don't have. We have personal terms with our students. I know every single student in my school, and they know me, and they know my door is there. And very often I've got a group of students in here that have got issues. I tell them when they come, you know, you probably won't see much of me unless I pop in and do a guest lecture. But you'll see me for one of two reasons: it could be one that you've got a problem, or two that you are a problem, and that's just about it and usually they come to me. And we've got an open-door policy.

53. **So that's one of the characteristic features of this here: the small size?**

54. Yes

55. **Anything else that's distinctive about this place?**

56. I think it's because it was initially built in 1848 I think as a teacher training (institution). We've got that element of an education base.

57. **So they perceive it as a teacher-training place?**

58. Yes, they know that it's there and we've got this wealth of experience; the staff are there and we use them. And we're in a lovely position here in this school. We're an academic school, but we've also got the practitioner element and we're collaborative as well.

59. **And the last one, as you might expect, is how do you see it developing?**

60. Well, you know the Furlong Report seems to be changing the thought processes in going into teaching and I can see that we're in a very strong position in this school because we've got Education Studies in a joint degree with very many other subject areas both within this faculty – the Faculty of Education - and in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. I mean we've got a very small number, but I do have students doing a joint degree in Education Studies and English and usually those are the ones who want to go and teach English in a secondary school, because they've got the background of Education Studies. But I can see maybe potentially moving into different joint areas now that the needs of potential employers out there, you know, all to do with the market forces and identifying some of the gaps.

61. **You've talked quite a lot about employment really. That's how you see it, isn't it? Preparation for work of different kinds, which might be teaching, but might be one of these other....**

62. Yes, it's more often than not not-teaching now. Because we started as basically a teaching institution, it's perceived very often as a teaching institution, if that's what they want to do, a lot of them will go there first. But, as I say, we've got less and less students now coming who actually say, I want to go and teach. But because the Education Studies looks from cradle to grave – we work a lot with adult learners – any placement opportunities the students get they're encouraged to not just look at one institution like a school – they can go to a school if they want to – but the next time you try to encourage them to get out their and work with adults or go somewhere else; go to one of the family centres.

63. **Is there anything I haven't asked you that you think I might need to know?**

64. Well, I don't know what you need to know. But anything else you want to ask me, then just give me a ring.

**Senior Manager 9 (SM9)**

**2 March 2006**

**65. How did the Education Studies programme originate and what were its antecedents?**

66. Quite an interesting development in a way, because the then Dean of Bilingualism, and the present Principal, in fact, was keen to develop a BA Education course back in the late 90s – 97-98. And I remember very well an Academic Board meeting which discussed this possible development and there was great animosity towards this development by your traditionalists: the Head of English, the Head of History, the Head of Geography at the time. Quite simply, they felt threatened by a BA in Education.

**67. So the subject people, not the teacher training people?**

68. No, not at all, not at all. And in fact that motion was carried, was passed, and what's happened subsequently of course was that Education Studies developed from the BA Education and it has become one of the most popular courses in the (institution) and it's quite interesting to look at the other subjects, because now we don't have a BA in Geography and a BA History. The students have voted with their feet to support the BA Education Studies Programme. A very, very interesting development in (institution).

**69. So their fears were justified?**

70. Indeed they were. (Laughs.)

**71. And when you say it developed 'from it', that was the BA with Qualified Teacher Status.....?**

72. No, no. No, a BA Education non-QTS course was validated back in the late 90s and that evolved into a BA Education Studies Joint Honours Degree in 2000-2001.

**73. So what was it in 1999 that's different now? Wasn't that *it*, in a way?**

74. Yes, yes, it's just the name in a way. We changed the title of the degree scheme from 'BA Education' to 'BA Education Studies'. Just to reflect the changes that have happened across England and Wales.

**75. Right, so there weren't any antecedent courses from which it derived? In 1999 that was a new.....**

76. Yes, conceived basically in '97-98.

**77. And why, do you think? What was the rationale for that?**

78. The rationale behind that: (Name of institution) had always been a teacher training (institution). The (Institution) decided in the early 90s to diversify, to develop two new schemes: a BA in Humanities and the Welsh-speaking equivalent, BA Dyniaethau..... and, erm, out those schemes then came your Single Honours in English, in History, in Geography etc. And I think that the Management at the time were concerned that there was a strong possibility that teacher training would be – well the numbers would be reduced in future years. So strategically the (Institution) decided to apply for the BA Education Studies course to offset any

cutbacks in teacher training.

79. **Which has proved to be correct.**

80. Indeed it has.

81. **So it started off *de novo* like that. What about the student numbers? Where did they come from?**

82. Well I think it's quite historical: (Name of institution) as a church (Institution) directly linked to education since 1848, you know, it has always attracted a good number of students who wish to pursue a career in education, not just within teaching as such, and I think generally it has a good name for teacher training and I think students were in the late 90s to 2001-2002 students were looking for a course in the locality, in the region – obviously it's far more expensive to attend university these days – and what we've seen is..... We've also tried to respond to some of the national agenda, if you like, that's come from the National Assembly in Cardiff and if I could just share with you what's happened in the last five years: in 1999, as I'll be sharing with you tomorrow, we had... our Faculty of Education was established in 1999 which brought together for the first time in many years all the staff involved in teacher training, OK? So, for example, I was a member of the School of Welsh at the time and I was teaching on the BA in Primary Education course and also in BA Joint Honours Welsh course. So you had your traditional academic subject and also your ITT course. So at the time we had a BA in Primary Education, a PGCE Primary course, a PGCE Secondary course in Religious Education, and MA in Education and, of course, the BA Education Joint Honours course. So that was the portfolio in 1999. Now, when I came into post my first decision as I noted over our lunch today was to establish a School of Early Years Education. Now why, you may ask. Well, quite simply the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Minister in particular, had published the paving document, *Wales, the Learning Country*, back in 2001, and Early Years Education was very, very high on that agenda. So we started by developing an MA in Early Years Education and then we went back to a BA in Early Years Education....

83. **The MA, would that be for serving teachers?**

84. For serving teachers and those involved in child care

85. **Early Years practitioners?**

86. Practitioners, yes. So over the last five years we now have an MA in Early Years, a BA in Early Year. We have a Higher Education Certificate in Nursery Management. We have an HE Cert in Welsh and Bilingual Practice in the Early Years, which has attracted over 150 part-time students over the last year alone and we're about to validate a Postgraduate Diploma in Foundation Phase Practice for next September. So that school has developed a number of very innovative and popular courses that have attracted up to 200-250 students.

87. **That's really interesting to see the extent of that development. So where have the student numbers come from in the sense of the funding? Was it transferred from something else?**

88. No, no. I'll be absolutely honest with you. We've always hit our target on ITT courses, no problems at all, primary and secondary. The late 90s saw quite a disturbing picture in this (institution) outside ITT. As I mentioned earlier, we had



validated a single honours in English, in History, in Geography..... what else? Religious Studies – probably seven or eight single honours. And in a way we were competing with the large institutions: with (Name of another institution), with (Name of another institution), with (Name of another institution). You know, we couldn't compete with those larger places, so obviously the students didn't come to (Name of institution); they went to the large institutions, as you'd expect. So what we decided then, of course, was to look again at the curriculum from the (Head of institution's) appointment in 1999-2000. That was the first thing s/he did: a review of the whole curriculum. And out went many of those single honours degrees. And in came, rather than your BA in English, you had a BA in Film Studies etc, etc. So the students came back. So we had those figures.....

89. **So they were the old BA in History etc numbers that you transferred .....**

90. Yes, indeed. You see, outside this Faculty we have a very successful Sports Studies programme. That's recruited well. OK? So I've mentioned Early Years, my second decision was to set up a School of Education Studies, which is now called 'Education Studies and Social Inclusion', to reflect the programmes offered in that school. And this is the second largest school now in (institution); it started from nothing back in '99 and just to mention some of the programmes in this school: we have a BA Joint Honours in Education Studies; we have a BA Joint Honours in Social Inclusion, concentrating at the moment on special educational needs; we have Single Honours BA Youth and Community Work degree; we have a Foundation Degree in Education Studies for Learning Support Assistants. We have – where are we here? – a Higher Education Certificate in Community Support, that's being offered for the first time in September, and then we have two Masters, namely MA in Education and Society and the MSc Management in Education and Training. So those courses have been validated since 2001 basically.

91. **Yes, that's a very impressive range *outside* teacher training, isn't it?**

92. Yes yes. So, as I say, when I was first appointed I wanted to concentrate on three specific areas: Early Years, Special Educational Needs and also Youth and Community Work. And by 2004-2005 I'd achieved that goal. Now, of course, by that time, there were whispers that the government in Wales was looking for substantial reduction in teacher training numbers. So in a way, I haven't been able to develop the second part of the vision, if you like, but that now will be taken on with Swansea.

93. **My second question is 'How does Education Studies fit into the mission of the institution?' and you've made that very clear: it's core .... with the reduction in teacher training numbers...**

94. It's core, yes.

95. **Thank you, yes. Now the next question is, given that you started in 1999 Education Studies from scratch, not converting it from anything else, how did you decide what that was? How was the curriculum developed? Where did it come from? What was the knowledge?**

96. To be perfectly honest, erm, it was developed by one individual who was then a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education. Erm, he was asked to develop this; he did so and the modules reflected his own interests, to be perfectly honest. Over

the next two years – by 2001-2002 – with the establishment of a School of Education Studies and the appointment of two or three members of staff then you had a far more varied curriculum, if you like, which includes modules in Psychology.... erm the National Curriculum.... the collection of modules you would find in any Education Studies degree.

97. **Of course, what I'm looking at is, what is that? It's what that knowledge is that's Education Studies is.... the different things people are doing. So you say that you started out with one person's view of thing, but it's one person's version and it's developed since. So – and this is a tough question – what would you say is the theoretical framework for that?**

98. Well, one of the priorities for this (institution) when the (Head of institution) came into post was the employability of students. So I think the majority of the modules developed within Education Studies is linked to the employability of students at the end of their course. I think we look at the number of students from this particular course who either go on to a PGCE or are successful in gaining a post outside teaching. And obviously it's been quite successful because 80% of the students do get a post at the end of their course, linked to many, many aspects of education: museum officers, working with young children, special educational needs.... a range of employment opportunities.

99. **So a range of employment, including teacher training?**

100. Yes.

101. **So then the question is, what is that link between your Education Studies and teacher training? How does it prepare students for a PGCE? I guess the question is, do you have a view of it preparing students for a PGCE course?**

102. Well, yes. Erm, when we interviewed prospective PGCE students, obviously some of them come with National Curriculum subject degrees, but others will come from Education Studies or Early Years Education, so at Trinity we do try to prepare those students who are interested in the teaching profession. We advocate they have an opportunity to study some modules which will directly link then to your PGCE Primary course. But (SL9) can tell you....

103. **Yes, it's probably a question for (SL9), and I can ask him/her about that. But there is an overall view of it that it's helping to prepare people for teacher training, among other things?**

104. Yes.

105. **I mean you were able to give a list of possible vocations and jobs that students could do, and that's interesting.**

106. Yes.

107. **How is Education Studies perceived within the institution as whole? You said at the beginning that it was perceived.....**

108. As a threat, yes. Erm, it is seen today as a core subject area within the institution's mission, if you like; it's central to that mission. Now then, I think it's fair to say as well that those involved in teacher training in the School of ITT began to see this subject area as a threat a year or so ago. You could see that the Faculty was developing non-QTS degrees and a lot of them were asking, well

why? And, of course, with the proposed cut-backs – substantial cutbacks now – the development of Education Studies was, and is, and will be crucial to the future well-being of this institution and tomorrow in my address I will refer back to that Academic Board meeting in '97-98. And I think, looking back at that meeting, you know that was a *crucial* meeting. If we hadn't secured the vote of the Academic Board that day we might not be sitting here today.

109. **Interesting. And that was with some opposition to it...**

110. Very much.

111. **Their interests, and the micropolitics of it, as it were.....?**

112. Indeed, indeed. But I think it's fair to say as well that a number of the ITT staff here are still slightly confused, I think, or are uncertain about exactly what is taught within the Education Studies Programme. What is different.

113. **OK, because I wanted to ask you about the schools. You've got the School of Early Years, the School of Education Studies, the School of Teacher Training. So are they really separate? People don't teach across those?**

114. That's a very good question, in fact. I've deliberately kept them apart for the last five years. However, if we are to work closely with (other institution name) to forge links and to develop a West Wales School of Education. I think the first step here is to see greater collaboration between the three schools internally within the Faculty. And that, I'm pleased to say, has already started to happen this year. Staff now do teach across schools.

115. **But they didn't originally: they were discrete?**

116. Yes, originally they taught within their own school. But probably half the staff now do contribute across the school boundaries.

117. **But there are staff who are teacher trainers and staff who are Education Studies people?**

118. Yes, yes. I think one issue, erm, that maybe explains that situation: teacher training is taught through the medium of both Welsh and English, so three quarters of the ITT staff – more than three quarters, probably 80-85% - are bilingual, OK? Now, obviously those within Education Studies, I don't think there are any Welsh speakers in that particular school at the moment. So they wouldn't be able to contribute to the primary course because of a lack of understanding of the Welsh language. So that has been one factor, I think, that has stopped the collaboration across the schools.

119. **Yes, that's very interesting, thank you. And is it in relation to government policy that..... I think you've probably addressed that in the .....**

120. Yes, well, actually I have a copy here of *The Learning Country* paving document. This was published in 2001 and it's basically a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales. So what we did, we looked at this, and we highlighted some major issues here and we addressed these then through the new programmes we were developing.....

121. **So that had an influence on the curriculum you're teaching – the knowledge that you teach?**

122. Indeed, yes.
123. **The knowledge that you teach is to some extent derived from that?**
124. Yes, very much so. I mean there's a whole section here on early years, for example. So what we've tried to do is to develop an undergraduate and also postgraduate training for those involved in early years. There's a chapter there on special educational needs as well and youth and community work.
125. **And you were telling me at lunchtime that the Furlong Report recommends the cessation of undergraduate QTS courses. Tell me, wouldn't that be good for this institution, because you've got a strong undergraduate Education Studies programme? I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it seems to me that would work well for you here.**
126. What we'd like to see here is the continuation of teacher training as co-element of the (Institution's) portfolio, mainly because of the issues I've talked through over lunch regarding bilingual teaching. Now we have approximately 400 students on non-QTS degree schemes here, it's going to be quite difficult, given the location of the (institution) to try and develop new initiatives and recruit up to another 300 students through similar courses in the future. The credit, or funded numbers, for BA Ed will be ring-fenced in future years. So we won't lose the actual funding, but we will be in a position to further enhance the non-QTS provision – Education Studies, Social Inclusion etc. and to develop new pre-professional courses.
127. **But you'd have additional postgraduate teacher training numbers, wouldn't you?**
128. I doubt it very much. At the moment we currently train some 400 primary BA students. We would lose those 400 places.
129. **You could convert them into undergraduate non-QTS.....?**
130. Yes.
131. **But you wouldn't get a comparable increase in the PGCE?**
132. No, certainly not.
133. **And you think it would be difficult to recruit more non-QTS students....?**
134. Well given the location of the (Institution) in (region) Wales, it's going to be difficult. We've done very, very well to....
135. **It has done well, and it seems that there is this market for undergraduate Education Studies.....**
136. Absolutely, absolutely. It's quite interesting, since we validated that degree back in '97-98 (Name of another institution) developed a similar course, (Name of another institution) have just validated a single honours Education Studies, (Name of another institution), I think, has a similar.... you know, it's developed nicely across Wales.
137. **And how much do you think the judgements made back in 1999 were about the way teacher training was going.... ? Was there a view of the market then? Was there a view of this as a good market.....?**

138. To be perfectly honest, no; I think that decision was linked to a probable reduction in ITT numbers.
139. **So you've been pleasantly surprised at the way it's gone? It wasn't part of your thinking at the time?**
140. Yes, yes. Well, with *The Learning Country* document being published as well, that was a great help and.....
141. **Your policy for staff appointments, then. I asked you about the discrete departments, so you would appoint people to one or the other?**
142. We would appoint to the School of Early Year, the School of Education Studies or the School of ITT. And those individuals will be obviously governed by the Head of School. As Head of Faculty I have five Heads of School and then within ITT I've got approximately 24 members of staff. Within Education Studies-Social Inclusion you have probably 8 or 9 and then 7 or 8 within Early Years Education.
143. **And is there a difference between the people who'd be appointed to Ed Studies? Who are they?**
144. (Laughs.)
145. **Do they have to have QTS, for example?**
146. No. No way, no. Erm, that's a good question, actually, I hadn't given that too much thought. Erm, Education Studies..... I think one or two do have QTS; the others have been working within different educational contexts outside teaching. The Head of School has come directly from the National Assembly in Cardiff. S/he was developing policies in the Assembly at the time. Erm, Early Years, then.... Yes, early years practitioners, who have some experience of HE in different institutions. Yes.
147. **But you're looking for a variety of people. Your not looking for ex-teachers who.....?**
148. No, not at all, not at all, no.
149. **And there is a view of people teaching across...**
150. Yes.
151. **And the last one is how you'd see the programme developing. And I think you've talked about that, really.**
152. Well, the future now is with (Name of another institution). There's no question about that. If we don't move in with (Name of another institution), then we'll be pushed together by the National Assembly. There's no question about that. The Furlong Report recommends the establishment of three schools of education in Wales. One in South West Wales, one in South East Wales – (Name of another institution) and (Name of another institution) being brought together - and one in North and Mid-Wales: (Name of another institution), (Name of another institution) and (Name of another institution) coming together. OK? What does that mean? Who knows? But obviously Education will continue to be taught here at (Name of institution) and also at (Name of another institution). At the moment

the initial discussions between both institutions suggests that, for the first few years at least, the new School of Education will concentrate on teacher training: teacher training, educational research and CPD. The non-QTS programmes then at both institutions will be branded within the (Region of) Wales School of Education, but they will continue to be taught at (Name of another institution) and at (Name of another institution). Those are the results of the first round of discussion. But when you do actually bring (Name of institution) and (Name of another institution) together you have a Joint Honours Education Studies here, a Joint Honours Education Studies in (Name of another institution). So in (Name of another institution) you have a degree in Counselling, a degree in Psychology. So that opens the doors for our students at (Name of institution) to study joint honours in Education Studies here and Psychology in (Name of another institution). In the same way, (Name of another institution) students could study Education Studies on their campus and Social Inclusion, Community Work and Early Years here at (Name of institution). So it does give that flexibility to students.

**153. Can I just ask about that: is there not competition between the institutions in Wales? How does that work? Because in England we're in vicious competition with each other.**

154. (Pause) To be perfectly, perfectly honest, I think erm.... all the institutions respect each other. The Heads of School, the Heads of Faculty, they get on well together. There's mutual respect at that particular level, but at a senior level, then – the Vice Chancellor, the Principal – of course, he or she does the best for his or her institution. In (Region of) Wales you'll get two Principals – Professor (Name) in (Name of another institution) and Dr (Name) here in (Name of institution) who are very, very supportive of Education. So hopefully that will be in our interest as a future (Region of) Wales School of Education. Both have come in from an educational background and they, of course, understand that Education is of great importance to the other institution as well. So that should help to provide a stable environment.

**155. Anything you'd want to add that you think I need to know about that I haven't asked?**

156. I don't think so. It's been a busy five or six years. We've doubled the number of students during that period. You know, it's been strategically led by the (Head of Institution) here, supported by myself as Head of Faculty and the Heads of Schools. I think the development of Education Studies and the other non-QTS programmes – let's be honest - has actually saved this institution. I'd go as far as to say that, I would. But it's given the (Institution) a sound basis to go forward with future initiatives linked to Education Studies.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Analysis of each interview set**

### Appendix 3

#### Analysis of interview sets

The following is the analysis of the interviews from each of the nine cases which were carried out immediately after the interviews had been conducted and transcribed. They include the researcher’s initial reflections and the temporary conclusions drawn at the time. This material was used as the basis for the analysis of the five themes in Chapter 7.

In each case there is an introduction to the background to Education Studies in the institution followed by a brief description of the nature and context of the interviews. The main analysis is under a series of headings which are linked to the interview questions. The sequence is varied in each case depending on the responses to the questions.

Cases 1 and 2 are the pilot interviews and, following those, there is a comparative analysis of the two. This informs the section 2 of Chapter 5 on the analysis of the pilot interviews.

The text has been anonymised by concealing the names of individuals, institutions and gender.

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## **Pilot interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Managers**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 1 on May 17 2004**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 1**

The institution is organised in Faculties within which schools are located. Education Studies is in the School of Education which is in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. Childhood Studies is separate and discrete subject in the Faculty of Health and Social Care and there is no link with Education Studies.

The Education Studies programme is currently in its first year in a combined honours degree with a second subject in with the following routes: Special Educational Needs, Applied Community Studies, Tourism and Leisure, Food Studies, The Outdoor Environment. The second subjects are sometimes taught by other schools in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, or the schools in another Faculty.

#### **Interviews**

These interviews were carried out when the researcher visited the university as an external member of a validation panel for a new route proposal, Education Studies and Early Years.

Interviews were carried out with the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Sport and Leisure, as a Senior Manager, who had been in post since 2002, and with the Subject Leader for Education Studies; s/he had worked at the university for ten years.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Paragraphs are numbered for reference. In the analysis the senior manager interview is referred to as SM1 and the Subject Leader as SL1, and paragraphs by their number: so SM1:26, SL1:27. The interviewers' speech is in bold. Comments inserted during transcription for clarity or explanation are in brackets.

#### **Reflections on the interview process**

The Subject Leader was known to the researcher as a member of the BESA group and his answers reflect former conversations and s/he tends to make assumptions about what he assumes the researcher already knows. S/he occasionally refers to Bath Spa as an example. The researcher had not previously met the Dean, but s/he knew of him and, similarly, referred to Bath Spa. At one point s/he asks a series of question about the course at Bath Spa which are not transcribed.

On listening to the recordings it seems that my interviewing style is too 'conversational' and by repeating their answers and giving signs of agreement tends to encourage the inexplicit quality of the answers.

The researcher's role as an external member of the validation panel, which occurred on the following day, was advantageous in that it gave some insights into the course structure and process, but may have affected their answers in making the interviewees guarded. For example,

I mean I'm trying to drag people away from..... dare I say it... a lot of the modules that were written for the Early Years bit I've changed.... (SL1:47)

However, both interviewees appeared to be open and uninhibited and occasionally refer to giving me confidential information.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

#### **Brief summary of findings**

1. Content largely derived single-handedly by the subject leader in a fervent mission to define Education Studies as socio-economic critique and strongly distinguished from teacher training. A pure Education Studies course is compromised by market forces in the form of students' desire for school-related content.
2. S/he is supported by the Dean who sees Education Studies as a liberating meta-analysis for undergraduates.
3. There is a high level of micro-politics over student numbers and complex inter-relations with other subjects.
4. There is antagonism towards Education Studies which is seen as low status by ITT staff.
5. There is lack of interest in the subject by the university management.

#### **Analysis of responses to questions**

##### **1 How did the programme originate and what were its antecedents?**

The programme was begun *ab origino* and not derived from any other courses. The Subject Leader (SL) had been a teacher and joined the university on the ITT programmes, but also had a sociology degree and was interested in social policy. S/he had a personal ambition to create an Education Studies programme outside ITT and the programme appears to be his individual initiative:

The original idea I had – because I'd been at a validation in the School of Health, and they'd been doing a degree on health and public policy, or something like that, I can't remember the exact title – and it just seemed to me there was a possibility of doing education and public policy, aimed at professionals, and other people, who needed to have an idea about public policy and education, but also how public policy was developed, how policy was generated, and so on. And that was..... I thought that was a good idea, but it wasn't allowed to progress for a number of reasons, namely that the guy who was Director of School then left (SL1:2).

However, because of a lack of interest by the Dean at the time, s/he made no progress with this until the new Dean arrived in 2000 and s/he had similar intentions.

So it was really that the present initiative was (Name of SM1). S/he felt, and I agreed, that we should go over to Education Studies: first to increase the portfolio of degrees that we have in the School of Education, also to increase the number of degrees not dominated by Ofsted and the rigours of ITT. (SL1:3)

SM1 concurred with this view:

I came to this university in 2002 and was very surprised that there was no Education Studies programme and nobody even talking about one. So, as Dean, I set about talking to people and found that, actually, people *had* been thinking of Education Studies programmes, but nothing actually had happened. It was a matter of galvanising interest and putting some energy behind it and finding a programme leader. We were very, very fortunate to have (SL1) who was very interested and had a whole host of ideas... (SM1:2)

So the programme has come into existence through the concurrence of the ambitions of the SL and the new Dean. The Dean is appreciative of the SL's broad perspective:

what was interesting about (SL1) was where the likes of me, and others, coming very much, if you like, from the teacher education service, (SL1) has a much broader span of interests: the community culture and all of these things and a pretty thoroughgoing grounding in all the philosophical tenets that we might see as underpinning Education Studies. So (SL1) was duly appointed programme leader and s/he set about developing the programme (SM1:2).

There is a strong commitment away from teacher training:

that's the beauty of having (SL1): he doesn't bring all that teacher education baggage with him/her in the same way. S/he has a much more liberated conception, I *think* (SM1:19).

However, there appeared to be no interest in the university management in the new programme in itself. Asked about whether the university is sympathetic to Education Studies

(Laughs) There's a level of disinterest..... The way we're set up, it is quite different from other places. This is my patch.... And what we do here is we balance our budgets, deliver on a multitude of objectives; we draw line under the objectives. Nobody bothers you; it's wonderful! But in some senses you want them, as you say, you want them to care (SM1:31).

And, despite the fact that there is a strong student demand for Education Studies, the Dean found it difficult to acquire numbers for the subject. S/he has been limited by the restriction of student numbers within faculties, although she has been able to make some transfers between the schools within the faculty:

As to where the numbers come from, that has been *extremely* difficult and, in fact, where they've come from – and I'm glad this is confidential – is that the numbers have actually come from the other faculties. Because, unlike a lot of

universities..... I'm used to the context where, if you develop a new programme which is a good recruiter, everybody claps their hands and says go away and get on with it. But here, very firmly, numbers are sitting in faculties. And that's because we have a devolved resource model and so each dean is responsible for his or her salvation and ultimately the jobs of their staff. So you don't relinquish numbers to another.... Now, some of that brokering at senior level is going on and I'm hoping that we'll be able to attract more HEFCE numbers from the university to expand the present programme. But what I have been able to do is to move numbers from one school to another, but with difficulty, because I've then got staff who I can't deploy fully and I've got areas where I can't staff fully. So, we've covered it..... (SM1:3)

..... here, it's the difference with other universities. Here it's because we have, if you like, six robber barons. We sit very firmly on our numbers. If anybody wants any of my numbers it's away with you, off with your head! (SM1:9)

The SL reports that even the transfers within the school have involved micro-politics and there is considerable animosity to Education Studies:

Well the numbers come from courses which under-recruit. But, of course, within the Faculty they've come from..... they've come from Outdoor Leisure and Food School, and they're very worried that..... Well I was told by the director of that school that they saw Education Studies as a Trojan horse that was actually going to see the end of Consumer Studies because we're taking their numbers (SL:1:15).

A further rationale for Education Studies which they both give is the demographic trend which is inclined to lead to the reduction in the need for teachers:

..... looking at the demographics there's a good chance that the number of teachers is going to be reduced. (SL1:3)

It's very interesting at the moment, because, when you think about the demographic change, the fact that reducing numbers in primary and all that, it's going to have to.... and of course you've got staff saying to you, 'We need more staff on the....' (indistinct...ITT course?) and I say, Yes, but.....in three years time we won't. Whereas if we converted (to 3+1) then we could.... (SM1:51).

### **What do you see as the aims of the programme?**

Answers to this question emerged during the discussion of the previous question. As noted above, there is almost an antipathy towards teacher training. SL1 sees it as the broader analysis of education, a critique of policy in socio-economic terms:

I argue that I see Education Studies as viewing education in its widest context. It's about educational policy. Education Studies has come out of the classroom in some respects and was dominated by the needs of teachers, because I think education's wider than that, and in that sense, how I view it is

as an industry; I mean this is a reasonable size commercial enterprise..... it's a business. (SL1:23)

However, s/he also sees it as offering critique for practising teachers:

I'm not saying that's good, but for most people to actually criticise who teach, the business policy that has been developed, an understanding of those processes, and there isn't anybody at the moment and I think teachers get shafted because there's a lot of people out there who say the emperors' got no clothes, so to speak. Because I don't see there's a critique of government policy at the moment. There's moans and groans and half-hearted attempts at industrial action by a few teachers, but there's no systematic, high profile critique.... Ted Wragg is the only person who contend..... but even then his critiques are only located within the classroom. (SL1:23)

There seems to be a tension here in that, on the one hand, SL1 sees Education Studies as that which is divorced from teaching, but it is an essential critique for teachers. But he also sees it as offering alternative careers to teaching which reflect his interest in public policy:

It's for graduates who can go into a range of professions which are allied to education, mainly that they want to go and be as teachers, but it seems to me that there are so many jobs these days in terms of..... well like thirty years ago you didn't have big accounting firms being involved in education. Now we do. Well you've got to have someone who has an understanding of policy in education, that wider overview; so obviously there are some jobs there. (SL1:29)

I think we concentrate on policy a lot. In the second year we have the politics of learning and we also have (hesitates) management in curriculum ..... there are a couple of modules that are oriented towards that, trying to get people to think about How did we actually get here? What's the nature of education policy? Both at the national and international level, but also understanding the ideology behind it, you know, because nothing comes without an agenda. (SL1:31).

There is a tension here, though, in what he expresses as a mismatch between the perspectives of students and tutors:

I've come to the conclusion that there's a mismatch between the views of the lecturers and the motivation of the students (SL1:23).

By this he seems to mean that students perceive Education Studies as a route into teaching, whereas he sees it as a broader academic study:

.... I suppose what we *do* do is sell it and say, look what you'll be is a better teacher, because I think that one thing that teacher education has a deficit in is in terms of actually understanding about education. (SL1:23)

Underlying the Dean's and the SL's responses about the aims and the nature of Education Studies lies its relationship with ITT. Both are stressing its broader nature and its critique of current processes and policies, but both seem troubled by the lack of a clear distinction. For the SL the problem is that students perceive themselves as future teachers:

If we said that you couldn't get into teaching from it we wouldn't recruit (SL1:25).

For the Senior Manager it is the 'baggage of teacher education' which conflicts with a 'pure study' of education.

The SL is concerned about the status of the subject:

From my perspective I see it as ....(hesitant) theory for teachers. I keep on saying Education Studies has to move out of the classroom and when you say it to people they look at you quite askance, but I think it has to have some sort of status and if you start to say it's a sort of ITT route, then that's not good. (SL1:27)

This is reinforced by the low status which the subject seems to suffer in the eyes of ITT colleagues. They have experienced animosity from the ITT staff about Education Studies entering the PGCE course:

And in fact I've taken a lot of battering..... I don't know what kind of 3+1 policy you have at Bath Spa, but what we do have is guaranteed interviews for our Early Years PGCE and I know (Subject Leader Name) at (another institution); I've talked to him and PGCE people there won't touch it. I know the same problem occurred at (another institution); the PGCE people won't look at Education Studies. It's a huge problem; but here, again with (SM1)'s backing - there's an issue of power politics here and it had to be fought for and I still think we've got battles further on down the road (SL1:25).

This is confirmed by SM1 who, again, refers to the negative attitude of ITT staff to Education Studies:

Mm.... it was quite interesting here about guaranteed places - and we don't guarantee places, we guarantee an interview - but even that was a struggle..... (indistinct) because they put around themselves the mystique of expertise....

### **What is the theoretical framework for Education Studies?**

The SL finds difficulty with this question:

What do you mean by that? (SL1:41)

(Hesitates) I mean even within the group..... I've given a very partial view of it. I think if my view was in discussion in a sort of wider..... there would be probably dissension from it..... (hesitates) (SL1:42)

Debate within the team? (SL1:43)

Right..... er and debate within the course.... there are tensions (laughs).  
(SL1:44)

S/he appears to see it as his personal view of Education Studies and notes how he has impressed his particular view on the content of modules:

I mean I'm trying to drag people away from..... dare I say it... a lot of the modules that were written for the Early Years bit I've changed (laughs). (SL1:47)

He appears to see the current ITT staff as lacking in political consciousness because of their age and professional focus:

I mean they were so ITT; I've opened them up. I mean some of them are still a but ITT-ish, but I think we've got to.... I wanted them to fit into the widest possible context. So I think there are tensions there. I think part of those tensions arise because A) well I'm 50, so that means that when I was educated, when I did my PGCE 28 years ago I went into teaching when I was 27 and I'd also done a sociology degree and that knowledge and background means that you are a different sort of animal from colleagues who are now in their 30s. And I think that they have a very narrow focus on what education is ..... What amazes me is when I was a student I was always politically active to some degree and that was always fed into things like what I discussed. But a lot of colleagues there's an absence of politics, and absence of the sociology and understanding, there's an absence of a critique of what they're doing.  
(SL1:49)

For the SL, then, Education Studies is a political critique to counter the hegemony of government control.

For SM1, it has a liberating function and is about methodological frameworks, rather than content or theory:

..... my theoretical basis for it would be a sort of meta-analysis of educational issues and developments in what is a very fast-changing scene; and that, I think, is its undeniable strength, because somebody could come to me to learn Education Studies and I wouldn't necessarily need them to have a whole raft of previous knowledge; what I would want them to go away with is the ability to question or critique education in all of its many forms. In a sense I think that's quite liberating, because it means that one isn't harnessed into sets of theories and bodies of knowledge that have got to be learnt (SM1:27).

His/her view of educational theory is interesting; she sees it as a meta-analysis which draws upon theoretical models, but in itself is a distinct discourse:

..... rather than being a body of theories, if you like, what it does is to *draw* on the body of theory, but it actually is itself a tool which facilitates discourse, and it facilitates analysis. (SM1:27)

Again, this view seems to be driven by an aversion to the current form of initial teacher training:

..... it as a meta-analysis..... that is its real strength, at a time when what is happening is quite the converse, quite the reverse. What we're doing with teachers is turning out relatively uncritical, trained beasts... (SM1:29)

### **Relationships with other subjects**

The relationship between Education Studies and other subjects appears complex and frustrating. It is almost as though the subject is being defined by its contradistinctions from other subjects, including teacher training. The relationship with Childhood Studies is particularly difficult:

Yes, we've got the links with.... Just a micro-political point, actually, the fact that Childhood Studies is within Health (another faculty). And that's problematic for us because it's actually in a school called 'Childhood and Midwifery Studies'. Vexing, to say the least and extremely amusing. So, again, I've had discussions with the Dean and..... it's a hands-off situation really. If Childhood Studies was here with Education Studies we could go...(SM1:37).

Relationships with Psychology are also difficult because they can recruit students anyway and have their concerns about BPS recognition:

Yes, now that's an interesting one. We did contemplate having a half degree with Psychology. But, of course, we can't do it because, what happens is, in order to get their psychological ..... well registration with BPS I guess it is, they have to do so many units in Psychology and half programmes are not a sensible option for them. And I mean it's a good recruiter, so why do they need to bother? (SM1:38).

### **Is a Education Studies a way of avoiding state intervention??**

Both deny this as a motivating factor, citing the change in demographic change and the need for non-ITT undergraduate courses:

No, that's not motivation as such. I tend to use the argument to colleagues.... I would be using the argument why would you be involved in that, with the demographics and the changing nature of teaching workforce and so on, and so if you're sensible about these things you'll keep your fingers in a couple of different pies and you can be sure that one of those is going to be there one way round. But, you know, in terms of ways of actually escaping from Ofsted inspections that's not..... (SL1:69)

No. Obviously there's a extent to which we want to diversify the portfolio so that we're not overly dependent on TTA funding; so here was that element. But no, if anything we're running too many things. (SM1:69)



**How much does staff interest and expertise determine the curriculum content?**

The Subject Leader didn't reply directly to this, although his description of the development of the course implies that his own subject background is strong influence. He went on to emphasise his interest in removing the ITT influence by appointing member of staff without QTS:

.... we've just recruited somebody else, targeted at Education Studies..... S/he hasn't got QTS, which I think is good as far as I'm concerned because nobody will be able to suck him/her into doing ITT, so from that perspective I think that's healthy. (SL1:73)

We've just been given the go-ahead to appoint an Early Years person and I've had a major battle with that because they'll have to service part of the ITT courses, so they want somebody just hot out of the classroom and I've said I could do with someone like that like a hole in the head, because I want someone with that wider view of Early Years and experience, so there's going to be battles over that. (SL1:73)

When asked whether staff are reluctant to teach Education Studies s/he is ambiguous:

Ah..... (pause) There's a lot of politics here, right? Because we have a Childhood Studies Degree, and that's shared with the School of Health (in a separate Faculty) and Education Studies is seen as a.... and that's older, well it started in about '96, it's eight years old. So it's split between the School of Health and the School of Education. So it's like the School of Education declaring a bit of UDI and there've been lots of battles which I don't really want to go into..... (SL1:55).

Oh, the micro-politics are phenomenal (laughs) and the wheeling and dealing is unbelievable, but we're still here and we're growing.... and that's important.... (SL1:63).

Asked whether the ITT staff and their expertise has any effects on the curriculum, he is adamant at first, but then has to acknowledge the role of classroom learning:

No, definitely not. On the other hand I wouldn't want to say that it has been totally excluded. I mean we do have modules on how children learn mathematics. *But*, those are from the perspective of the process of how children learn mathematics; it's not about how to teach the National Numeracy Strategy; it's not how to do a good mathematics lesson; it is about how young children develop ideas and experiences and how you develop mathematical thinking and draw on the work of people like Skemp and Bruner and God knows who else, as well as the American stuff (SN1:79).

The Dean is determined to appoint new staff to Education Studies at the expense of ITT. This is almost conspiratorial:

Ah well, (tutor names)'s appointment is a case in point. Made a member of staff redundant who.... Well s/he wanted to go on ill-health retirement at the time, so I

just converted the post to an Education Studies post. Er.... (hesitates) the school where we moved numbers *from* ..... that's, you know, very sensitive, but what we would see happening is through natural wastage, or other means, they would be replaced by Education Studies. (SM1:67)

**You'd see Education Studies growing? (SM1:70)**

Oh God, yes, better had do! (laughs) Oh, very much. I don't know whether (SL1) always believes me, because sometimes I have to speak with forked tongue, trying to get numbers from somebody over here, and telling somebody you can't have them over here and – the usual Dean's stuff.... (laughs) (SM1:71)

**Vocational outcomes for Education Studies**

The SL has difficulty with this and is unable to identify specific posts; it reflects his/her rather singular view of Education Studies as critique:

(Hesitates) Erm, I haven't got any.... I should have done thought about that..... If you look at it as an industry with diverse roles and so on with diverse providers, factors that are involved in this huge thing called 'education', then I see it as that we need to equip people working with critical thinking, with the ability to have some knowledge and understanding of education processes, have some basic skills to hold down a job (SN1:81).

**The role of the QAA benchmarks**

The SL finds little in the benchmarks:

We have looked at them, but what I find about that is they're so loosely drawn that you could drive a coach and horses through it.... I thought the Education Studies benchmarks..... well, it didn't define anything in terms of the body of knowledge you should have, because it's so widely drawn. Actually, I think it's so widely drawn that I think it's a useless document. It's there, you look at it and you think.... you pay lip service to it. Well you don't even pay lip service to it: if you talk about education you can't help but meet it. I mean, that's the problem, you don't have to say, 'oh I'm going to include that bit, or not that bit.... There are other subject areas that have a key core.... (SN1:83)

**Do market forces play a role?**

In reply to this he sees the other school-related subjects as the market appeal, and so Education Studies has to compromise with these in order to draw students in:

I think if you just did what students need you wouldn't get the course. I think we do pay attention to what students want, in terms of the fact that we've got work-based learning. I know that's good practice now.... there was a time when the Dean wasn't too keen about the costs, but we kept it in, and I think that was the right decision, because it's important. The fact that we've got modules on Special Needs, Maths, Language, on Science..... (SL1:89).

Again, s/he would prefer to see a 'pure' Education Studies programme, but regards this as implausible and recognises the need to compromise his principles and comply with students' interests:

.... if we didn't have those I think it would give us problems. And sometime I want to write a module called what are the reasons for education? And looking at that would be a really nice and exciting module to teach. Whether people would opt for it, I don't know. I suspect, I don't know, that especially at Level 3, we need that exciting educational ideas and engaging. So in a sense that's not there and the other stuff is there and you can only do so much. We've got a module in this new one (The Early Years Route) a small business enterprise module, and that's there to say to people, if you want to set up your own nursery, for example, or be involved in the management of a private nursery. I mean I suggested it, but I don't *like* it. (SL1:93)

Language, Literacy and Learning is a recruitment mechanism, Special Needs is a recruitment mechanism. There isn't much else that isn't (laughs). But they are there and they're compromises and it would be nice to have an Education Studies degree, but before we have an Education Studies degree I would want to build up the staff work on it so we've got the numbers and so that we've got a body of people who've got those sorts of views. (SL1:101)

The Dean has a more practical view of market forces in terms of gaining student numbers and seems less concerned with the purist principle of Education Studies:

Yes, although there is a sense in which the people who have been able to get on training courses, and so in marketing terms we might see..... You know, if there are fewer primary courses, if anything Education Studies will be an even greater pull. (SM1:57).

## **Pilot interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 2 on 13 July 2004**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 2**

The Institution is located on two sites. The School of Education is located on a new purpose-built campus. Undergraduate programmes in Education include a three-year BEd with Qualified Teacher Status and Education Studies in a Combined Honours Degree. Education was originally combined with Humanities; the Humanities pathway is being phased out to be replaced by Early Childhood Studies. The Education Studies programme commenced in 1999 with some 40 students, largely recruited from those who had been unsuccessful in applications for the QTS degree. It now runs with some 160 students (80 fte) in total. A Single Honours Degree is being proposed to begin in 2005. Priority has been given to the teacher training programmes during the year 2003-04 because of Ofsted inspection, following weak inspection results in a previous year.

#### **Interviews**

The original Subject Leader for the Education Studies Degree who had done the original developmental work, relinquished the post in 2003, although s/he still teaches on the programme. S/he is interviewed first as Subject Leader (SL2A). S/he was replaced by a colleague who had worked in the School of Education for some years. At the time of the interview s/he was at the end of his first year of running the course. S/he is interviewed as the second Subject Leader (SL2B). Finally, the Head of the School of Education is interviewed as the Senior Manager (SM2). S/he had been in the post for one year.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

SL2A was known to me as a former colleague of ten years previously. S/he was helpful and organised the other two interviews for me. S/he is familiar with the Education Studies course at Bath Spa and refers to it on several occasions to explain and contrast the course at case 2. The interview with SL2B took place immediately after the interview with SL2A. SL2B was rather guarded at the outset and expressed a slight level of impatience, saying that s/he had only 15 minutes. S/he became more cordial as the interview progressed and in fact spent longer with me. Similarly, the Head of School had little time between meetings, but in fact did offer to spend longer with me once the interview had begun.

My different relationships with the interviewees has produced some interesting outcomes. SL2A knew me well and so is predictably informal, and speaks openly. There is, though, occasionally a tension for him/her in not wishing to present the course negatively. For example, at SL2A42 s/he describes the sociological introduction to the course as 'quick and dirt...', but then corrects this to 'quite intensive'. This reflects, on the one hand, his/her desire to be open with me, but on the other, to present him/herself and the course favourably. The other two interviewees, while expressing themselves initially willing to be interviewed, were guarded at the outset, but became more open as the interviews progressed. The interviews revealed

some interesting dynamics between the three individuals and these are discussed in the analysis. The three were remarkably open in the information which they revealed about each other.

On occasions during the interviews there were points which implied criticism of individuals or the institution and the interviewees were defensive. For example, the Head of School is clearly aware that there is a negative view of Education Studies in the school and she tries to counter that. I did tend to find myself probing in the form of a QAA review about the quality of the programme.

During these interviews I attempted to adopt a less intrusive, and less leading, style than in Case 1, confining my remarks to comments of assent to the interviewees. This was not difficult in the case of the two Subject Leaders as they both spoke at length. With the Senior Manager, however, her guarded responses at the outset meant that I had to make a number of statements which tended to reveal my position.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

#### **Brief summary of findings**

1. Content was largely derived single-handedly by the subject leader in 1998-99 as the sociology of education, SL2A's specialism.
2. The rationale for the course is the retention of the study of the subject disciplines of the old QTS course and which had disappeared from undergraduate ITT because of the TTA standards. The content is largely that which had been left out of the ITT programmes with the focus on classroom practice.
3. It was also designed to provide employment for those staff displaced from undergraduate classroom-focussed initial teacher training.
4. The theoretical framework is described in terms of the subject disciplines of Psychology Sociology and Philosophy, although these need to be concealed from the students' perceptions at the initial stage.
5. The new Subject Leader is critical of what s/he sees as a narrow range of content with too much sociology, the lack of psychological material about learning and the lack of an international dimension.
6. The subject leaders have a rather negative view of the students as low attainers who don't achieve a place on the QTS course. This appears to give the subject low status in the institution, although this is vehemently denied by the Head of School. Its low status might be a function of running Education Studies alongside undergraduate teacher training courses.
7. The subject leaders see the future for undergraduate Education Studies as an international programme, rather than for home students. The rise of Childhood Studies appears to them to be taking the main body of home students.
8. The low status of the course is reflected in the apparent reluctance of staff to teach on it. The current subject leader is reluctant and his/her interests lie elsewhere in the foundation degree for Teaching Assistants.
9. The university has a 'benign indifference' towards Education Studies.
10. Students' choices and views have little affect on the content of the programme. Students would rather be doing a teacher training course, while the staff wish to be teaching 'academic Education Studies'.

11. There is a limited perception of the career opportunities for Education Studies students, other than teaching.
12. The Head of School wishes to counter the negative views of the subject, but has a limited perception of it, and no particular vision for it.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The three interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

The programme was begun in 1999 with an initiative by the former subject leader (SL2A). S/he was finding him/herself increasingly redundant in undergraduate initial teacher training. The TTA standards, together with the move to a three-year BEd programme, had removed the space for the teaching of sociology, which had been his/her specialism and interest:

One reason was a negative reason and that was the perception of the loss of Education Studies from initial teacher education as initial teacher education moved away from that 1960s-1970s model of the four-year BEd with lots of sociology, psychology and philosophy and moved towards a more competence-based and skills-based teacher training, as it then became. Then the foundation studies of education were eliminated, and not only were they eliminated but we moved away from a four-year undergraduate initial teacher education programme to a three-year initial teacher-training programme. So that was all Ofsted, Teacher Training Agency and I guess everybody knows that kind of stuff. So I thought, well what is going to happen to the study of education? And so I thought there must be a way of retaining that, or bringing it back in. So that was one strand in my thinking. The other strand was that the study of education was something in its own right and, therefore, why shouldn't there be an undergraduate programme in Education Studies broadly similar to any other of the liberal arts. So those were, in a sense, I suppose, the twin reasons for wanting to start an undergraduate Education Studies programme (SL2A:2).

....by the time we got to 1998 the old QTS course with the foundation studies in education had already gone and there were a number of people like me who had trained as sociologists and who, in a sense, felt a little empty, as it were (SL2A:4).

The content of the programme, then, seems to have been defined as the *retention* of the subject disciplines which had been the theoretical framework for the former QTS course. SL2A stresses that it was his initiative and that it was his/her intention to retain the teaching of the sociology of education and to retain a role for him/herself:

It was from me. I was.... I suppose that erm.... Just from a personal standpoint I've always.... I guess I've worn two hats.... since I've been in higher education, what, for twenty-five years, and the two hats have been: one as, yes, an educationalist, because I've always worked in schools of education wherever I've been, but I've always worn the hat of sociologist and, more

broadly speaking, a social scientist. And so I've always had, if you like, those twin interests, and they came together when I was involved in, you know, the old-style four-year BEd courses where I could indulge my own interests, sociology and so on and so forth. But once that all went then I was left with, as far as teacher training was concerned, left with all the practice-oriented stuff, which I was always involved with when I became involved with teacher training, but that wasn't me and wasn't what I came in to do. And, therefore, this allowed me personally to get back, not only to some of the old things I was doing (SL2A: 11)

S/he professes to seeing Education Studies, the, as a means to 'indulge his own interests' and the course seems to be rather narrowly-defined sociology, being SL2A's particular discipline strength. It does appear that, although his/her initiative had been supported by a new dean, s/he was in sole charge of the programme and the content was determined by his/her particular definition; the existence of the subject was contingent on the particular career intention of the individual concerned:

..... it coincided with the appointment of a new dean here; she came in the September of '98 and, I thought, well I'm going to get in there very quickly and I had one of the first meetings with her. Basically I introduced myself and said, well what are your ideas as far as the school is concerned? And she said, 'Well actually I'm very interested in having undergraduate Education Studies'. And I said, so am I! So, to cut a long story short she said, "Right, yours to develop". And so I spent the greater part from September through to May developing it and getting it started.....

He adds rather nervously:

..... well with help, and as a team. But I drove it... I drove the programme (SL2:13)

And s/he does confirm the sociological orientation:

Question: *Because you were instrumental in originating it, does that mean that it tends to be sociological, philosophical rather than.....* (SL2A: 44)

Yes..... Not so much psychological, because we didn't have any..... We seem to have lost our psychologists... So we didn't have too many..... We had to look at who could contribute... We had - and we still have - a relatively narrow staff base, because most of the staff are tied up with teacher training (SL2A:45).

At this point s/he seems concerned by the implication of a narrow focus for the course and tries to suggest that he also taught psychological elements, although s/he speaks quietly and unconfidently about this:

... so it took up most of my time, erm, and I guess I tended to teach across the disciplines (very quiet and indistinct) .....I did the psychological stuff....although it isn't my bag.... (SL2A:45)

The strong sociological emphasis is seen as a weakness by the new subject leader (SL2B). S/he confirms that the programme was defined by SL2A. When asked about the theoretical framework SL2B replies,

I think that would be inspired by ... the perspective of the original course leader, who was essentially a sociologist. When you look at the content of the programme, even through its evolution to date, it has had a very strong sociological orientation, which I think is one of the weaknesses and one of the things I want to change (SL2B:8).

S/he would like to see more on the psychology of learning and less on the 'educational provision':

The other driver is my/our philosophy, which wants to broaden what we're doing in Ed Studies to bring in a strong element which says any form of education at all is to do with people and learning. And, therefore, Ed Studies ought to acquaint people with the debates about the nature of teaching and learning, as distinct from the debates about the nature of educational provision, which we tend to concentrate on at the moment. So I want to bring in a strand that at least allows the opportunity to get back into some applied psychology of learning. Erm, yes..... learning theory through motivation and all that sort of thing (SL2B:10).

The new SL would also like to see a further broadening:

..... we don't do enough in my view about the political control and political role of education..... We don't do much at present on the economics of education. We do stuff about the sociological, about redistribution, but the actual economics..... And we certainly don't do enough about international comparisons (SL2B:10).

The theoretical framework is seen by both Subject Leaders as the subject disciplines. However, both are careful about the use of the terminology with students. SL2A was worried that students would be frightened by the terms 'psychology' and 'sociology' and didn't use them in the titles of modules:

Well we decided that we wouldn't go down that route totally in the sense that we'd have something called 'psychology of education'..... no we didn't. So we did that, I think, for a number of reasons. One, not to frighten the horses too much, but it was a kind of compromise, so the initial..... The programme's changed a lot; for example we did have a couple of first-year modules, one that was concerned with something like educational institutions, or the study of educational institutions..... can't remember what it was called. And then we had another one which was the study of educational ideology, society and one that was looking at individual development. So *essentially* a historical macro-sociology one, one a more philosophical sociology of knowledge....(indistinct, mumbling). And then another one which was much more psycho... psychol..... *psychologically* oriented. So the disciplines – the foundation subjects – they were there, but they weren't taught watertight in the sense..... the titles suggested that, you know, there might even be a number



of disciplinary influences within each of them. But one was, you know, *much* more psychologically, one was much more philosophical, one was much more sociological..... (SL2A:41).

..... We didn't feel that that was going to attract the punters. We felt that they would..... once we got into these things, into the subjects, then they very well might be interested. But, as we know, labels put off people (SL2A:51).

Again, there is hesitancy in his/her description of non-sociological elements. The point here, though, is that it was felt that the students ('the horses') would be disaffected by the subject disciplines. The subject disciplines are made more evident to students in the second and third years:

.....when they got to the second year, *then*, consciously taking it up a notch, we did actually have – we still do have – a module called 'Sociological Perspectives on Educational Processes' and it is a sociology course, and we take them from the very beginning..... what is sociology? And I give them a quick and dirt..... well certainly a fairly intensive introduction to sociology - some of them might already have those elements – and then come on to a study of current issues in sociology. And then you'll have another one which is a final year module, which is one that I've run, called 'Education in an Inter-cultural Context' and so that draws on a number of disciplines; so yes, for instance, sociology, history.... er, in sociolinguistics.... (SL2A:43).

The reluctance to name the subject disciplines might be a function of the criticisms of the educational disciplines in the literature on teacher training. However, there is another factor at work here: a perception of the students as being insufficient to cope with the study of these academic disciplines because they are low attainers, the ones who failed to get onto the teacher training programme. SL2A explains:

..... we took from two broad groups of students: students who failed for one reason or another to get onto the initial teacher training programme, either because they weren't competitive compared with other students, or they didn't get their GCSE maths or science, and that wasn't needed for this particular programme. That was one group. The other group of students was from clearing: those who were routing around for something to do – and so on and so forth. So I guess the initial cohort consisted of ..... students with..... relatively low A-level grades, compared with those in the initial teacher training programme (SL2A:6).

The deficit perspective on the students is shared by the new Subject Leader:

Yet we recognise that a number of our students come into this programme because they've failed to get onto the, particularly primary, teacher training (SL2B:6).

And particularly for our students, the 18 year-olds – huge, sweeping generalisation coming up here – are immensely parochial. Most are (Local place name) people... and they tend not to think much beyond (Local place name) (SL2B:11).

..... the thought of trying to get some of our 18 year-olds interested and fired up by the economics and politics of education when they struggle to name the prime minister..... (SL2B:12)

SL2B sees the subject itself as a resort for those students who are not capable of higher things, and so Education Studies is described in these deficit terms, as second-best to teacher training:

Ed Studies is not a very sexy subject, as seen by people out there. So we tend to recruit students from the weaker end of the academic spectrum. .... returners to education (SL2B:10).

We struggle to recruit. We do. And for most of our students it is a second best (SL2B:28).

This deficit perspective on the course and the students is fervently denied by the Head of School. At the beginning of the interview, asked about Education Studies s/he rather pointedly notes that it is *valued*:

Well, it is an undergraduate programme, of which we do not have many in the school and, therefore, it's extremely valuable (SM2:2).

It is evident that she is conscious of the subject having a low perceived status and is anxious to counter this view. When asked about the two subject leaders' comments about students simply being those who failed to get onto the QTS course, she replies:

No, no, no. Far from it..... Their history goes before mine, and what I have heard, from them, is that the first cohort of students was not particularly strong because I think the programme was validated during the year and they recruited onto it in the September without any marketing and things like that. So I think that they felt that they'd picked up most of their students from clearing. So that's perhaps coloured them in a way that my impression hasn't been (SL:2:18).

There is no hierarchy of courses in this school. I keep saying that ..... (laughs).... I keep saying it: there is no hierarchy (SM2:52).

Of course, the fact that she 'keeps saying' it probably means that there is such a perception. It easy to see that the co-existence of Education Studies and QTS courses might lead to this negative perception as a route for failures.

### **The relationship between Education Studies and teacher training**

Some of this has already become apparent above in that SL2A describes the content as that which was excluded from old QTS courses. Asked whether the content of Education Studies is helpful to, or informs, future teachers both SLs reply negatively:

No..... I don't think so (SL2A:67)

No, we wanted to make sure that it had an integrity of its own. We wanted to..... although we were aware of the reality that significant numbers would go in, almost as soon as the first group of graduation we knew that not all of them were going to go in (SL2A:69).

Asked whether the TTA standards had any effect on the course content, SL2A replies,

No, no, we steered clear of it. So again - looking at intercultural - students need a knowledge of race relations, but that didn't influence it at all, no (SL2A:73).

So the decision to include 'intercultural education' was made as part of a view of the nature of Education Studies as an academic subject, rather than because it might inform future teachers.

SL2B sees teacher training as a subject of study for Education Studies, but attempts to reject the notion Education Studies as being a form of teacher training. Asked about the relationship between Education Studies and teacher training s/he replies:

Coincidental, rather than planned, and the stuff that's going on within the UK at the moment in terms of teacher training and teaching is obviously subject material for the critical engagement that forms Education Studies. We, the course team – such as it is – do not see ourselves in any way as being *quasi* or *ersatz* or surrogate teacher training; we're a discipline (SL2B:6).

SL2A does note that it would provide future teachers with a critical analysis, although s/he does not elaborate on this:

.....they would also have acquired a hopefully thorough and clear understanding of education with due processes and ideas which they mightn't necessarily get from a teacher training programme.....and I think there's some, at least anecdotal, evidence that our students who have gone onto a teacher programme – a PGCE – have been at a distinct advantage compared with some others (SL2A:33).

And s/he sees Education Studies as a way of students 'testing the water' in teaching:

I think some of them were quite glad of the opportunity to test out what it's like to be in school either during the course of this programme or getting jobs as teaching assistants before they go, 'oh this is for me, I'll apply for a PG', or 'no, I'm really not going to be able to stand this'. But at least they've ended up with a degree which is an academic degree.... (SL2A:69).

Education Studies, then, does appear to be seen by both as content which is distinct from, rather than supplementary to, teacher training. SL2B's notion of Education Studies as a 'discipline' seems to be a way of defining its distinctiveness. For SL2A, the content is that which used to be, but is no longer, the subject disciplines of teacher training.

## Staffing for Education Studies

The negative perspective on Education Studies, together with the priority given to teacher training, does appear to affect the staffing of the course. The initial staff base for seems to have been limited to the first subject leader, in that, as noted above, s/he had to cover content which was outside his main expertise, and his mention of 'others' in the planning is hesitant:

I think..... Yeah..... I guess it was. Erm, it was me, but in discussion with others we arrived at those aims (SL2A:33).

..... so it took up most of my time, erm, and I guess I tended to teach across the disciplines (very quiet and mumbling) .....I did the psychological stuff....(indistinct)... although it isn't my bag.... (SL2A:45).

SL2B's view appears to be that staffing is made principally for teacher training and that Education Studies has taken second priority:

We've made one appointment two years ago who had not been involved in teacher training. But s/he was an early years specialist and we hired him/her for Ed Studies, but in the end we used him/her almost exclusively for early years. To date we have made no appointments specifically for Ed Studies (SL2B:36).

The Dean contradicts this, although his/her protests are rather vehement and perhaps reflects her awareness that there is a lower priority for Education Studies. Asked whether there is separate staffing for Education Studies and for teacher training, s/he replies no, but rushes to defend him/herself against possible accusations of discrimination by SL2B, but s/he does acknowledge that teacher training has had priority in the past year:

No. The policy in the school – and you'll have had C's version of this because he's feeling sorry for himself at the moment – but I'll tell you what the exact..... The policy in the school is that people teach to their strengths, preferably their research strengths, across the programmes..... During this year we have had Ofsted inspectors crawling all over us..... and (SL2A) agreed with me that where there was conflict..... if there were conflicts of interest, for this year ITT should have priority. Now..... I don't know, because I asked him/her to talk..... (Hesitates) Er, I have not seen from him/her his/her spreadsheet with requests for staff hours yet. So..... (SM2:40).

Asked whether staff prefer to teach Education Studies she becomes yet more adamant about the equal status of Education Studies, which is easy to interpret as 'defensiveness' and leads to the possible conclusion that there is a problem in the way that Education Studies is perceived by staff:

Well, I don't know. I repeat the policy that people teach to their strengths across the school. That's my perception.... We have got some *very* strong staff in the Ed Studies area, with great enthusiasm..... You know if there was something about research in the Ed Studies programme, I can't see why a

research professor shouldn't be involved. I've done some teaching on it myself. So, I think that (SL2B's) view that s/he gets second best, which s/he once said in this office and I was quite shocked by, because in my view s/he's got what s/he's ever asked for. I've talked to him/her, so s/he's obviously telling you differently.... (Angrily) I don't see it as a Cinderella. I don't know how many times I've got to say it. Nor do I see the foundation degrees as Cinderella subjects. I regard them very, very highly. I've done some teaching on that, as well (SM2:42).

They've got a chip on their shoulder, actually, I think. No, I'm beginning to think that (SL2B) has got a chip on his/her shoulder about this. I'll have to have a word with him/her..... (SM2:44).

### **Students' perceptions and their effect on the course content**

There are suggestion that the course to date has not been popular with students, reflecting, again, its low status in the institution in relation to teacher training. SL2A implies that there has been some student dissatisfaction:

I think that has..... Not all of it, by no means has all the programme.... I *think* that has been popular and students, I think you'll find, will say it's the curate's egg, good in parts. The initial groups of students, initial cohorts, still saw it as a second best to getting on the teacher-training programme. And because they were disgruntled, disgruntled because they hadn't got a place on initial teacher-training (SL2A:63).

S/he goes on to say student satisfaction has improved now, but mainly because they are able to take Childhood Studies alongside Education Studies:

It's changed because now Early Childhood is the other pathway, they're going to be people coming along to the programme because they want to work in early childhood education and we don't have another vehicle for that (SL2A:65).

SL2B has a similar view, having talked to students, suggesting that Education Studies has limited vocational attractions for students, compared with Childhood Studies:

I've tried informally talking to Year 1 over the year, and most of them are there because they want to do the other bit, Early Childhood or Humanities. So they're *obliged* to do Ed Studies and, as they go through, many of them actually find Ed Studies quite interesting. But it's the point I made earlier that, in terms of recruiting undergraduates, it's not a sexy subject..... If you think about it, I struggled to find a natural career from Ed Studies, so we're unlikely to find a 15 year-old saying, what I really want to be is..... (SL:2B:26).

Incidentally, his/her view of Childhood Studies is similarly negative in that s/he sees it as a transitory phenomenon:

I think it's a bit of a boom market at the moment and I think that will begin to collapse in the not-too-distant future. Because there are only so many young

children in the country. And they only need so many people to work with them in one capacity or another. And only a sub-section of those need to be graduates in Early Childhood (SL2B:32).

SL2B gives another indication that there has been student dissatisfaction:

.... I've re-designed the first year, a couple of years ago, we did it together. Because previously modules came in too quickly with the –ologies; it was too, sort of, up there or out there for them. And it turned them off (SL2B:14).

He also suggests that there are differential aims for the Education Studies between tutors and students. While the subject has been conceived as separate from teacher training, some of the students wish to perceive it as a teacher-training course:

Yet we recognise that a number of our students come into this programme because they've failed to get onto the, particularly primary, teacher training. They're taking this with a view to doing the PGCE. So *their* motivation is more towards teacher training, but ours isn't (SL2B6).

Because it is a small programme with little choice of modules, student choice has little effect on the content:

There are no choices. We have very little in the way of choice; we simply haven't been able to offer it. I mean we didn't have sufficient students in the beginning.....

And student evaluations appear to have little effect on content:

We certainly take on board our evaluation processes.... er.... we do respond; sometime we like to..... (indistinct) But sometimes we like to in the sense that initially we think that's OK, good.... sometimes it's stupid.... Actually, they may be right. They're not always right..... (SL2A:57)

They only effect apparently appears to be on structure and timing:

Well certainly the structure, the administration of the programme.... For example, I'll give you one change that's going to happen this year. The intercultural module which would normally have been taught in the final semester of the third year was found by students to be too much, because it's a heavy one, a lot of them are interested in their dissertation, all the pressures are in that final part of the year. So we're now bringing it into the first semester of the third year and it evens things up a little. And we're also going to teach it differently: we're going to – and we may be looking at other modules - we're going to front-load the module and so we won't necessarily be doing up-front teaching all the way through the life of the module. And we will leave a much bigger space in terms ..... during the second half of the module for tutorial work allied to essays and so on. Because the last time we taught it we taught it right up to the end, and students were saying, 'Look, I'm really interested in doing an essay on this topic and it's not going to be done until nearly the end.....' So we're going to teach in a more intensive way

during the first half of the module and then have it tutorially-based for the second half..... (SL2A:59).

The way the institution has responded to market demand by students appears, then, not to be reflected in the content of the Education Studies programme, but rather by the provision of an Early Childhood programme to replace the Humanities, the original combined subject:

..... we kept our eye on the market certainly now we've packed in humanities because there was just no market for that. The idea was that we would have an integrated humanities programme..... er, well, possibly for those who wanted to do early childhood and we did have one or two people, including myself, who contributed to that, but the one history element of that, we just didn't have the resources..... and I think that while it was quite an enjoyable programme, the last group had eight people on it, compared with God knows how many on Early Childhood. So it was a non-runner in the end and market forces have dictated the shape of the entire combined honours degree, so Education Studies and Early Childhood Education could have been fairly popular because of the early childhood element (SL:2A:79).

There is some indication that Early Childhood Studies might replace Education Studies in its present form:

Question: *Do you think that Childhood Studies might engulf Ed Studies?* (SL2A:80)

Yes, that's the market. There seem to be a hell of a lot of people..... (on Childhood Studies) (SL2A81).

All three have limited notions of students' career trajectories, other than into teaching. SL2A sees the programme as offering an understanding of the nature of teaching, but little beyond that:

.... we've had one person who came onto the programme, wanted to teach, was desperately unhappy that she hadn't got onto the teacher-training course, but as a result of having gone into schools and into classrooms said, 'I don't want to teach now; I know what they *do*!' (Laughs.) And some who've gone into other fields and said you might want to go into careers that are allied to education, maybe library work or other kinds of work and so..... I'm not on top of.... I haven't involved myself in an audit trail to find destinations (SL2A:65).

For SL2B the limited career outcomes add to the problems in recruitment:

It's very difficult to see a progression – a career route – for which and Education Studies qualification would be the first qualification (SL2B:24).

..... in terms of recruiting undergraduates, it's not a sexy subject..... If you think about it, I struggled to find a natural career from Ed Studies, so we're unlikely to find a 15 year-old saying, what I really want to be is..... (SL2B:26).

The Head of School expresses no suggestions for Education Studies, other than careers in teaching:

..... people can do an Ed Studies degree and progress to a PGCE if they want to.... (SM2:54).

### **The university's perception of Education Studies**

There seems to be little interest in the subject in itself. SL2B, asked about the university's view, replies,

I don't think it's got one, I really don't (SL2B:42).

.... it's benign indifference (SL2B:46).

The only concern appears to be whether a subject can generate student applications:

our various areas of activity across the university seem to suffer from quite profound fluctuations in recruitment and our head money man is very happy to vires student numbers; but we have never yet recruited to our limit. We're always under-recruiting (SL2B:44).

The recruitment to student numbers is also the rationale for the university expressed by SL2A:

..... I mean they're very conservative, very.....you know the accountants run this place as they run every other place, so we always have to show..... There were spare HEFCE numbers and so they were allowed, through juggling about..... Numbers have been lost elsewhere in the university so I think we took up spare capacity..... (SL:2A:21).

It is also reflected in the comments of the Dean, who sees the indifference as not even necessarily benign:

Yes..... Well I'm not sure it's quite as positive as even benevolent. It's just if we're happy, they're happy (SM2:34).

### **Future developments**

The origins of the programme were in the provision of a subject which could be taught by those who were made redundant by the TTA Standards. The Head of School has considered converting the undergraduate teacher training degree into Education Studies followed by a PGCE course, to form a three-plus-one programme. S/he has rejected this idea because she believes that the undergraduate teacher-training fulfils a need in the region. The outset of her reply indicates that this might have been unpopular with staff and others:

If I'm very honest, and I shall be, because I know this isn't going to be attributed, when I came I did wonder about whether we should retain the



three-year undergraduate ITT programme, or whether we should move to - not formally a three-plus-one, because I think there has to be an opt-out possibility at the plus-one stage - and recruit to Education Studies and encourage people to go on to do a PGCE. Because we're the only undergraduate ITT programme in the (Local) Region, or in (Region name) I should say, because technically (County name) comes into the (Region name), and (Name of Dean in another institution) has one, I think it is fulfilling a real need and, therefore, we have not done that. So it's another degree of equal value with all our other degree programmes (SM2:10).

Such a move might have been to the advantage of Education Studies at would have made the course a larger and more central part of the work of the schools. As it is, both Subject Leaders are rather pessimistic about the future of Education Studies as a low status subject for undergraduates.

So, yes, a question mark hangs in my mind over the future of Education Studies as such. If it's going to have a future in this institution it's going to go internationally oriented..... (It) would be great, just for me personally, to have an undergraduate programme internationally-oriented in Education Studies and myself working in research and there'd be cross-fertilisation right there (SL2A:83).

SL2B also sees Education Studies developing through an international market, leaving the home market to Childhood Studies:

I think it'll grow differently from the Early Childhood stuff. The Early Childhood will grow principally from the home market and the Education Studies will grow primarily from the international market (SL2B:34).

The Dean, however, seems not to be aware of these possibilities and sees Education Studies simply as a means of widening access to teacher training:

..... it's not bad at the moment because people can do an Ed Studies degree and progress to a PGCE if they want to. I do see it in terms of an opportunity for widening access. I think we can..... We do get students on those courses who..... might not find other courses appealing. I think it *is* a good widening access... (SM:2:54).

Again, this is the deficit model of Education Studies, even though s/he protests that there is no hierarchy of subjects.

S/he appears to entertain no particular vision of the content of Education Studies and will be reluctant to see expansion:

(Slowly and carefully) I'm not sure that I'd necessarily like *very* many more HEFCE numbers on it at the moment. I think it needs a period of..... well, it's just been reviewed..... I think it needs a dose of enthusiasm..... in terms of leadership. It needs the right person to lead it and take it forward. And I hope between now and Christmas we'll identify that person (SM2:50).

She is excited by liberating effect of Education Studies and the prospect of students being able to study philosophy, and this seems to be the limit of her view of the theoretical framework:

You know, when I was doing my doctorate, where I used to go to hide, really to hide – I lived..... well actually I lived in (Place name), but was working in (City name)– and I used to go into (Name of Institution) and the place I knew I would never be disturbed was in the philosophy of education section (laughs). Otherwise, the Law Library in August..... And it was quite interesting because occasionally you'd pick something up off the shelf, you know, Dewey and..... (SM2:56)

Yes. It's liberating (SM2:58).

However, s/he appears to harbour few preconceptions about what Education Studies might constitute, being prepared to leave the definition of its content to others:

Yes, well I would expect it to go..... I regard people who lead areas..... I regard as the experts in their field. And I feel I have the right to be informed, consulted, as I've said to I think it was C or L – it makes me sound like the Queen, doesn't it (laughs) – but that's exactly how I feel. I expect there to be discussion, certainly between the person leading that are and me, and then probably with senior management as well, so that we don't have..... (SM2:72).

S/he expresses concern only that it is not defined by a single person, and hints that s/he is aware that that is the situation in the current Education Studies programme:

You have to be a bit wary that you're not getting a whole course predicated around one person's view. We did have one or two modules like that, but then (SL2A) took a sabbatical..... (laughs). So you have to be a bit wary of that (SM2:72).

The different perspectives expressed indicate an interesting dynamic between the three. The two Subject Leaders see Education Studies as a low status subject which gets weak students and low priority in the school, and the new Dean is trying to counter this view. The new Subject Leader and the Dean see the curriculum as too closely defined by the original Subject Leader, but the new Subject Leader seems rather indifferent to the whole subject and the Dean talks of his/her being replaced by Christmas, after the outcome of the Vice Chancellor's re-structuring paper. The two Subject Leaders see Education Studies developing as an international programme for overseas students, although the Dean seems unaware of this and has limited notions about its future development.

## **Pilot interviews**

### **Comparison between Case 1 and Case 2**

**Written following the analysis of Case 2 on July 24 2006**

#### **Summary**

- Singular definition of subject content by the Subject Leader
- Lack of competing definitions among staff about the content of Education Studies
- Education Studies initially seen as a marginal activity by teacher training staff
- Low status of the subject in relation to undergraduate teacher training
- Strong definition of aims and content to be discrete from, and to contrast with, teacher training; no explicit links between Education Studies and teacher training made for students
- Low priority for staffing in one of the institutions, but both see staffing as ideally being distinct from QTS staffing
- Subject disciplines rejected as an overt theoretical framework, but lack of an explicit theoretical alternative
- Different approach by Head of School and Dean in each institution: one seeing the subject as an expanding field with distinctive theoretical framework, the other with limited vision in terms of the student numbers and theoretical framework

#### **Definitions of subject content for Education Studies**

There are interesting similarities in the origins of the subject. In both institutions the subject was started by a single tutor who was interested in Education Studies as a separate subject from teacher training. Each had considered the idea for some time and was able to realise it with the arrival of a new dean who supported the initiative. In each case the individual concerned appears to have had a high level of unquestioned control over the content. While each subject leader referred in general terms to a course or subject team, they both indicate that their own initiatives had formed the final version of the content. This appears to be a function of the lack of any strong competing definitions among other staff. Of course, this might also be interpreted as a lack of interest by other staff. For in both institutions there is a concurrent undergraduate teacher-training programme and most staff are involved in teaching that. Education Studies in both cases, then, was perhaps seen by other staff as a marginal enterprise in relation to teacher training.

In both institutions the development of Education Studies was seen by the subject leaders as a career opportunity. In Case 1 the Subject Leader expressed it as an exciting initiative with the intention to provide a critical analysis of education systems. In the Case 2 it was expressed more in terms of a refuge for staff who were uninterested in working with a competence-led model of teacher training.

Both see Education Studies as a discrete academic subject which is distinct from teacher training. In Case 1 this was taken to the extent of seeking to appoint staff without QTS and who would not be contaminated by teacher training ideas or poached by the managers of the QTS courses.

## **Education Studies and teacher training**

In both institutions there is a tension between Education Studies and teacher training courses in the competition for staffing and resources. The main difference between the two is that in Case 1 the Dean was giving priority to Education Studies and in Case 2 the Head of School was giving priority to QTS. This priority differential comes from Case 1's need for a successful Ofsted inspection of the teacher training course, but also from a difference in the personal interest taken in Education Studies by the two individuals, the Head of School in Case 2 appearing to have a limited vision and ambition for Education Studies. The contrast between the two institutions demonstrates the potential for Education Studies and teacher training to become oppositional, both in terms of aims and content and in terms of staff allegiances. Neither institution provided a model of Education Studies providing a supplementary relationship to teacher training. An interesting point was made in Case 2 that, while the staff see Education Studies as being entirely discrete from, and critical of, teacher training, the students would prefer to see it Education Studies as contributing to their development as future teachers.

## **Theoretical framework**

The view of the subject disciplines is apparently different in the two institutions. In Case 1 the Subject Leader does not speak in terms of the disciplines, but in terms of subject content; when asked about the disciplines s/he acknowledges that they are included and are evident to students, but that they are integrated within each module. In Case 2 both subject leader described the course explicitly in terms of the disciplines. However, they were guarded about using the description with students, fearing that it would make them disaffected, mainly because they see the students as incapable of coping with the theoretical concepts. However, although they had these fears, there seemed to be little in the way of an alternative means of presenting the material to students. It is as though they are locked into the subject disciplines as the theoretical framework, but worry that it is not conducive to students. In both institutions, then, there is an attempt to move away from the 1970s model of Education Studies as the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy.

Both initial subject leaders have produced courses with a sociological framework with a critique of provision. This raises the hypothesis that Education Studies courses attract those with a sociologically-oriented perspective and who tend to be driven by the desire to provide a critique of extant educational provision.

## **Institutional perceptions**

The institutional perceptions of Education Studies seem to be relatively simple. Both universities are reported by all interviewees to be uninterested in aims and content of the subject, but only in the extent to which it will generate student numbers.

## **Questions or hypotheses arising from the data**

1. There is an intuitive attempt to move Education Studies away from the 1970s subject disciplines, but the alternative theoretical framework is not explicated. The move from the disciplines is probably driven by former criticisms of

educational theory (Simon, 1994, Cowen, 2002).

2. Education Studies will tend to have a sociological bias because of its aim of providing a critique of extant provision.
3. Education Studies will be a marginal activity in relation to teacher training because of government priority given to teacher training and the need for institutions to maintain quality through Ofsted inspections.
4. Can Education Studies have a supplementary relationship to teacher training, or will it always be outside it, offering a critique? Can it offer anything other than critique to future teachers?

### **Questions regarding the interview method**

- In interviewing students and staff, how to avoid it being a course evaluation or a QAA review?
- How much can the tone of the speech be interpreted as meaning?
- How much the Case 2 Senior Manager's protests that Education Studies is valued as much as other courses to mean the opposite?
- How much should the interviewer refer to the Bath Spa programme?

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Managers**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 3 on November 11 2004**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 3**

Education Studies began in 1992 with a small number of students and has grown to a current total of 250. It can be taken as a combined subject or in a single honours degree. The Department of Education Studies is in the School of Education with a dedicated staff of seven tutors. There are departments of Primary and Secondary Education which house teacher training. A four-year Primary QTS course runs with over 1000 students. There is no specific link to the PGCE courses. The original subject leader who began the programme is now Head of the Department and another tutor is now the subject leader.

#### **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the Head of Department and the new Subject Leader. An interview with a Head of School had been requested, but the Head of Department with insisted that s/he would be able to answer questions about the school and institutional perspectives. Neither of the interviewees had been met by the interviewer before. However, the interviews were informed by a reading of a paper by the two interviewees.

Before the interviews the interviewer had met the whole team for informal discussion over coffee. There is, therefore, reference in the text of the interviews to points that were made during the informal discussion. Some information presented here also is drawn from this discussion, although an attempt was made to cover the content of the discussion in the recorded interviews.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

Having read the paper beforehand the interviewer was well informed about the material in some of the questions and so there is a slightly artificial quality to some of the interview text. It was explained that this would be the case and the two interviewees both accepted this in the spirit of the need for standardised data. Both were enthusiastic about the interviews and were anxious to articulate their ideas. They appeared to be particularly sympathetic because their paper had been read. Some of the text of the interview is an attempt to show that it had been read and understood. The other factor that gave an artificial quality to the interviews was having met the team beforehand. This meant that sometimes questions had already been asked over coffee and the interviewees both make allusions to the earlier discussion.

The informal discussion included their asking about the Bath Spa course. This, then, tends to affect the content of the interviews as they respond sometimes in relation to what had been said. The interviewer being seen as another significant stakeholder might be seen as a methodological problem, although the fact that he had been open in my explanations of the Bath Spa course it might be seen to help in encouraging and open response from them.

The interview with the Head of Department overlapped strongly with the content of the interview with the Subject Leader because, as s/he had formerly held the subject leader role, s/he was able to give the same, and more, information. S/he was able to answer questions about the School and institutional matters. However, it would have been helpful to have had a third perspective from someone who was not actually part of the department, a more senior member of the School of Education. In particular there could have been some confirmation of his/her assertion that there are good relations between the departments and the details of staffing would have benefited from more discussion. It has since been learned from informal conversations with other members of the institution that relations between the Education Studies and teacher-training departments were distant and sometimes strained. It would also have been useful to have a management perspective on the rather 'unworldly' vision of Education Studies and the refusal to contemplate alternative models in the context of the higher education market or the constraints of QAA review regime.

The end of the interview with the Head of Department leaves the list of questions and develops into a discussion of the nature of Education Studies. While this may seem to be a digression, it does provide some useful data. It was also seen as necessary in order to express the interviewer's interest in the course and, thereby, to sustain the relationship with the individual.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

#### **Brief summary of findings**

1. Content was largely derived single-handedly by the subject leader in 1992 when s/he was asked to run the course with a small number of students.
2. There is a highly articulated theoretical framework with a strong philosophical basis. Education Studies is seen as emancipation through informed critique.
3. The theoretical framework 'Self, Theory, Critique' over the three years can be seen as super-ordinate to the detailed content.
4. The course is highly theoretical and students appear to operate at a high level of abstraction with a high level of expectation of students.
5. Education Studies is seen as a subject distinct from the contributory disciplines and the rationale for this is quite well articulated. The disciplines are seen as tools for analysis – students come across them 'accidentally'. There is no critical analysis of the disciplines as subjects in themselves. Such analysis is seen to be an impediment to the study of Education as a subject in its own right.
6. The origins of the course were to provide a diversification from teacher training in 1992, but the institution had no idea of the market for it.
7. There is no link with teacher training content, but paradoxically the only vocational outcome identified is teaching.
8. The subject is taught by a dedicated team and there is little commonality of staffing across teacher training.
9. The original staff were formerly disaffected teachers who had become frustrated by the limitations on teaching in the 1990s. This is an interesting contrast with institutions where Education Studies staff comprises former teacher training tutors.
10. The programme is expanding and there is clearly a student demand for this type of very theoretical provision.

11. No concessions are made to the higher education market. Staff are intent on carrying on what they are doing. There is an unrealistic quality about this, although they have been successful in recruiting students.
12. The staff are proud of their curriculum and their theoretical model. They are not uncritical of it, but there is an high level of self-assuredness. They admire the Head of Department and former subject leader.
13. They make no concessions to the QAA Benchmark and are prepared to maintain the current curriculum, even if it does not meet the Benchmark.
14. The subject appears to be intellectually rather exclusive and isolated from relationships with the teacher training programmes and the staff teaching them. There is a sense of intellectual superiority in Education Studies and the question about the relationship with the teacher training staff remains unanswered.
15. There is a rather narrow vision of the nature of Education Studies, such that they find it difficult to recruit staff who are suitably qualified and interested to teach the curriculum. Instead, they recruit staff from their former students.
16. The subject is highly successful in terms of standard university QA criteria with strong external examiner reports, high student satisfaction and a maximum QAA review score.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The three interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

Both interviews confirm that the programme began in 1992, although there is a discrepancy in that the Subject Leader states that the rationale for the course was to make provision for those students who failed or withdrew from the undergraduate teacher training course (SL3:2). The Senior Manager, however, denies this and suggests that it was done simply to include Education in the new modular programme, although there was no understanding at the time of the possible market:

Question: But the original students were ones who'd dropped out of the QTS?

No, it wasn't that. Originally in '92, as I said, these 17 people turned up who had nothing to do with ITT at all. (SM3:39-40)

So the origins lay firmly outside teacher training and in the notion of Education as a degree subject. The initiative was taken at the management level, rather than by the Subject Leader. S/he was identified by the Head of Department and the role was offered to him/her without requesting it. There was however, remarkably little rationale for the subject or a concept in the institution of what the market might be:

The Head of Department had marched me up to the VP and said, 'We've put this on; I don't know if anyone will come, and, if they do, I don't know why they'd come.' But they thought it was important to have Education represented in the modular programme. (SM3:42)

Presumably, too, there could have been no coherent strategy for marketing the subject, and the fact that 17 students came to study the course is an indication of the inherent



demand which existed. At the time there was no difficulty in expanding HEFCE student, and so the subject took place in a non-problematical context.

Although the subject leader was offered the role in 1992, rather than requesting it, s/he was enthusiastic about the opportunity to define the subject. In fact a course had been prepared which was based on a disciplines approach and which s/he chose to replace with a new model. The new role, s/he says,

gave me the scope to put my vision of Education into the degree, not only into a module, but a whole degree experience. And from that moment I set about trying to transform what they had done, but not yet run, into what we've got now. (SM3:4)

Again there is the effect of a single vision for the subject. The curriculum and the theoretical framework are defined exclusively by him/her. Other staff were working on teacher training courses and, in effect, their role in Education Studies was marginal:

Well, in '92, I got the leadership of it and all the other tutors were from the BA Primary, and they would be doing it as one module out of, maybe..... most of their other work was still on teacher training. (SM3:28)

This is confirmed by the current Subject Leader:

And s/he was primarily responsible for that – guiding it and leading it – with several colleagues from QTS programmes doing guest appearances. As I remember, and this must have been about ten years ago, (SM3 Name) was the driving force.....

So it appears to be another solitary operation in the first instance, with other tutors appointed later who fitted into the model which he had defined. There is a tight definition of the type of tutor required, those former schoolteachers who wish to engage in a critique of the education system and policies:

The core staff from Education Studies are former schoolteachers, so myself, (Name, name) who are the longest-serving members, all came out of education, as many teachers did, in the early nineties, with our discomfort with the changes in education. Derek and I were primary teachers; (SM3 Name) was a secondary teacher. .... So I guess you could characterise us as the kind of teachers who were, well, thinking teachers, quite innovative teachers and at some point made the decision that we weren't going to be headteachers; that wasn't going to be our career path. Our career path was going to be down the aisle of further scholarship in education and along comes the '88 Education Reform Act, and you know that time in schools when we were all very anxious and very defensive..... and, certainly the schools we worked in suddenly regressed to very mechanical formulaic ways of teaching and, suddenly, thinking teachers had nowhere to go really. So we came out of the school system and developed our academic courses here. I guess those ideas about critical reflection on education reflect us, and the kind of teachers we were and our desire for more people to have more ideas about education... we saw the

formulaic constraints on school work then fed through into teacher education and that became more formulaic and mechanistic, and again, 'then you become as a thinking teacher or educator, you become increasingly concerned that now they're completing the circle: there won't be the thinking teachers unless we encourage people to think about education (SL3:6-8).

So those who were appointed shared the original Subject Leader's disaffection with the education reforms of the 1990s. It is interesting that this is different from those institutions where Education Studies derives from dissatisfaction with teacher education. It is perhaps this which has made the course particularly remote from teaching and teacher training. This is somewhat paradoxical, given that the staff are mostly former schoolteachers who 'needed to do something more satisfying' (SL3:10).

### **The theoretical framework and curriculum content**

Both the content and theory of the course are complex and highly abstract. The simplest way to characterise it is in the three-year development of students' thinking and learning which the Senior Manager describes. This is seen to be a theoretical framework in that it is super-ordinate to the content:

... as one goes another one comes along, but as long as we hold together with our structure of Year 1 experience, Year 2 theory, Year 3 critique, as long as we hold that I think we can accommodate a great deal. (SM3:126)

Students reflect on their own learning experiences in Year 1 and learn the content of theory in Year 2 before being allowed to make informed critiques in Year 3. The Subject Leader also articulates this:

In the first year we're expecting students to reflect on their own experience which, as you said earlier, everyone has an experience of education, maybe not in school maybe not in this system, but we've all had an experience of education, and we all have an opinion. And for the vast majority that has to be worked through, and the limitations of their experience as a basis for understanding education has to be identified. So that they leave the first year realising that their understanding and experience are a wonderful starting point, but they can't call themselves informed about education, because that's all they do. (SL3:24)

The fact that this is so clearly articulated by both interviewees would suggest that it is a framework which is realised in practice. There is also a clear explanation of the role of Education Studies as emancipation through critical analysis:

We want to liberate students from taken-for-granted assumptions, yes. That's right. And we do that in a two-fold process in the second year in terms of introducing them to the social theories of the Frankfurt School; they're the theoretical perspectives that they get introduced to. (SL3:26)

Another key feature of the theory is the notion of students' meta-consciousness of what is 'educational':

One of the key sentences, I suppose, is that – and this would be true for anyone, I'm sure – but we've got to write this down: we don't just want people to study education, we want them to know they're doing it at the same time. And that, perhaps, has underpinned most of the reforms we've made over the years: not just to study it, but to be doing it, and to recognise that you're doing it, to recognise how difficult education is when you're doing it, to try and understand more of what those difficulties might mean for you while you're doing it, and even to turn the content of the difficulty it into modules. Now that, I think, is the really distinctive thing. (SM3:20)

There is a strong commitment to theory which is not practice-oriented with students required to read source texts and there is a distrust of secondary interpretations:

I mean real, serious theory, going back to the original work, and we're trying very hard to put a stop to the rot of so many textbooks – not only in education, but in cultural studies, and in many English texts – where you get fleeting references to say Foucault or Derrida, all the big names, and students learn a pat phrase that summarises that thinker in the usual kind of secondary text, and it doesn't do them justice, and it doesn't give the students the ability to understand them. We do our very best to bring them back to the primary works so they can understand it for themselves. The way I always spin that to students is that makes them a more powerful thinker. They're not repeating other people's interpretations, they are dealing with it themselves, and as a by-product of that they learn very quickly that there are very few original bits; they are re-cycled, re-worked, and by taking them back to the original thinkers – sometimes 2000 years – that becomes very, very evident. (SL3: 12)

The Subject Leader expresses consciousness that this might be seen as 'old-fashioned', but there is no apology for this and it is seen as the strength of the course, even though it is demanding.

They go back to Locke and Rousseau for early childhood studies. So many students will use the phrase 'blank slate' unthinkingly and they need to go back to the original work and see that Locke's misinterpreted. So we do a lot of that work in the second year. And in many ways you can see us as a very traditional, old-style degree in the second year; not in terms of the disciplines, but in terms of teaching students information and expecting them to take it on board and then regurgitate it. So we're always asking them for different ways. Read the stuff first; when you've taken that on board and we think you fully understand it, then we'll allow you to use that as the building blocks for critiquing it. (SL3:28)

The aims of the course are to produce informed critical thinkers:

So we're looking for people who will be critical thinkers about issues which, because of our work on the degree, we think of as important, not only to teachers, but also to parents who want to go into supporting the child's education, adults without children who are reflecting on their own education,

and as citizens and who are going to be voting for and supporting various education policies. So, the, we're looking for.... critical thinkers.

There is an explicit commitment to demanding theory and to source texts and there is a pride in this. There is no attempt, apparently, to make things seem easy and accessible:

Naturally, it's very demanding of the students.... and maybe I'm being overly-arrogant about our course, but my sense is that we are very, very demanding in what we require. If you look at our best students, they are doing the kind of work which I did at masters' level, and they're producing it as undergraduates.

There is even a sign that good education might be a painful experience:

Even when they are miserable in one subject - sometimes that's us, sometimes it's the other subject – the experience of being miserable is useful. (SL3:30)

Again, there are no apologies for this, and it is acknowledged that the approach to Education Studies is unusual, even idiosyncratic:

So, maybe that's just because it's our students and the type of cohorts we have, but if we tell them when they've finished, you know had really a rather.... (laughs)... idiosyncratic approach to Education Studies..... (SL3:20)

The subject might be described as narrowly defined in the way that it rules out content which does not comply with the strict theoretical model prescribed. For example, asked about a political dimension in the course, the Subject Leader replies,

Not necessarily in the explicit, obvious form of ranting about the latest policy development, but at a much more generic and theorised about what is the role of education and who has the right to .... (indistinct). (SL3:66).

To describe discussion of the latest policy developments as 'ranting' and does give the impression that there is an exclusive view of what counts as educational discourse. A similar perspective is offered by the Senior Manager in his/her description of the difficulties in finding staff. It would appear that only those who have learned Education Studies course at the institution are going to suitable:

We put our adverts in the Guardian and the Times Higher: *wanted, Ed Studies lecturer*, and last time we tried to appoint we got two people, neither of whom were suitable. Now, if we weren't breeding our own subject tutors, I think we'd be in trouble. I'm not sure how we would keep our staffing levels up. We don't really want the disciplines - people with the disciplines coming – because they're not going to be happy. We need people coming in at the beginning of their career and we can offer them jobs to do research and teaching, but we haven't found any people out there who want to take that option (SM3:114).

Although the course theory and content appears difficult, the claim is that students are not exceptionally academically oriented on entering, but they are well supported by staff with a clear understanding of what is expected of them:

Our students aren't very confident in their abilities when they come; they think they might be able to..... but their confidence is undermined for various reasons: they struggled at school or didn't fit in at school. Quite a few students are mature women who have got to forty. They've got the children in school and they've realised they're much more able than anybody ever let them think they were, and they're very tentative when they come to us and if we simply gave them demanding material they'd be out by Christmas. So it has to be combined with the support; it has to be combined with the individual relationships; and that, I think, is what is distinctive; it is something distinctive of the (institution), regardless of the course (SL3:12).

A feature of the course, then, is a high level of individual support with small numbers, the team see themselves in a strong tutorial role:

And I believe that comes from our origins as schoolteachers. So we are incredibly committed to getting to know our students and supporting them as individuals, rather than simply an enormous student numbers. (SL3:12)

However, this is threatened by continuing expansion:

But that's getting increasingly difficult to do with the large numbers, because we started off with about 50 FTE, sorry, 25 FTE. Now we're up to 40, 60, 70 FTE, and so it's increasingly difficult to develop that personal relationship, but we are very committed to it because of those things you earlier asked about.

The Senior Manager confirms this, saying that the conversion of the QTS degree into Education Studies would make the theoretical model impossible:

..... if they had gone to three-plus-one I don't think Ed Studies could have been what it is. The numbers would have been too big to do what we're doing. I mean 260 people don't get into one of our halls. At the very least we'd have to repeat everything twice. We haven't got enough staff to give the kind of attention to scripts and texts that we want to do. It's in our interest that it stays strong. (SM3:86)

This, then, seems to be a course where 'traditional' academic values of difficult theory, source texts and critical analysis are sought and valued. It depends on a small number of students studying in a relatively rarefied context. There are no attempts to make the education process, or Education Studies, into an 'easy option', nor to make it seem palatable through its relationship to teacher training.

### **The role of the contributory disciplines**

There is a particularly interesting view of the contributory disciplines in the theoretical framework. There is a strongly philosophical approach throughout and in reply to the question about the theoretical basis for the course the Senior Manager suggests:

It's grounded in a vision of learning that comes from the Philosophy I did. The Philosophy I read is in the speculative tradition from Plato right through now, I suppose, to Deleuze, Derrida, people like that. It's very much in a continental tradition. I believe they have a vision of the significance of learning as an end in itself and I've tried to build a course that makes that, not only the subject of the modules, but also the content of some of the students' experience. If it's names –where do I find the philosophy of education – it's Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, those kind of..... (SM3:62)

The philosophical approach employed is to examine the theory of philosophical thinkers in education, such as Plato, Kant and Rousseau, rather than the linguistic analysis approach to the Philosophy of Education typified by Hirst and Peters in the 1960s and '70s using Wittgensteinian methods.

Although the content is avowedly philosophical, students are not seen to be 'doing philosophy':

..... you see, we're not *doing* Philosophy in the sense that we're doing the disciplines. I don't have to worry at all about whether we're representing the subject properly or not. Take out of it what I think is educational and put that in. So they come to Philosophy accidentally. (SM3:64)

And this is also the view of the other disciplines. They are used as tools for analysis, but they are not subjects of study in themselves. The original course which the first Senior Manager had inherited was based on the foundation disciplines, and his/her first act was to dismantle that:

As they came off the BA Primary the whole structure of the field of Ed Studies was written around the disciplines; Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology were the core..... and from that moment I set about trying to transform what they had done, but not yet run, into what we've got now. (SM3:2-4)

The disciplines, then, were seen in themselves to be an impediment to the true study of education:

..... it was quite clear to me that the educational issues were getting masked by some of the disciplines' methodological issues. You could pick the Sociology of Education, but if you wanted to go into some of those issues in depth, you were in the end getting caught up with 'what is Sociology?' I couldn't see that..... No, I didn't want the course to go down that path. I didn't want us to be hamstrung by disciplines' definitions of themselves that prevented us from taking and educational issues in any direction we cared to take it. (SM3:16)

There is a critical point here: that while Education Studies employ the disciplines, it should not include a critique of the theoretical perspectives of the disciplines themselves. For example, it presumably would not involve students analysing the differences between the theoretical paradigms of cognitive and behavioural psychology or methodological issues in sociology. There is, then, the notion that

Education Studies is a subject which is separate and distinct from the contributory disciplines, a point which Tibble (1971) argues. However, what is being argued here is that, should it include a critical analysis of the disciplines themselves, it will become simply a form of Sociology, Psychology or Philosophy, and lose its distinctive quality as a subject:

So I made the decision that we would move away from the disciplines and try and establish the notion of Education as a subject in its own right. I guess that's the core of what we've tried to do. We've tried to make Education, in the loosest possible sense, a subject that can stand with any other. Now, if you're back in the '60s there was the same kind of debate: whether you had the History of Education, the Sociology, the Philosophy, the Psychology, and Education itself fell through the net. (SM3:16)

I just didn't like the notion of Education that emerged out of an agglomeration of disciplinary approaches. It was that Education must stand on its own two feet, it must say it *is* something, and I guess over the last ten years we've been trying to form an idea of what Education actually is. (SM3:18)

Unless we believe in Education as a subject in its own right, then I think we'll continue to simply be under the tutelage of other (disciplines) (SM3:130)

The important point here is that there is no critical analysis of the disciplines which a student of Psychology or Sociology would expect to have. This is an interesting idea, although at first it seems to contradict the whole notion of critiques which permeates the course. It is confirmed by the Subject Leader who, asked about the disciplines says:

Yes, these are cropping up, but not in the traditional sense. So you can identify Stephanie as the historian, and you can identify (SM3 name) as the philosopher, and (Tutor name) has philosophical leanings. I'm a jack-of-all-trades. So my origins are in sociology, but I also play about with a bit of the psychology and a bit of philosophy. You see in these issues cropping up, and there are modules which it is possible to align to the old subjects, but the majority of them take a bit of a pick-and-mix approach, because we don't wish to compartmentalise the knowledge – the information - that we're dealing with in that way. It restricts it, it undermines it and it demeans it.

One rationale for this view of the disciplines is that they must be taken together to study education, and that singly they are inadequate:

We want the students to deal critically with significant issues in education, and no single discipline would do that effectively. So we tend to work on the whole with a combination of issues, so that we would see Bourdieu and Hegel popping up in the same module.... at level 3..... (SL3:14).

S/he is, though, aware that his/her knowledge of Psychology as a discipline is weak. When asked about whether students are aware of the disciplines in their studies, s/he goes so far as to say that the students are 'playing Psychology':

They know they're doing psychology and they know when they're doing history. Erm, they do very little psychology really; it's a compulsory module in the second year which is called 'Theories of Teaching and Learning' and that's one of those modules that an Education Studies student expects to see on an Education Studies course. So it's the introduction to some of the ideas..... but – and I teach that module, and I spend most of the apologising for poor psychology and the rapid romp through psychology that that module represents – so they know they're playing psychology and hopefully my warnings make it clear that they're not doing pure psychology in any way at all. (SL3:18)

And s/he claims that the students have only a limited awareness of the role of the disciplines:

But actually the disciplines question from a students perspective is a in some ways a non-question. When we have discussions with the third years and they're reflecting on the programme and we introduce the idea of the disciplines, we find it's something they don't understand, as students. They have no sense of there being a subject and they have no sense of a traditional or conventional approach to it. (SL3:20)

In the end, though, s/he returns to the importance of philosophy as the grounding for the theory:

If it's anything, it's philosophy. In the end we get to a stage for those high flyers where the only useful support they have for where their ideas are going is philosophy. (SL3:22)

### **Relationship to teacher training**

As shown above, the course was not conceived as related to teacher training; it was not converted from a teacher training programme and a large QTS degree continues alongside it. Again, as already shown, the two programmes operate separately, and with distinct staffing and little teaching across the programmes:

There's a tiny bit of overlap, but very, very little. I mean even down to numbers like maybe someone will teach two lectures, two seminars on what is, after all, a four-year course. So really, the answer is no. So we're really..... a professional course, this isn't..... (SM3:14)

Both interviewees emphasise the non-practical and non-professional orientation of the course. There is no influence of TTA standards on the content of the course:

No, absolutely not. (SL3:56)

However, it is interesting that, while the content of the course is steered strictly away from the teacher training curriculum, the only career vocation that is conceived for graduates is teaching. In answer to the question about career outcomes the reply is:



I think they're being thoughtful, informed teachers.... We have an uplifting statement in our prospectus which says we want you to make positive changes in whatever you do (SL58).

There is something of a paradox here, then, that while the course makes no concessions to the teacher training standards, tutors see themselves as preparing future teachers who are critically informed.

There are suggestions implicit in the responses that relations between the staff in the departments are less than collaborative and that there is a perception of the undergraduate students who enter the PGCE course at the institution as over-critical and over-theorised. The Senior Manager's first response to the question about students' progression to the PGCE is equivocal:

Do they like our students on the PGCE? Sometimes I think that they do. I think they like the critical spirit that they bring into the seminars. At times I think that one or two have perhaps not understood that the professional requirements probably outweigh the critical requirements. But I think they've learned that lesson in the end. They certainly don't hold anything against our students; they leave them along with anybody else, and I guess they've taken about four or five a year. (SM3:12)

The Subject Leader also mentions this difficulty:

Occasionally, we produce an argumentative one, and that's no help to anybody. And when that happens – maybe once a year – we have somebody who's not really suited to the education system because they haven't appreciated the need to be part of a system... (SL3:48)

In her reply to the question about the view of the PGCE staff of Education Studies students, she replies,

They welcome applications and our students tend to be very successful, because they're able to talk about the important things. Anybody can bone up on the curriculum and recent policy, but our students can talk very well about individuality in the classroom and the need to make a response to various individuals in the classroom.

Again there is the tendency to diminish the value of knowledge of the curriculum in the phrase 'boning up', and their Education Studies students are depicted as having a superior perspective. It is difficult to imagine that this position is welcomed by colleagues on the teacher-training courses.

### **The market and student choice**

A similarly dismissive view of the higher education market is expressed. For the Subject Leader the influence of the market is simply discounted with the view that

what they are doing is robust enough not to be influenced, and anyway they recruit sufficient students:

No is the straight answer. Our numbers are growing; that appears to be organic; we've got a growing reputation; we seem to have a lot of careers officers and access course leaders who seem to like us; we've got good reports about us; they do a lot of sterling work for us. We can't really manage the growth which means we're not struggling to get students. (SL3:62)

The Senior Manager has a similar view:

Well..... I think when it was first put on in '92, as the Head of Department said to me, we didn't know who was coming and why. In that sense, we tested the market. Now, enough people come so we don't have really to think too hard about it. (SM3:100)

Student choice does not influence the curriculum. Potential applicants can see what the course is and they can take it or leave it:

No, no, not at all. Because they can go onto the website wherever they are. No, our message to them at open days is, look, you might like what you've seen, but you need to go on the website and see if you can see yourself in that; and if you can't, don't come. And that helps us. (SM3:104)

The Subject Leader confirms that, while students have a good deal of choice of modules, the selection of them is 'absolutely not' determined by students choice (SL3:32).

There is, then, a very strong sense of the integrity of the programme and it is not to be assailed by student preferences. There is a view of the theoretical framework as being above the content of modules, such that the actual modules that run are not significant as they all comply with same theoretical model:

Those are the only compulsory modules. Everything else is up for grabs. However, that doesn't necessarily give a phenomenally different type of degree to two different students who take very different curriculum choices, because underpinning every single module is the same framework of experience being put it; and we've got generic learning outcomes for each level. They're always working for the same generic learning outcome and we're always working on the assumption that every student has been introduced in their mandatory modules to.... Rousseau, Plato, Marx, Durkheim, Locke, Vygotsky, and we tend to use those theorists again as a starting point in every singly module; so the same theorists come up again and again and again. (SM3:30)

This secure view of the appropriateness of the theory is confirmed by a contemptuous view of the QAA Benchmark for Education. This was not seen to have influenced the curriculum, and would not do so:

None at all, no. I mean, I think we felt we were doing all of them except the maths key skill, which we don't do and we're not going to do. Other than that, they didn't pose a problem for us. (SM3:74)

No. We found we match the benchmarks, but that was a retrospective exercise. And (SM3 Name) was in charge of the programme, as you know when you speak to (SM3 Name), (SM3 Name) has a very clear vision for the programme and I think if we hadn't met the benchmark it wouldn't have been a straightforward fiddling with the programme to meet them. S/he may well have been happy to argue philosophically.... (SL3:60)

There is, then, a strong commitment to the academic rationale and to its originator, as well as a secure view of the academic freedom to continue the course as it is:

But no government can come and tell us in higher ed what we should be doing. Academic freedom would kick in at that point. They can control the training programmes, but they can't start coming in here and telling us what we should be doing..... (SM3:108)

The actual curriculum content, then, is driven by what tutors choose to teach:

..... we tend to teach what we research. For example, (Tutor name) does a lot of work in aesthetic education and he has modules called 'The Art of Learning' ..... none of the others immediately come to mind; he has a level version of Art of Learning, which I can't remember what it's called. But they all have themes about ..... aesthetic education and using images and icons about ways of forming thought, rather than using language. (SM3 Name)'s a philosopher and his/her modules are called 'the Power of Teaching', 'Philosophy for Teaching' and that completely sums up his/her research interest. S/he's interested in the power and responsibilities of teaching. (Tutor name)'s work is in gender studies and history; his/her module's on women and power in education, gender constructions and the power struggle (SL3:38).

New appointments can be made to expand this content, but only within the framework of theory:

Now, now I see it as a framework, as I said, where you can appoint people to come and do and teach their own research interests. Well it's a great offer. Anything in the field of Education, you know, (Tutor name)'s a historian, (Tutor name)'s doing aesthetics, anything. Come in and talk to us. Send in an application and come and see if you can..... (SM3:124)

We're broadening our perspectives. We've (Tutor name) and (Tutor name) that you met this morning: new members of staff who are the moment doing one module each, (Tutor name) on critiquing higher education because that's what his/her PhD research is on and (Tutor name) on religious education which is what his/her PhD was on. So they're testing the water really to see whether those are routes that they'd like to develop. And we have another new member of staff starting in January who's going down the environmental education line. (SL3:68)

## **The institutional perception of Education Studies**

As noted above, the institutional perception of the subject might be described as exploratory in that there was apparently no proper rationale for the inclusion of non-teacher training Education Studies in the modular scheme in 1992. The suggestion is that the subject might have been included because of a perceived threat to teacher training numbers at the time:

But how secure was teacher training? (SM3:44)

However, the Senior Manager reports that the subject is valued by the university because of its success in quality terms:

The reputation's very high. There are three things that measure that. The external examiner's reports every year are quite fantastic. The QAA inspection got 24 and we were the first in the college who had ever got 24. And the student satisfaction survey, which the college carries out every year, we haven't yet lost a mark on anything, which, again, nobody else has done. So because of those three external measures I think our reputation is very high. (SM3:66)

## **Conclusion**

The subject, then, appears to be very successful, flying in the face of a number of current trends in higher education. The centrality of 'old-style' philosophy is against the context of the unpopularity of Philosophy as a university subject and the rise of new subjects which are immediately attractive to students, such as Cultural Studies and Drama. The highly theoretical intellectual challenge also appears to run counter to suggestions that students are seeking courses which will give a degree and the transferable skills for employment. The course provides nothing which is directly transferable into a teacher training course in the practical knowledge sense. It also runs counter to the theory that the university curriculum is determined by students choice in the market. No concessions are made to student preferences for the curriculum.

The attenuated university, suggested by Cowen (1996) is perhaps not reflected here. Rather, the course might be seen to confirm Barnett's (2000) suggestion that university students do want old-fashioned academic and theoretical study:

'Society is hesitantly intimating that it needs the universities to live up to their rhetoric of guardians of reason. The university seems intent on constructing itself in narrower frames of self-understanding. A trick is being missed' (p.34).

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 4 on 9 February 2005**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 4**

Education Studies is in the School of Education which has large courses in undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education, both primary and secondary phases. There is also a substantial CPD programme. However, the term 'Education Studies' is used in the School to refer to all the non-pedagogical elements of work in all the initial teacher training programmes: four-year QTS degrees and PGCE courses in both primary and secondary phases. It is also used in some of the CPD programmes. There is, then, a long-standing use of Education Studies; however, non-teacher-training Education Studies first began in September 2004 with an initial intake of 14 students on a single honours programme against a target of 25. The course is in the University's modular scheme, but with such small numbers there are no choices of modules in Education, only electives in other subjects. The small number was recruited with difficulty because of a policy of discouraging those applicants who were interested in teaching. Some of the 14 were taken from the over-recruitment to the undergraduate QTS course, being persuaded to join the Education Studies programme with the promise of a place on a subsequent primary PGCE course.

#### **Interviews**

Three interviews were conducted: the Course Leader for the BA (Hons) Education Studies Degree (SL4A), the Subject Leader for Education Studies (SL4B) and head of the School of Education (SM4). The Subject Leader for Education Studies has overall responsibility for the subject across all programmes, including initial teacher training, and teaches on the Education Studies Degree, but is not responsible for its leadership and planning which is done by the Course Leader (SL4). The approach for permission to do the interviews was carried out with the leader of the BA Education Studies. S/he was self-deprecating in these discussions, saying s/he isn't an expert in Education Studies: s/he is a tutor in secondary geography and the BA course had just been given to her to run. S/he suggested that the Subject Leader for Education Studies (SL4B) also be interviewed as it was felt that s/he would have a stronger theoretical account of the subject.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

The interviewer had recently accepted the post of external examiner for the BA Education Studies at the institution, but had had no engagement with the programme at that point except for reading the course documents. The interviews were carried out during a one-day workshop for external examiners held by the university. The interviewer's role as future external examiner perhaps did ensure that the interviewees were very cooperative.

#### **Analysis of the interviews**

## Brief summary of findings

- Although the concept of Education Studies in the School of Education derives from initial teacher training programmes, the new Education Studies subject is defined to be systematically distinct from Education Studies in ITT.
- The sharp distinction from ITT is driven by the fact that there is an existing undergraduate QTS course and tutors were under an injunction not to encroach on that area. Those planning the course appeared to have been restrained from considering its relevance to teacher training to the extent that they express surprise at the notion.
- The aims are distinctive; they relate to learning in a very general sense and offer students a 'sense of place', focussing on the local community of the place where the institution is located. The ideological position is to examine concepts of equality in education.
- The placement in a non-educational setting is an innovative idea and has generated interest from employers. The vocational outcomes are well explored and well articulated.
- The Course Leader has had a direct influence on the curriculum content as a Secondary PGCE Geography tutor in defining the 'sense of place' in the aims.
- There is a strong sense of collaboration among the staff and that the aims have been jointly agreed. However, the course leader as a secondary Geography PGCE tutor has been instrumental in defining the aims about the sense of place.
- The programme leader (SL4A) and the Head of School (SM4) both have a limited vision of the theoretical framework. It is better articulated by the Subject Leader for Education Studies (SL4B), although s/he finds the description difficult to carry out without notes.
- A distinctive feature is the semester-long placement in a non-educational environment.
- Any curricular link with ITT has not been considered and both interviewees found it difficult to articulate.
- The attempt to define the subject away from ITT led to an admissions policy to exclude, or discourage, those applicants who expressed an interest in teaching as a career.
- Poor recruitment to the first cohort (14/25) led to the revision of that policy for the 2005 entry and a to a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between Education Studies and teacher training for undergraduates.
- There is a somewhat naïve quality about the assumptions for the course in imagining that Education Studies has nothing to do with teaching.
- It is unusual in commencing with a single honours programme, rather than as a subject in combined awards.
- There is a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from staff; some are anxious to be deployed away from competence-based ITT: emancipation.
- The theoretical framework is defined as the use of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, History and Informatics to inform an understanding of the nature of learning, although the terms are not used explicitly, and there is an intention to conceal them from the students.
- The rationale for the course is well argued. However, another perspective would be that the pragmatic case for running the course - of deploying staff disaffected by the TTA standards - is converted into principled action by devising a set of

normative aims couched in the currently accepted discourses of widening participation, vocational outcomes, education for the community.

- The discourse of the Senior Manager demonstrates a management-oriented self-affirmation which refuses any sense of self-doubt or tentativeness.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

The first reason given for the origination of the subject given by the Subject Leader was the fact that staff needed to be deployed who were unhappy teaching to the standards of the ITT programmes:

It was really the previous head of department's baby. S/he was at a point of realising s/he had a lot of staff who had expertise that wasn't being used appropriately because of the changes in teacher education – moving to the competence-based and school-based stuff and all the sociology and psychology of education all went out of the window. And the number of people who were experienced in terms of psychology, sociology..... S/he thought that this would be *a* way of using the expertise that we had there already to move it forward and to get away from the confines really of Ofsted and TTA (SL4A:2).

This pragmatic origin is not confirmed by the Head of School, however, who offers a more ideological version with a commitment to broadening the university's education for the community:

The main differences, I suppose, is the degree that relates to Education has a very strong commitment to equality and it's set firmly within our geographical setting. And we're now looking at ways in which people can contribute to Education other than being in teaching, and in a way that influences the kind of modules we've got on courses like the BA Professional Education Studies which is a CPD course where people that are working in an education setting can gain a degree. So they might be youth workers, they might be all sorts of people who are in a setting where education is involved in their work (SM4:6).

It might be argued that here a course or subject has been devised for the pragmatic reasons of staff deployment and then the value rationale has been erected around it, couching the aims in normative terms which reflect the politically current terminology.

There is, though, also the notion of the creative energy of liberation from the constraints of professional standards expressed by the Head of School:

..... we felt that it would give people an opportunity to really get to grips with education policy: how does that affect our lives? What do we really mean by equality and equality of opportunity? How could people develop their skills in a placement setting? And we really wanted to be able to do that kind of thing

without the constraints actually of things like the QTS standards, you know, in other areas, the professional standards of things can be limiting and we actually wanted to develop something that *was* different and innovative and would take people *into* education, but in different directions, not within the constraints of a particular profession (SM4:12).

The Subject Leader (SL4B) adds that the development of Education Studies was a part of the upgrading of the subject across all programmes, including the teacher training courses where Education Studies had been used as a ‘catch-all’ for various elements which did not fit with the curriculum teaching:

.... historically Education Studies in the teacher education programmes had been a dumping ground for everything else, so we don’t actually plan the lesson - Ed Studies’ll do that.... and we said, this is a discipline of its own and the QAA Benchmarks, we took those, we added some of our own and then we mapped those onto the standards. So we looked at it from that point..... it took us two years to make it clear to the staff – and maybe this is where the status came in – that Education Studies is a *serious* business and not a dumping ground. So there’d been that kind of campaign going on (SL4B:38).

So the development of the new subject appears to have been carried out as part of a general attempt to re-theorise across the programmes, and it is interesting that the QAA Benchmark was used also to guide the development of Education Studies in the teacher training courses.

The planning had been done in detail over a long period of time and the Course Leader explains that there has been a serious attempt to formulate a new subject:

Oh, I mean, it’s been going..... This is the first cohort, but the planning has been going on for two years before that.... a lengthy process. I don’t know why, I don’t know why, but it took two years. On reflection, I think it was good that it did take two years, because I don’t think we would have come up with what we’ve come up with in a short space of time. We would have gone down the let’s do a bit of psychology..... you know. I don’t think we would have been as free form as we have become because of the length of time we had to think about.... *re-think* things (SL4A:6).

By ‘free-form’ s/he presumably means that new approaches were adopted, rather than employing former elements of Psychology and Sociology.

So a new subject, then, has been devised which is intended to be distinctly different from the content of undergraduate QTS degrees, and it is explained that a part of the rationale was to avoid encroaching on the QTS programmes:

.....we weren’t looking to tread on anybody’s toes within the School of Education. It was meant to be completely separate and distinct from.....(ITT) (SM4:96)

And there had been a decision by the former Head of School that the course should be distinct from other Education Studies provision:



(Name) who was the previous head of school before had been a QAA Education Studies inspector, or whatever they call them, for years and so s/he knew what was going on out there and s/he felt we could do something better (SL4A:134).

The aims of the programme are expressed as:

.... the interpretation of education in its absolutely broadest sense: a process of living, not just a preparation for future life (SL4A:24)

And the role in the community is signalled strongly by a one-semester placement in an employment setting:

And also the university is very keen to be a community partner and so we've built in placements in Year 1 and in Year 2, because we do want to try to get these students to be part of the community, rather than just coming from three years, disappearing again and not actually contributing to the community. So *that's* an underlying principle as well (SM4A:24).

The Subject Leader (SL4B) adds to this, explaining how her domain of Social Informatics is employed in the local studies:

....in Year 1 one of the modules is Creativity and New Media, so what are the affordances of these new media that enables a creative expression of experience. And so we're teaching it next semester, but there are many overlaps with that and what (SL4A) has done in this semester in terms of the sense of place: looking at (Institution place name), for example, and so I'll be picking up on some of those themes, taking (Institution place name) Museum and using that within a module for creativity. In the next year there's module called 'Borderless Education' which is about on-line communication – on-line communities – ways of learning where the boundaries aren't clear. At the moment it's called creative and cultural industries because of it being about (Institution place name). There's a lot of digital media in small companies here. We wanted students to know what is it like to learn in places like 'Epic', which is a multi-media production company, or places such as company name), which is a media centre where they make films and .... So there's a thread through out Education degree about the implications of new technologies on this business of learning within a context of (Institution place name) within the wider view of our society (SL4B: 8).

There is a strong emphasis on vocational outcomes and these are well-articulated:

I did do quite a lot of 'phoning of organisations to say, would you be interested in these sorts of people who've done this sort of a degree, with this sort of background and would they be the sort of people you'd think of? And yes, they were interested and they're interested in offering them placements (SL4A:132)

Libraries, museum service, art galleries, working in education offices, those sorts of things; working in education departments of all sorts of NGOs;

community work, social services in some contexts, you know.... quite a lot of different things..... (SL4A:130)

..... within a breadth, so not as narrow as teaching. And most of our other courses have got those obvious outcomes, you know: youth workers, teachers, and we want to give them something a bit broader (SM4:26).

The placements are not in schools or other educational institutions in order to avoid conflict with placements for the QTS students:

(They are) definitely *not* in schools, definitely not in schools, because we don't want to encroach on any of the placements that are used by QTS students. It's meant to be seen as a separate ID.... they're meant to have a separate ID (SL:4:26).

Again, the necessity of avoiding conflict with QTS needs serves to define the nature of the placement and, thereby, of the subject. This subject, then, takes its aims of non-teaching employment outcomes because of the fact that it exists alongside a QTS programme. The planners have been ingenious, however, in creating an identity for the subject in the idea of a sense of place and by involving local industry and organisations:

we try to set it in the context of the city, and the city is a place of great contrast. You know, there's a lot of inequality within the city, so it's recognising how an urban area such as this has all these different factions working within it, and then it's sort of transferring that to other sorts of situations. The placement opportunities are how different groups of people work towards a more equitable provision for the group they're working for (SM4:34).

And

The placement is very distinctive, trying to set it in the context of the urban environment in which the university is situated. Because, although the students are at the university, they don't all necessarily come from (Institution place name). And they don't all necessarily *live* in (Institution place name), but we're trying to give it a focus of being part of what's going on within the city (SM4:38).

There has also been communication with another school in the university about the skills of Education Studies students and there is a view of Education Studies as contributing to those subjects where communication is required:

I had a conversation with the Dean of the School of Science and Engineering who said that a straight science degree doesn't necessarily mean that his/her scientists are particularly good at communicating. They're very good at communicating *scientific* knowledge and understanding, but in a broader context, and s/he does a lot of work where those scientists go into schools, or go into the community, and teach, or interact with people in terms of science. And s/he feels that those kind of skills are very important for scientists and

that, for some of them, and Education strand within their degree would open up opportunities for them. I think it has got a huge amount of potential (SM4:74).

Among the aims for the subject is the notion of 'equality'. This is not clearly expressed and it is difficult to interpret what is intended:

And the notion of 'equality' is the underlying principle that hopefully goes all the way through (SL4A:28).

Question: Can I ask you how you see that 'equality'? Does that mean they will have an understanding of equality and inequality? (SL4A:29)

Yes, yes (SL4A:30).

Question: So is there some ideological thing behind that? Other than analysis, is this in some way... does it have a political drive towards equality? (SL4A:33)

Well, I suppose..... I mean one of the significant tutors on the course is a Marxist and, you know, s/he's up-front about being a Marxist and a lot of the things that s/he does obviously have a political bias to them, but that's fine, you know, if you're up front about things. So certainly s/he has a significant input in Years 1, 2 and 3. And so there will be that influence in terms of the sorts of things s/he's doing. Erm..... but also, I think, in the context of.... It's that sort of idea; it's a bit vague really (SM4:34).

The QAA Subject Benchmark is used and referred to specifically in the course documents:

Yes, we took the Benchmark statement as the underlying principle. Why reinvent the wheel, sort of thing. We've got to work towards the Benchmark anyway. So yes, we did. They're pretty..... you know, all-embracing, aren't they? (SL4A:140).

### **Education studies and teacher training**

As noted above, the new Education Studies is intended to be systematically distinct from ITT and is intended not to 'encroach' on the content of those programmes. This attempt to distance the course from the existing QTS courses has strongly shaped the content, but also, in the first year, the admissions policy was that those applicants who expressed interest in teaching were discouraged or excluded. This was later recognised as an error, but demonstrates the limitations on the planning process imposed by the radical intention to distance the subject from teaching. The result is that the first cohort are students who intend to teach and are finding the programme remote from their perceived needs:

Well, obviously, it's looking at education in absolutely its widest interpretation, which I think has been one of the hardest things to get over to the students, especially as some of them were hi-jacked from a teacher training course, and some of the things that we've been doing with them they think,

well what's this got to do with teacher education, you know. It's breaking down those barriers of what education actually *means* (SM4:16).

Yes, what's this got to do with teaching, but you've got to remind them they're not on a teaching course: you're looking at education in its widest context; they in which people learn; you don't just learn in a school; every experience is a learning experience.

Question: Are you convincing them of that? Are they going along with it?

Gradually. We'll see when we've marked the first set of assignments (SM4:84-86).

Despite the fact that the students were recruited from the QTS course, some have already decided that they do not wish to teach:

I should think there's a fifty-fifty split at the moment. Some are definitely convinced they still want to teach and others are keeping their options open, and are pleased to be on a course that will allow them to keep their options open (SM4:88).

The admissions policy, then, has been revised to recognise the reality that students who take Education Studies are interested in teaching:

..... we've had to revise our thinking on that, because we recruited so poorly last year we think we may have been a bit narrow in terms of..... or a bit exclusive in terms of the type of students we were looking for. So.... I mean we've had a huge increase in applications, but also I've made offers to people I wouldn't have made offers to last year who definitely say I've always wanted to teach; I want to do an education degree and a PGCE. You know people who thought about it, and giving them more credence in terms of knowing what they're applying for, because one does assume that they've read the documentation and know what they've applied for. And I think we were a bit narrow and exclusive last year (SM4:92).

However, there are to be no changes to the course content and there is no intention to make provision which would be explicitly 'useful' to teacher trainees:

.... we've slightly re-worded the flyers and things to say that should you meet DfES criteria and want to teach, then you could be eligible for a PGCE. We've put that in, whereas it didn't mention teaching at all in our original documentation, because we weren't looking to tread on anybody's toes within the School of Education. It was meant to be completely separate and distinct from.....(ITT) (SM4:96)

The Head of School is unequivocal in the rejection of QTS-related content and explains that the course is not intended to lead to a PGCE. Asked whether the course had been planned to be helpful to future PGCE students, s/he replies,

No, we didn't. We actually took a conscious decision not to do that, because so many other education programmes, especially when they're called Education Studies, lead *onto* the PGCE and they're designed in that way and we didn't want to do that (SM4:30).

Asked simply about the course's relationship to ITT s/he replies:

It doesn't really have one.... It doesn't really have one in that.... we have placements, but the placements are very, very different to the kind of placements you would have on an ITE programme. However, you could be eligible to apply for a PGCE primary course with your qualification. So I think that there are people on that course who might end up being teachers. But that isn't the main thrust of the.... That isn't the main thrust of the programme. It is about enabling people to understand the education process, policy, practice – you know, some of the underlying principles and philosophy (SM4:28).

What is significant here is that any relationship with teacher education is seen only in terms of placement. There is no notion of curriculum content which might inform future teachers. And this is confirmed by her rejection of the three-plus-one model in her statement that undergraduate teacher education must include the curriculum, demonstrating that s/he has no notion of an Education Studies content that might address the school curriculum:

I do believe that they need to be able to articulate with the curriculum and what lies beneath their teaching, their understanding of the curriculum (SM4:66).

The determination not to relate the subject to teaching seems to extend to trying to distinguish the course from other Education Studies programmes. This seems inconsistent with the concern which s/he expresses that recruitment is difficult to a course which is unique and not understood in the market:

suddenly you offer an undergraduate programme full time that doesn't carry QTS – so what's going on at (Institution), then? (SM4:60).

The Subject Leader, confirms that the starting point was other than teacher training, but acknowledges the change in the light of experience of the students:

Initially, when we were planning it, it wasn't.... the degree experience for the students themselves.... there's no expectation that it would lead into teaching. So the relationship came from the staff who designed and were teaching it. There wasn't an expectation it would lead into teaching. That's shifted, and now some of the people who are on it are saying, actually, I think, might want to teach. And so we can say, well you could apply for a PGCE. But I think at first we thought they'd be people who were interested in education settings, but not necessarily QTS (SL4B:22).

### **The theoretical framework and contributory disciplines**

All the interviewees discount the explicit role of the disciplines, but have difficulty with explaining the theoretical nature of the subject without them; there is an intangible notion of 'underpinning':

Well, they're not identified as subjects, so the disciplines and the modules are underpinned with..... Yes, I'd say that the modules are underpinned by those disciplines, but we don't..... the modules are not identified as Psychology or Socio..... (SM4:44)

Education Studies is seen to be concerned with learning, and that would distinguish it from a social sciences subject:

it certainly draws a lot on the theory of learning and theories of development and..... the concept of equality issues and the significance of those issues in terms of society.... And how that all relates to a particular geographical position that we're in. And that's what I think distinguishes it. And that wouldn't fit within our School of Social Sciences. (SM4:52).

And it is transdisciplinary in that different contexts (or subjects) can be included:

That's the beauty of it that you can pull together a coherent range of contexts which, for students, are interesting and intellectually challenging and what have you (SM4:54).

The rationale for the subject was to employ those staff who had knowledge and skills in the disciplines:

... moving to the competence-based and school-based stuff and all the sociology and psychology of education all went out of the window. And the number of people who were experienced in terms of psychology, sociology..... S/he (the former Head of School) thought that this would be a way of using the expertise that we had there already to move it forward and to get away from the confines really of Ofsted and TTA (SL4A:2).

However, as well as removing the constraints of the standards, but disciplines themselves - the old 'ologies' - were to be removed:

.... we looked at people's web-sites to see what was going on out there and many of the courses seemed to be the old 'ologies', you know. And we tried to.... and I suppose to keep away..... it took a while to.... multi-dimensional..... all the way through it's multi-dimensional, rather than trying to put things into pockets. That was what we tried to do (SL4A:46).

So while the disciplines are not there explicitly, they 'permeate everything:

They don't appear strongly, and deliberately, but they're meant to, as I say, permeate everything..... but when we had the validation, the (person) from Greenwich, whose name escapes me, was our external scrutineer and s/he.... when s/he read the documentation s/he felt it had a heavy sociological bias and I think that is a true reflection of the people that are working on the course.

The other disciplines are there, but I think it does lean towards being sociologically-based.

Students are not made aware of the disciplines, unless they study one of the social sciences as an elective:

Well those who take modules in the School of Applied Social Sciences will be more aware, but if they don't take those I don't think there will be a great distinction; there will just be..... it will just be a more holistic approach..... (SL4A:52).

So the methods are used, but the terminology is not used:

Those terms, no..... (SL4A:58)

So there appears to be a use of the disciplines, but the illusion for the students is that they are not there. This appears to be, again, an attempt to define the subject as something in its own right which is not simply the old disciplines. The remaining theory seems intangible, though:

Erm..... well I think we would like to have and I think it would probably be organic as it moves forward (SL4A:60).

Again, here, s/he resorts to the contemporary-sounding phrase, 'organic' and its meaning is difficult to determine.

The Subject Leader has a more considered view of the role of the subject disciplines which s/he sees as informing Education Studies, along with other theoretical domains. S/he regrets the loss of these from teacher training courses, although there is reluctance to identify the disciplines by name:

I think that they (the disciplines) inform it; it draws on those; maybe you could describe it as trans-disciplinary, but it has to draw on those domains, ways of thinking and looking at the world in order to.... I think we lost a lot in Education Studies in teacher education when we lost the Sociology of Education, the Psychology of Education, but I don't think that putting them into their subject domains is helpful. I'm not sure I've explained that very well, but I think Education Studies, and Education as an area, draws upon a whole range of disciplines, and that's why I think it's of interest. You can have ecology, an environmental approach to looking at the world.... in the a psychological way of looking at the world, in with a sociological, in with my area which is social informatics (SL4B:4).

So the disciplines are included amongst other new perspectives: ecology and social informatics. But given the way that this is clearly articulated here, the desire to keep the terminology from the students is notable.

Her response to the question about the overall framework is interesting in that s/he finds it difficult to bring to mind without reference to the documents.

I'm hesitating..... I mean, we've discussed it as a team and I'm thinking, ah, if I had the documentation here with the words..... I can't remember the words that we actually put in the validation document, so I'm trying to think, ah, does what I say this afternoon match with what we said (laughs)..... at validation? The theoretical framework for the whole degree? Well, erm, perhaps rather than to talk about a theoretical framework I can give our motivations for wanting to do it; that'll give some clues as to what our theories were..... Erm, in addition to the 'let's diversify' generally within the School of Ed. A sense of engagement in our own particular domains; I won't call them 'disciplines', but 'domains'. And that was social justice, globalisation, technologies, sense of place, you have this engagement. All of us have in common and engagement with education as, not just learning, it's erm realising one's potential..... of learning beyond..... instrumental learning for your qualifications and learning in order to be a participatory citizen in the world. I suppose a sense of what are the values and beliefs about ..... yes, being an active and informed citizen. And I think that fuelled us to say, yes, but how do we express that within subject domains that we all operate in... (SL4B:10)

The theoretical framework expressed is a thoughtful, but rather diffuse discussion of the nature of learning and global citizenship. The interesting thing is that s/he is quite explicit in indicating that the theory is derived directly from the practical expediency, and the motivation for, diversification in the School of Education. This is reinforced here, but also there is the idea of staff 'expressing themselves' through the new subject, as though the pragmatics of diversification released some inner need:

Well, pragmatic and practical too in that we were told we need to diversify; there's some of that too. But yes..... We saw it, I suppose, as an opportunity to express our ideology. We didn't know this when we started, but looking back on some of those processes; and the validation meeting, which was actually very positive and we were actually very.... assertive about the nature this degree and what we wanted it to look and feel like; yes that's how it.... (SL4B:22).

Again there is an expression of the need for emancipation from the constraints of the teacher training standards:

Also for a sense of what are the dynamic, *inspiring* aspects of education we feel have been squeezed out of us in the Teacher Training Agency model of a teacher. We feel very strongly that we have tried to hang on to those at (Institution name) and, rather teacher education, not teacher training, but which we can no longer find space to do. And much of that is to hand over some autonomy to the students, to give them more of a string vest approach, instead of tight knitting ... so an opportunity also to model ways of learning and teaching more authentically within the Education Degree than we feel able to do in the teacher training degrees, because it's not about meeting someone else's standards, it's more to do with personal and intellectual growth; well not just intellectual, but personal growth (SL4B:12).

## Staffing



Staffing appears to be non-problematical. It is common across both the Education Studies and ITT and CPD programmes, necessarily because of the small numbers. So it is notable that the opportunity for making links with teacher training is not taken. Staff seem to be enthusiastic to teach Education Studies and enjoy the freedom in it:

... they have realised that they can do what they want to do rather than what the TTA are saying they should do. So that's been nice (SL4A:72).

The Marxist (person) that I mentioned earlier, I mean s/he just thinks it's fantastic: this is wonderful, you know; at last I'm doing something that I want to do. It's been a revelation for him/her; s/he'd like to be even more involved, I think. So that's been very good. And some people who weren't involved to start with have become involved because they've realised that there is more freedom in this kind of degree and have come on board subsequently (SL4A:74).

There is general approval among staff for the new subject, although one demurs:

..... one member of staff didn't want to be involved because it *wasn't* teaching, and s/he said, we're about teacher education and unless it's a route into teaching I'm not interested (SL4B:30).

### **Note on the discourse**

The Course Leader (SL4A) and the Head of School (SM4) display distinct forms of discourse. The Course Leader adopts a pragmatic style with some direct terminology. For example of the initial cohort s/he says, 'some of them were hi-jacked from a teacher training course' (SL4A:16) and s/he offers the pragmatic reason for the origins of the course. S/he is rather self-deferential, referring to the course as 'the baby' of the former Head of School, when s/he, in fact, has led the planning from the start and has given it the distinctive feature of the 'sense of place' and the focus on (Institution place name).

On the other hand, the Head of School replies to questions with a uniform tendency to elevate the image and status of the school:

I suppose, in a sense, the Education Honours Degree arose from our very strong traditions that related to ITE and to those related, you know, MA Education-type programmes, and we've got an EdD here as well (SM4:4).

And I actually think that, had we not had such a strong and diverse breadth of provision that has evolved year on year, we would never have got to the stage of having an education degree (SM4:10).

S/he refers frequently to 'tradition' as though it justifies the practice:

The reason for that is that we have a tradition here of Education Studies, which we used to call 'Core Professional Studies', being a central part of all of our initial teacher education programmes (SM4:4).

Oh yes, and we've got a strong tradition there... (SM4:46)

There is a degree of certainty and lack of self-doubt of self-criticism that makes the discourse a form of continuing self-affirmation:

The motivation was: a) that we see ourselves as having strengths in that area and secondly we wanted.... We're committed to widening participation and we're committed to breadth and diversity of provision and we didn't have a full-time undergraduate programme like it, and we felt that it would give people an opportunity to really get to grips with education policy: how does that affect our lives? (SM4:12).

S/he takes every opportunity to reaffirm the strengths of the institution:

..... and we've got this very strong reputation for ITE, and that's the thing, isn't it, that suddenly you offer an undergraduate programme full time that doesn't carry QTS – so what's going on at (Institution name), then? (SM4:60).

And mistakes cannot be directly countenanced: rather than acknowledging directly that the admissions policy of turning away those interested in teaching had been an error, s/he formulates the response to the market question as something done not 'sufficiently well', and s/he uses the term over-formal 'interrogate' to mask the error:

I think that was an aspect of the development that I think perhaps.... wasn't interrogated sufficiently well (SM4:58).

At no point is there any sense of tentativeness or consideration of alternative viewpoints or practice. Asked about the possibility of changing the undergraduate QTS to Education Studies s/he replies:

Absolutely not, no. Because I believe that that is not what all undergraduate teachers need and I would really not want to do that at all. It wouldn't be a direction in which I'd want to go, not with the model of Education Studies that we've got here. I mean, I would have to reconceptualise what that means if it were to be relevant to ITE students (SM4:62-64).

I do believe that, because we've got such a big undergraduate primary programme, I do believe that they need to be able to articulate with the curriculum and what lies beneath their teaching, their understanding of the curriculum. It's very important and I don't think that marries very well.... (SM4:66)

It is interesting that this resoluteness is expressed in the first person singular, whereas the rest of the responses are framed in the plural, institutional persona 'we'. This gives the impression that the matter has not been discussed with other members of the school.

At several points s/he resorts to vacuous assertions of educational terms, for example, asked about the role of Education Studies in relation to the university mission:

I suppose, the underlying agenda is the concept of Every Child Matters (SM4:22)

.... we've used things like the QAA code of practice and what have you... discrete criteria.... (SM4:40)

That's the beauty of it that you can pull together a coherent range of contexts which, for students, are interesting and intellectually challenging and what have you (SM4:54).

This is a politicised discourse (Fairclough, 2000) in which the speaker is continually endeavouring to reinforce the positive image of the institution. This might be seen as a function of the management role which is a tireless public relations exercise.

## Conclusion

The planning and origins of the subject are an interesting case and it proved to be valuable to conduct the interviews at this point where the early experiences are still in place and matters are being developed.

There is a most interesting case of planning here. Education Studies was developed over a two-year period with the first admissions in 2004. Because the institution was retaining its four-year undergraduate course, the planning team was under an injunction to make the course sharply distinct from the content of the ITT course. The attempt to distinguish it from teacher education, and indeed from other Education Studies courses which relate to ITT, give it a particular quality, especially in its strong vocational outcomes and the semester-long placement. However, the failure to understand students' perceptions of Education Studies as a possible route to teacher training demonstrates a naivety which they are now forced to realise and address. What is peculiar about the view of Education Studies is that they do not perceive that what they are doing in developing a notion of the wider role of education in the community and in society might be of value to future teachers. It might even be suggested that they are so marooned in a model of teaching as compliance with government-determined competences that they cannot see this themselves. The conclusion is that these broader perceptions of education and society are for others, but not for teachers.

In the conversation with the Head of School, this notion begins to emerge:

No..... I think at first we were perhaps one step too far in that we definitely did discourage people who said they wanted to be teachers from having anything to do with it; and I think in retrospect that was a *little* bit of a mistake, because I think we do need to make the connection that they will be doing relevant things, though we haven't necessarily linked them to the standards, that clearly, if the student does a placement in an extended school setting, or if they do a placement in a play-work setting, the kind of experiences they have would be very valuable experiences for them (SM4:32).

The desire to formulate a distinctively new subject entails the rejection of the explicit use of the contributory disciplines, but it is acknowledged that the permeate the

modules and, asked to explain the theoretical framework without the disciplines leaves both interviewees with little to say and both resort to forms of discourse which conceal the lack of substance in the theory.

The Head of School's answers are typical of a form of management discourse which runs counter to academic discussion and critiques and might be seen as a function of the demands for compliance and the role of the university in a free market.

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 5 on 1 March and 11 March 2005**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 5**

Case 5 is a diversified teacher-training institution with some 4000 students formed from the amalgamation of two church foundation teacher training colleges. Teacher training is still its main area of provision with a large primary undergraduate QTS programme as well as primary and secondary PGCE courses. The undergraduate Education Studies course began in 2001 as a small subject in the modular scheme and was derived from a course for those who had failed the teaching assessment in a four-year QTS degree. Student numbers have grown rapidly to a total of 600. Education graduates are able to progress to the PGCE, but there are no formal links through guaranteed places or interviews.

The subject was reviewed in March 2005 with modifications to give longer modules in order to improve student retention. Education Studies had been selected as a focus subject for the QAA institutional review later in the year.

In June 2004 the first Subject Leader had held a national colloquium on Education Studies at the Institution. This had been a significant event in the development of the British Education Studies Association and s/he is a member of the founding group.

#### **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted on two separate occasions. The first was 1 March when the interviewer was an external panel member for the subject review. On that occasion two senior managers were interviewed: the Dean of Education (SM5A) and Assistant Dean (SM5B). The Dean had been recently appointed and, although a former member of the Institution staff, was unfamiliar with the processes in the Institution and with the details about the origins of the Education Studies course. The Assistant Dean had been in post for some years and closely involved with the developments of the programme. For these reasons it was agreed that it would be appropriate to interview both simultaneously.

The Subject Leader (SL5A) who had originated and led the course had been on the staff for 15 years and had previously run the four-year QTS degree. S/he had recently taken up a new post as Head of Widening Participation and had just been replaced by a new Subject Leader (SL5B). He had joined the staff eighteen months previously, a new appointment to increase staffing and to provide a post-16 dimension to the course. Again, because of the possible lack of background knowledge of the new subject leader, it was agreed to interview the two simultaneously. The occasion was a meeting of the British Education Studies Association on March 11.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

A significant factor in the interviews was my role as an external in the March 2005 review. The senior managers were interviewed shortly after the review. This had the effect of repeating some questions asked during the review and potentially made the

process somewhat artificial. There was also, at first, some uncertainty about the status of the questions in relation to my role in the review. However, both interviewees appeared to quickly become reassured that the processes were disconnected and seemed to answer in an uninhibited way. The subject leaders make references on occasion to the review documents which they were aware I had read.

A second factor was my familiarity with the two subject leaders who are involved in the founding group for the British Education Studies Association. The Education Review document included a number of references to my work on Education Studies. We had previously discussed each others' courses and roles and so, again, there was some repetition of information. This led to the responses of the first Subject Leader (SL5A) sometimes being rather informal in tone, although it appears not to have inhibited his responses.

It might be argued that, because of my knowledge of some of the participants and because of my role in the subject review, the data should not be included in the study. However, it is suggested that the Institution's course is a large and successful one and important in the national picture. Further, the access to the material and information about the course provided rich data which it would be perverse to discount.

The simultaneous interviewing of pairs was a new approach. Two subject leaders had been interviewed at University Sample 2, but in that case the second subject leader had been in post for a year and had developed a particular view. Separate interviews were therefore appropriate. In this sample, the Dean and the second subject leader had been in post for a matter of weeks and both expressed uncertainty about being able to speak confidently. It was judged, then, that the first interview in each case would be able to speak about the origins and thinking behind the course, whereas the new appointments might be able to contribute ideas about future developments. The method appears to be successful in gathering the necessary information, although there are some interesting effects on the discourse as a result of the interaction between the individuals in one of the pairs. Another feature of the paired interviews is that, especially between the Subject Leaders, they occasionally question and respond to each other.

### **Brief summary of findings**

- The current course was initiated by the subject leader from an antecedent emergency provision for QTS failures but has grown into a large and popular non-QTS programme.
- The subject was conceived by the first Subject Leader. A large Education Studies course does not appear to have been part of a strategic mission and the institutional management seems to have been taken unawares by its success.
- The Senior Managers appear to have only recently grasped the nature of the subject and the rationale for its existence is *post hoc*.
- The rationale for the programme within the institution is enhancing widening participation and providing a broader range of study and non-teaching vocational opportunity.
- The high Education Studies numbers have rescued the institution from failing to meet its overall HEFCE target.
- Education Studies with Early Years has been a popular subject combination.

- The aims are described in terms of vocational outcomes and widening participation, rather than inherent concepts and content. It is seen to attract low-quality students and has a redemptive role: ‘rescuing them from oblivion’, ‘lifting horizons’.
- Alongside the QTS degree, Education Studies is perceived as lower status and for those who are insufficiently qualified for QTS.
- All interviewees found the theoretical basis of Education Studies difficult to articulate. The subject disciplines play an explicit role.
- The first Subject Leader has a modest view of the content, describing it as easily accessible and ‘amorphous’ without boundaries.
- Its relationship to teacher training is ambiguous: its origins lie in an alternative to teaching, but progression to a PGCE course is seen as one strong vocational outcome. However, there are no formal links with the institution’s PGCE programmes.
- Staffing has been fragmentary and difficult to find to teach the unexpectedly high numbers. Core Education Studies have only recently been appointed.
- The Subject Leaders relish the freedom from the teacher training standards, but other staff do not generally perceive it in this way and remain committed to the priority of teacher training.
- The teacher training culture of the institution dominates students’ perceptions of the subject.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

The two interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

The first Subject Leader explains that the Education Studies is derived from his/her efforts, while leader of the QTS degree, to make provision for those students who were unable to complete the course:

....its true antecedents, were probably the BA Ed, which was a programme I set up to salvage the degrees of students who’d failed their teaching practices. Because we had a four-year degree programme and if they got to the end of their third year and they didn’t.... they blew their teaching practice, then they were lost, they didn’t have anything; so I had this thing where they could get through the fourth year doing a set of dissertations (SL5A:2).

S/he is candid about these modest origins and explains that, rather than being a part of the institution’s strategic planning, the course was initiated informally:

..... in a hotel room in Wales on one of our staff week-ends this idea came up about establishing an Education Studies programme that was separate from ITT (SL5A:2).

The second subject leader, however, hurries to explain that there was a strategic consideration in relation to the publication of the QAA Education Benchmark:

Well, you'd also got the other driver, which were the national drivers for Education Studies and it was a combination of the two, I think, really. I think that probably underpinned it (SL5B:4).

However, the dimensions of the development were not envisaged. A pilot group was tried and then 25 HEFCE numbers were allocated:

.... there was a very, very small pilot group – I think it was 27 or so students – who had opted as an elective as part of the BA Combined programmes this elective they took on in order to try out Education..... but then in the very, very first year we were first to get 25 students

However,

.... we actually recruited nearer 200, well 170, so it was just like a huge demand we uncovered (SL5A 9-11).

The appeal was to those students who were insufficiently qualified for the QTS degree:

A lot of them were people who wanted to become teachers, but didn't have quite all the..... you know, those GCSEs that they needed (SL5A:17).

The impression given here, then, is of a low status programme for the unsuccessful. Again, though, SL5B comes to the rescue to identify those who had simply selected Education Studies as an alternative rather than as a failed QTS route:

.... but then there's the other cohort that we talked about last week which was those that picked a-n-other subject as a core subject, if you like, as their primary course and actually picked up Education Studies, not by default, but as their second subject (SL5B:18).

SL5A does, though, continue to emphasise the provision of opportunities for low quality of entrants as the rationale for the course:

We're not getting students of the first water, but I think we're all surprised at how.... what wonderful students they turn out to be. So I think that fits into the notion of what I think the aims are: the notion of widening participation (SL5A:36).

S/he elaborates this with the view that the widening participation mission is effective in offering a higher education route for low-qualified entrants and raising their aspirations:

We are bringing students in - you know part of that 50% thing – I think we're at the cutting edge of that in many ways. We're bringing students in and we're giving them an academic sense and we're actually..... we're projecting them towards possibilities within the education industry. I definitely think we're doing that, doing it quite well (SL5A:36).



The course even has a redemptive function:

..... giving them a notion about what education is, because a lot of them are very poorly read, even right to the end of their time with us, and we are trying to lift their horizons (SL5A:41)

..... we have rescued people from a life of oblivion really (SL:5A:36).

His/her view of the subject and its appeal to low-qualified students is interesting:

I think to some of them it's kind of an unbounded subject - an amorphous subject – you don't really necessary have to be particularly prepared to enter it, because everybody thinks they know about education. So I think they felt that they had..... the underpinnings and understandings of knowledge that would enable them to succeed on it.... (SL:5A:20).

His/her regret is that the students' success tends to be judged purely in terms of whether they are successful in gaining a place on the PGCE course, as he does not see Education Studies as merely a route to teaching:

So I think that fits into the notion of what I think the aims are: the notion of widening participation. But the only issue with that is that the ones you see as being most successful tend to be the ones who go on to Postgrad. It's almost like a badge of their success to get onto the PGCE, which is a bit unfortunate, (SL:5A:36).

The second Subject Leader also has a view of students being academically limited:

... if we look outside giving them a notion about what education is, because a lot of them are very poorly read, even right to the end of their time with us, and we are trying to lift their horizons and how we're doing things (S15B:96).

The senior managers avoid this rather tortured account of the origins and aims of the subject and express it simply and tidily as different routes into teaching:

..... a desire to give opportunities to students who were not successful on entry to a BA QTS programme, or who wanted a different route into education professions, or into the PGCE (SM5B:2).

The origins are given a more positive gloss. Rather than the 'failures', it was for those who were undecided, and there is less emphasis on low-attaining students.

There were some people who were dropping out, but there were others for who it was not appropriate at that time, although they may have had an interest in teaching; they hadn't confirmed in their minds that was what they wanted to do. It was seen as creating, I suppose, flexibility and other opportunities for those who wanted to go into education, but who weren't absolutely sure they wanted to teach (SM5B:4).

It is only when pressed about the role of the course in the institutional mission that s/he refers to a non-teacher training rationale:

I mean the mission's all about educating the whole person and we see Education Studies as part of that because it's both academic and vocational; there's an element of theory and practice and it's about.... it's about rounded individuals and our mission is very much about not just training teachers – its sort of historical origins – but about training other practitioners and professionals to work with children in schools and other settings (SM5B:17).

This does indicate that the management's thinking about the rationale is rather limited in that s/he only at this point comes to the point that there might be alternative vocational outcomes than teaching. So the limited and low status vision of Education Studies which was originally held has been revised and this *post hoc* rationale is now offered by the Senior Manager. The following indicates initial uncertainty about the nature of the subject, with tentative, ill-defined starts and revisions:

I think in the initial stages the curriculum came out of teacher training and was very much focused around children learning, child development, that sort of thing. Erm, it always had strands, that I suppose linked back to our mission statement. One of our early modules was looking at beliefs in education, which is appropriate for a church college. That's then been, erm, modified as we've responded to student needs in terms of what might students want, what are their aspirations over and above teaching? But I think the curriculum's also developed as both as the pathway to.... and the Deanery has developed its understanding of what we mean by Education Studies and what sort of careers might our students be going into (SM5B:22).

S/he acknowledges that the numbers entering the course had been neither anticipated, nor planned for:

I think that we anticipated them being small, but from the very beginning they've been much larger than we anticipated (SM5B:6).

But in the event Education Studies proved to play an important role in the survival of the institution:

..... we recruit right across the college, we don't have targets for particular areas. There're not targets that we stick to..... so what's happened, to be honest, is that Education Studies they've taken more students because we haven't been able to recruit in other areas. So that, dare I say it, has contributed hugely towards, you know, saving the college (S5B:10).

This is to such an extent that its success generated some resentment within the institution:

I think it's looked on quite enviously in some ways. Here we have a subject that started off, and all of a sudden was so overwhelmed with students that other subject areas looked in very enviously. They were desperately trying to recruit students and Education Studies just seemed to be pulling them in. ....

If you look at the figures you'll find that ... (the) retention figures and progression figures are good and I do think that it did..... and it does create a little bit of envy elsewhere (SL5A:30).

The Assistant Dean agrees and suggests that there have been institutional questions about the academic viability of the subject:

I think it does, and I think as well that when it was being set up, I think there was some concern perhaps by other areas in the college as, well, was it an academic subject and should it be part of our portfolio at (Institution name)? And then, in a sense, the envy of having a subject that, you know, perhaps doesn't have a sort of long tradition as an academic subject, suddenly comes on board, does recruit well, does retain students well..... has been an interesting one (SM:5B:31).

This perception is confirmed by the first Subject Leader who notes that all the work of the School of Education is perceived to be as academically inferior:

... you have this other dynamic going on in the (Institution), which is that you have Education (Departments), and then you have the other (Departments), and there quite definitely is a sense in which the – maybe it's not quite so strong now – but the other (Departments) think of us as being the Pioneer Core, as it were: because we can't cut it as academics: we teach.

While Education Studies does not include an Early Years element, it can be taken as a combined subject with Early Years in the modular scheme, and this has added to the low-status image:

I think the other thing though is that at (Institution name) it's been developed alongside our Early Years pathway, and so you had two new subjects that perhaps aren't regarded as having a strong academic background suddenly being developed and recruiting extremely well between the two of them, because Early Years recruits as well as Education Studies.....that's been in part our success at recruiting to Education Studies in that we offer Early Years alongside it. For a lot of students that makes a very popular, coherent package (SM5B:36,37).

### **The curriculum**

A somewhat negative view of the content of the Education Studies curriculum is sustained by the first Subject Leader who sees the present content as 'stolid' and needing change:

but it now needs another leap of imagination. I mean I've done the stolid stuff, let's say; you know, we've got it in place. It's like a Lada. Now I think it needs to become a Jag, because..... because there are so many..... (SL5A:52)

S/he seems to be going to say that there is a wide range of alternative and better content, and s/he makes the point that there are no real boundaries set on the content of the curriculum:

As long as we keep to some decent standard there doesn't seem to be anything that would hem in our visions, which is I think sort of makes it distinctive (SL5A:48).

Again, the second Subject Leader comes to its defence, pointing out that development work has been done already:

I personally don't think it's quite as black and white as that and actually I want to give credit to Les because I think it's moved on well beyond that point already and I think appointing those three people eighteen months ago with a remit to look outside QTS, which is what was done. It was the start of that process and I think in the last eighteen months when I've been there I think that's exactly what's been going on, so looking at some of the modules at Level I and H, they just didn't exist eighteen months ago and even this year we've got brand new modules that didn't exist, erm... and I think that process had already started, so I don't think he's doing himself justice in terms of.... (SL5B:55)

So there has been a deliberate attempt to appoint staff to remodel the curriculum with a non-QTS emphasis. And this is recognised by SL5A who notes the work that has been done on non-teacher training placements:

Well, now we've had (SL5B) and (Tutor name) come on, and one of the things I wanted to bring to this was the notion of the way that work-based placements have taken a..... have developed hugely and there a wonderful... a real sense of possibility came to me yesterday when I was working in the Jaguar Training Plant where (SL5B) is taking students and the person there is.... there are undreamed-of links, you know, with widening participation and so on going on that we haven't quite got our heads round yet..... or I haven't. So erm... staff interest? (Tutor name) came to us with quite a strong record of generating work-based placements, which is a skill that I don't have, and (SL5B) has brought all his/her industry links and so on, so yes (SL5A:131).

The key features, then, appear to be the fact that it is defined differently from the QTS standards. There is, though, an attempt to respond to perceived student need, and this seems to mean that the aims and rationale are determined by a teacher training vocational perspective:

I took one of the students to Malawi... kind of.... one of the most articulate students of the year went to Malawi with me and we spent hours in trucks just talking about what Education Studies should be about and, I mean, a lot of strands came from that. So, for example, one of the things he wanted was a lead into teaching that wasn't overpowering, so we set up these 'Bridge to Teaching' courses. So it was, as (SL5B) says, drilling down to get some sense of what they did want (SL5A:60).

He claims that students' perception is not the sole determinant:

But we're not enslaved to what they want, because a lot of them don't know what they want (SL5A:60).

However, the vocational perspective is reinforced by the second Subject Leader:

.... that was my understanding when I joined that one of the things that you were doing and that we were brought in to do, which was broaden the concept of what Education Studies was to this cohort of students, and if we were brought in to that you have a responsibility really to look at, you know, those that want ..... move out into vocational... a vocation at the end of their first degree, or ultimately go on and do a PGCE, Masters or whatever it may be. So I... the next phase is we should seriously be looking at the.... that broader range of postgraduate alternatives (SL5B:111).

I also think that there are vocational drivers in this which the Education Studies underpins. If we look at some of the options that they've got – Sport, Business Studies, IT and so forth – it's this broad concept of Education Studies is more than just compulsory education and they're looking at it as a training..... you know, as an arm of – if they're going to go into business – the fact that they've got some educational background, that they can look at training, they can look at..... they can look at it as a valuable sort of underpinning of whatever the core vocational route is as well (SL5B:21).

So while the course has moved from what was described as a 'failed QTS route', the redefinition is still in terms of vocational outcomes, be they teaching or others:

... over the three or four years because as we've identified that the proportion of those that are people that come in and want to teach right from the start seems to have gone down as we've broadened the remit of Education Studies and sold it as a bigger thing than a failed QTS route, and as a route through to a PGCE. I mean it isn't a failed QTS route, but for some of them initially it was perceived as being ..... So where what.... the vast majority of the students in the first couple of years probably, er ..... teachers by another name, I think increasingly it's moved away from that (SL5B:24).

The first Subject Leader, however, is sure that a route into teaching is still a strong motivation for students:

It's still a major impact, though, isn't it? (SL5A:25)

When asked, both confirm that they regard the vocational outcomes as the salient ones:

.... because I think, putting myself in the position of a typical student today, there has to be a vocational rationale for most of what takes place in education. Now whether that's good or bad is a different issue and I think with the cost factors involved, its... you know, you're aware of the cost drivers the students themselves have, so if you can support them in actually meeting that, then I think you're doing a good job (SL5B:40).

This, then, is linked to the widening participation rationale: that the point of a university degree is to offer social mobility:

Well we would always lead with those idealistic aims, wouldn't we, Dave? But it's just the recognition of reality: these poor kids are going to be.... you know they have to find..... they've come to university ..... in order to make a better life for themselves. It's a luxury for us to have some notion about ideals.... (SL5A:115)

There is an enthusiasm for the academic freedom which is offered by Education Studies in contrast with teacher training programmes, but there is expression of what the academic content might be which becomes available:

.... it's an untrammelled kind of ..... You know you've used these terms that I've picked up from you that I've put in the (course review document)..... mostly about being fettered – teacher training being fettered by all this compliance culture and so on. But with us we can virtually teach what we like, actually, can't we? And it's exciting, but if you can keep the students with you (SL5A:46).

### **The theoretical framework and the subject disciplines**

All interviewees found the questions about the theoretical framework difficult to address. When reminded that it might be about the role of the subject disciplines, the Subject Leaders reply that the disciplines are treated explicitly:

.... we're addressing how do sociologists view education and so on... what's the psychological.... (SL5A:84)

Year 1 their lectures will be entitled 'the sociology of....the philosophy of .....the history of.....' (SL5B:88)

There is an interesting point about Education Studies requiring a being a 'synergy' between theory and practice:

We're dealing with the theory of education through a number of perspectives, whether it's Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, History, whatever it may be. And we're also dealing with the practice of education – and training if we take education in the broadest sense, rather than in the narrow sense of pure education – and so we're looking at the two strands, and I think if it has a theoretical framework it is the need to integrate those two things and see them as being synergies (SL5B:80).

The fact that the disciplines are seen as an explicit part of the theoretical framework is indicated by the attempt to employ social sciences staff from other areas of the institution to teach the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy, although it has been difficult and staff are of varying quality:

one of our efforts has been to try and draw in people who teach in those programmes in the main.... in the, you know, the pure forms elsewhere, but it's quite difficult to recruit people from outside Education and when you do get them they're probably not of the first water (SL5B:82).

However, the first Subject Leader is less categorical about the role of the disciplines:

I think it gets a bit blurred, though, doesn't it? The whole thing gets ragged in terms of conceptualising it (SL5A:89).

So while there is some attempt to present the subject disciplines as the theoretical framework, the implication seems to be that it is less than clear. The senior managers are also doubtful about the role of the disciplines; they are only 'touched on':

... in terms of Sociology and Psychology and how they relate to it and I suppose in..... sort of.... It's touched on.... It touches on a number of, erm, subject disciplines and so theoretical underpinnings.... There's obviously an element of some of the humanities subjects. I would see it as having a very broad base, but at the same time in being focused on what it's doing.....

So it is a notion of breadth which defines Education Studies.

### **Relationship to teacher training**

As already noted, Education Studies runs alongside an undergraduate QTS course and this remains a priority for staff and management. Its origins in a programme which for those who had failed the QTS course would tend to define it as a subject which is distinct from teacher training, and this is how the staff have tried to develop it, rather than as preparation for teaching:

....we're trying to avoid..... the notion that we're just a pathway onto the teacher factory (SL5A:36)

At the same time, they are pleased to see students progressing:

It's a miracle for us when we meet students in the yard who are getting towards the end of their PGCE (SL:5A:36).

There is a complex relationship here, around failure: failure of the QTS, or failure to gain admission. So while it began as an alternative to teaching, its growth beyond the QTS failures means that there are students who are taking it with a view to teaching, often as a route into teaching because they had failed to gain entry to the undergraduate QTS. This is explained by the first Subject Leader who notes that teaching as a career is part of the institutional culture:

I was speaking to the Senior Careers Adviser about this whole thing. He was saying that teaching defines *everybody's* choice at Hope. Doesn't matter what programme you're on; they either want to teach or they don't want to teach. Do you know what I'm saying? So it's either a positive or a negative so that everybody's career choice is chosen.... is affected by that. So Education Studies is almost replicates that tension in smaller, more contained pathway....

....teacher training is an influence on everybody's career choice in that sort of a college and that erm.... I think that probably you'd find about 90% of our

Education Studies students, if they were offered a PGCE place on a plate, they would take it...(SL5A:102, 104).

The second Subject Leader, though, sees a broader perspective among students:

I only disagree from the point of view of the feedback from students that I have had in the last eighteen months, which is a significant number have come forward to me to say they were thinking seriously about teaching at the point of entry, and actually through what we've done, we've broadened their concepts of what education can.... how education can be used outside that narrow framework and actually they're looking at all sorts of different things and so, for example, the module on the health economy as that operates several students have come forward to me to talk about education can be used through.... (S:5B:109)

The Assistant Dean confirms the idea that students begin with a view of teaching as a career, but then adopt broader possibilities. So there is a link to teacher training, but the content is not dictated by the standards.

... it is linked to teacher training in that students are interested in teaching, erm, obviously Level C, the first year, has a very strong element of looking at schools, how children learn and develop, and we would see it as a good foundation for a student who want to go on to a PGCE, but we don't see it as being governed by teacher training, and in that sense, I suppose, year on year it becomes more liberating as we're able to diversify..... away from the sort of perhaps strict focus in the beginning. I think it gives us new opportunities, new opportunities to staff and the Deanery colleagues elsewhere. It's not taking us away from teacher training, but it's not governed by teacher training (SM5B:64).

There is an interesting view of Education Studies from the Dean who sees it as addressing future government priorities and, in the light of predicted reductions in teacher training numbers, a possible future for the Department:

..... fits in with government policies that relate to - if I'm using the right terms - joined-up thinking of, you know, the social services, the health service and all the rest of it. From that perspective, I think, it's very timely..... I think also..... one feels slightly insecure about the future of the TTA side of it and so we're looking to make sure that if that reduces the (Department) itself has got some sort of security (SM5A:74).

The demand from students for teacher training-related content, however, has dictated the content of the curriculum in that modules have been developed which offer direct teacher training content, Bridge to Teaching:

that's one module of six to eight modules at one level.... that relates directly to the QTS standards..... (SL5B:122)

I don't think either of us thinks that it shouldn't be (related to teacher training). You could put it the other way round..... which is that it shouldn't be about *us*



predetermining the outcomes for students in that sense.... that we have to accept there are a significant number of students are either those students who wish to do a QTS course and couldn't get on it at that point and came to join us, or ultimately decided to do Education Studies because they wanted to do a PGCE .... (SL5B:125).

The first Subject Leader, however, is disappointed with the content of this module and recognises that it provides a limited vision of teaching:

Our concern with this particular programme is that it's quite under-developed, isn't it? Quite unambitious. In other words it's..... I suppose it *is* a criticism really, but we're..... It's difficult to persuade say the person who's running that course they go beyond the filling in of forms and applying for GTTR. What we had in mind when we set it up was almost a glorious notion of the idealised side of teaching: why would you want to be a teacher? But that hasn't happened..... (SL5AB:127).

Progression to the PGCE is not guaranteed for any students and there is a suggestion that such arrangements have been rejected, although the managers are interested in such a proposal:

Well I'm very interested in it, yes. You know, we have a lot of Education Studies students who are very good students; they demonstrate that through their assessment; they've developed a range of experiences in schools and other educational settings; they've demonstrated their commitment to education and they are very strong candidates for a PGCE anywhere. I think, you know, partly in terms of looking at our mission, the sort of institution that (Institution name) is, we ought to be supporting our students in further study. It's not about lowering our requirements that we have of them, but it's about supporting them in their future professional development (SM5B:70).

Given that the managers are in favour, it is notable that it has not been allowed to happen, presumably because of the inclinations, and power, of those who run the PGCE course.

## Staffing

Staff teaching Education Studies are all drawn from teacher training courses or from other subject disciplines. The rapid growth in student numbers has meant that there were difficulties in recruiting sufficient staff to teach the required modules. While most people were content to teach the subject, there is an indication from the Senior Managers that some were reluctant because they perceived it as a low-status activity:

There were those, too, who perhaps needed to be convinced about the sorts of students that we were recruiting, the quality of what we were offering, erm, and the reason for them as teacher trainers to be involved in it (SM5B:54).

It is interesting that the sense of liberation in teaching Education Studies noted in other institutions is not described as strong here. Asked whether that was a factor in

staff motivation to teach Education Studies the Assistant Dean is uncertain and suggests that any such perception would be retrospective:

Erm... I don't know. I think that people who are on it, or who do a significant amount on it, recognise that. You know, it gives them freedom to create modules that they're interested in.... erm... so I think there is an element of that almost in retrospect (SM5B:58).

Rather, there is a strong commitment among staff to their teacher training roles and many prefer not to be diverted from that:

I think the other thing is that, erm, you know where people already have a pressured timetable in terms of teacher training, asking them to contribute on another new pathway, although they have hours for it, sometimes they see it as an additional pressure and something else to juggle, which isn't about their attitude to Education Studies, but is perhaps about the workload that they have at that point in time (SM5B:58).

There is certainly no question of the subject being developed in order to deploy redundant or disaffected staff:

I think we've almost come at it from a different angle. Because it has come out of the Education (Department), at the time it was set up, all of our staff had QTS and we had sufficient number of students that we required them all to teach on teacher training, whether primary or secondary.... (SM5B:60).

The picture, then, is of a (Department) which is strongly committed to teacher training and with staff who share that priority and level of expertise. Recent appointments were made to non-teacher training posts in Education Studies and the management have welcomed these as a means of diversifying the staff:

....since having Education Studies and Early Years, we've been able to recruit staff to the (Department) who haven't got QTS, and that has been one of the most positive benefits of having Education Studies. It has brought diversity to the staffing of the (Department) (SM5B:62).

## **Conclusion**

Education Studies at (Institution name) is an interesting case where the subject is strongly determined by teacher training, even though it derived from a course for students who had failed QTS and despite attempts to define it more broadly. Its relationship to teacher training is complex and there is a variety of perceptions about the status of the subject. It appears to be that the institutional culture of teacher training has a powerful impact on the way the programme is able to develop. The plans to extend the scope of the vocational features to industrial placements is an original and interesting development.

## **Notes on the discourse**

There is a distinction between the forms of discourse used by the two subject leaders (SL5A and SL5B). SL5A tends to answer in everyday terminology

its true antecedents, were probably the BA Ed, which was a programme I set up to salvage the degrees of students who'd failed their teaching practices. Because we had a four-year degree programme and if they got to the end of their third year and they didn't.... they blew their teaching practice, then they were lost, they didn't have anything; so I had this thing where they could get through the fourth year doing a set of dissertations.... (SL5A:2)

Terms like 'salvage the programme', 'blew their teaching practice' contrast with SL5B who is intent on using 'proper' educational management terminology, 'drivers':

Well, you'd also got the other driver, which were the national drivers for Education Studies and it was a combination of the two, I think, really. I think that probably underpinned it (SL5B:4).

And on another occasion he is anxious to guard against the course being seen as a failed QTS route:

we've broadened the remit of Education Studies and sold it as a bigger thing than a failed QTS route, and as a route through to a PGCE. I mean it isn't a failed QTS route, but for some of them initially it was perceived as being ..... So where what.... the vast majority of the students in the first couple of years probably, er ..... teachers by another name, I think increasingly it's moved away from that (SL5B:24).

This may be a function of SL5A's relatively closer association with the interviewer, whereas SL5B finds the need to express things more formally and to protect the course from appearing less than adequate.

SL5A is anxious to appear self-critical and, perhaps, his relationship with the interviewer affects this: he wants to acknowledge that the course is not as good as the Bath Spa course which is featured in the text book (Ward, 2004). This self-demeaning manner is contrasted throughout by the second Subject Leader (SL5B), perhaps for two reasons. First he wishes to present a positive image of the course because he is taking up its leadership, and second because he of his relationship with first Subject Leader to whom he wishes to pay compliments as a more senior member staff:

I want to give credit to (SL5A) because I think it's moved on well beyond that point already and I think appointing those three people eighteen months ago with a remit to look outside QTS, which is what was done (SL5B:55).

It should be noted also, of course, that s/he is one of 'those three people' who have done some of the development work, and he wants to see that acknowledged.

Similarly, the Senior Managers have an interest in ensuring that a positive image is presented, and this is the reason for SM5B's simple statement of alternative routes into teaching:

It originated out of a desire to give opportunities to students who were not successful on entry to a BA QTS programme, or who wanted a different route into education professions, or into the PGCE (SM5B2).

‘A desire to give opportunities’ is an example of presenting the institution in the role of a benevolent social service, rather than as a trading corporation.

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 6 on 28 April 2005**

**First draft 14 May 2005**

#### **Background to Educational Studies at Case 6**

Education was one of the initial Departments when the Institution was founded in the 1960s with secondary PGCE teacher training and Educational Studies as a subject in a range of Combined Honours Degrees. The term 'Educational Studies' is used, rather than 'Education Studies'. At the time Educational Studies would have been very unusual and probably unique. Its existence at this time might also be said to be due to the new institution's innovative commitment to combined honours degrees allowing diverse combinations of subjects. Educational Studies, then, was seen as a subject which could have an existence in combinations with other subjects of disciplines.

In 1993 a Single Honours Degree in Educational Studies was developed, drawing upon the modules and subject content of the Combined Honours subject. The subject was revised between 1999 and 2001 in time for the QAA Teaching Quality Assessment. Student numbers are 30 per year on the Single Honours Degree and variable figure of 15-20 per year on Combined Honours. Educational Studies is a minor component (one third) of the Combined Honours Degree. There is a full-time staff of 20 teaching Educational Studies.

There is still secondary, but no primary, teacher training. There are links with another teacher training institution for primary teacher training.

The subject is structured with a series of modules grouped within six themes.

#### **Interviews**

Three individuals were interviewed separately on 28 April 2005. It had been initially difficult to obtain permission to carry out interviews at the institution. Eventually, three responded to the request. One, SL6B was the current Subject Leader and was able to give the most recent perspective. SL6A had been the subject leader from 1979 to 1998 and in 1993 had developed the Single Honours Award. S/he was able to give a historical perspective. SM6 had also been the subject leader from 1998 to 2002. S/he had also been an undergraduate at the institution in the 1970s, taking History and Education, and so had that additional perspective. It did not prove possible to secure an interview with the Head of the Department. However, SM6 had been the Chair of the Education Board of Studies and, while strictly not the manager, agreed that s/he was able to answer the Senior Manager questions. The interviews were carried out in the sequence SL6A, SM6, SL6B in immediate succession during a visit to the institution on April 28, 2005.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

There had been no previous contact with any of the staff at the institution and so all the interviewees were unfamiliar and with the course at Bath Spa. Before the

interview SM6 had cited a paper of his on the subject of the course at the institution and this is referred to in the interview.

Despite the initial difficulties in making contact with the interviewees, they all proved to be very co-operative and gave a warm welcome. Interestingly, and unlike most other cases, they did not ask me anything about the course at Bath Spa. They all spoke very openly and seemed to be confident about their roles and status and there were few attempts to 'apologise' for, or to diminish, any aspects of the provision at the institution. SL6B, the new Subject Leader was just a little guarded on occasions. SL6A spoke in rather informal style and in a strong South Eastern accent.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

#### **Brief summary of findings**

1. Educational Studies had begun in the 1960s as an innovative subject in Combined Awards Degrees as part of a commitment by the founders of the institution to the analysis of educational processes of potential benefit to all undergraduate students. There is a sympathetic view of Educational Studies in the institution.
2. In the 1960s Educational Studies had been taken by those who were considering entering teacher training. The development of the Single Honours award in 1993 meant that it could not be a precursor to teacher training because at the time DES regulations for PGCE courses required undergraduate study of a school curriculum subject
3. There is a tradition of Educational Studies being related to subsequent teacher training, although the Single Honours Degree was initially not conceived as such. There is still a strong professional element in the programme because the staff are former schoolteachers and the professional content is maintained through their pedagogy.
4. It is predicted that the professional and vocational element will grow in the future.
5. From its inception in the 1993 the academic structure for Educational Studies appears to have been loose. After a change of Subject Leader in 1998 it was structured into themes and levels in time for the QAA Review in 2001.
6. There has been a vigorous debate about the coherence and content of Educational Studies as an academic subject which: whether its content should be derived entirely from current staff expertise or from other academic principles. This is seen as a continuing problematic. The Senior Manager gives a strong proposal for a theoretical framework for Educational Studies.
7. The contributory disciplines are explicitly identified in some modules, although it is acknowledged that some students will avoid them in the choice of modules.
8. An aim for the subject is the ideological commitment to widening participation in higher education and students are admitted with lower qualifications than other subjects in the institution. The institution management is sympathetic to this ideal to the extent that it fulfils the occasional need for such an institutional policy.
9. The level of entry qualifications for Educational Studies is lower than for other subjects in the institution.
10. The distinctive feature of the course is the wide choice of modules available to students and the ability for them to be able to structure a self-selected programme. This appears to be regarded as a form of academic structure.

11. There is a surprisingly large number of module options for such a small programme. Group sizes are small, reflecting strong staffing resources.
12. As a result of the student choice element, market forces play a strong role.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The three interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

Educational Studies has interesting origins as one of the initial subjects when the institution was founded in the 1963. At the time Education was seen as a valuable element of undergraduate study for all students as part of a Combined Honours programme and it is still seen as being 'at the heart' of the institution. At the time the institution was innovative in the combination of subjects with Education as a minor (one third), available with a range of subjects. It was seen at the time to inform knowledge in other subjects and its characteristic appears to have been as a joint subject in a programme, rather than as a subject in its own right. The Senior Manager explains:

.... the first (Head of the institution) was a former headteacher, (Name), and his/her notion of Education was that it should be at the heart of everything, the (institution) should be concerned with it and so .... Education is right there, literally, at the heart of the campus. But also educationally, erm, things were set up so about a dozen Departments had joint programmes at undergraduate level with Education..... (SM6:2).

More than simply for students, Subject Departments were also intended to consider the subject of Education in informing their own knowledge base:

.... all Departments are interested in Education, but all Departments should *think about* Education as a separate entity, as well as the educational process that each Department itself was concerned with (SM6:2).

There seems, then, to be a rooted sympathy for the enterprise of Educational Studies in the (institution) and these origins have given Education a lasting status in the institution; it does not suffer from having its origins in low-status teacher training institutions:

Education is at the heart of the campus and we've never been in that situation which you can see in a whole variety of places: you know it's there at (names of two other institutions) – lots and lots of places - where Education essentially is the old teacher training college down the road. We took over them with some discontent a few years ago and, oh well now.....I mean, we've never had that at all (SM6:6).

Overall, the (institution) appears to have taken a liberal view of the Department of Education. In arguing for the Single Honours Degree in 1993, the response of the (institution) management apparently was:

We're not totally convinced, but if you feel that this is the way that you'd like the Department to develop and you are confident that you can recruit, then they were prepared to back us (SL2B:8).

A first rationale for the development of the Single Honours was to improve the take-up of Educational Studies and this was based on the positive evaluations of the subject by the students. The first Subject Leader explains:

When I arrived in 1979 I think we combined with about twelve or thirteen other subject areas where you could do a joint degree which was two thirds a main subject, one third Education. And that used to recruit quite well. I think we probably had an intake of about fifty, or something of that order; that would be our average. Erm, now after 1979, we noticed that our recruitment numbers were beginning to drift downwards and I think by the mid sort of 1980s, early 1990s, we were beginning to think well this isn't really very healthy; what can we do about it to bring our numbers up? And I'd been the Director of the Undergraduate Programme a few years at that time and so I was sort of thinking about things and so on. And.... I don't know where the idea came from, but I thought.... erm that there might be a market for people doing a single subject degree in Educational Studies and I think that came from the fact that some of the students we'd got sometimes said to us that they were enjoying the Education Studies part of the joint degree more than they were enjoying the main subject. And sometimes they would say, what a pity we can't spend all our time doing Education (SL6A:2)

A second rationale offered by all three interviewees was the opportunity which Educational Studies provides for widening participation and community links. At first this is surprising in an institution which is among the elite institutions in the country and which has no difficulty in attracting students. However, the first Subject Leader explains the institution's desire to respond to government policy which, during the 1990s, began signal the need for higher education to respond to community needs. This, s/he suggests, facilitated the approval of the Single Honours Degree proposal:

Now, the other thing that I think might have helped swing it was in the early 1990s I think there was more pressure on universities to have links with the local community and to be trying to attract mature students, and at that point I think the (institution name) was trying to sort of think about how it could get more students in who had non-conventional backgrounds. And I think that we also said something along the lines of that a degree like this might appeal to a number of mature students with young children or had had involvement in schools as governors or something (SL6A:4).

The current Subject Leader verifies this at an early point in the interview. Unprompted s/he identifies widening participation as a principle:

....one of the key principles as I see it is the idea that students could work across a series of disciplines and also the other principle of extending access, I think, too, throughout the community and bringing more mature returners into education into the course (SL6B:4).



There is, then, an interesting break with the notion of preparing future professionals to one which appears to be appealing to local community interests, and this chimed with a perceived national priority for universities:

I think the (institution) has always had to adapt to pressures that come from the fashion of the time. And I think at that point in the (institution)'s career in the mid-1990s I think there had been statements coming from the Government much more to do with, if you like, the beginnings of widening access and so on. What are you doing for your local community? What are your links with the local community? (SL6A:8).

The Senior Manager refers to the Educational Studies as a medium for widening access to higher education in a paper about the programme:

There is some evidence to suggest that programmes of Education Studies can contribute to the strategy to widen access to higher education (DfES, 2003). The QAA Subject Review reports (<http://www.qaa.org.uk>) draw attention to students who are female, mature, hold non-traditional qualifications and are locally based (Reference anonymous).

And s/he confirms that it is a principle issue in the programme. However, in the interview s/he expresses a more equivocal view of the institution's commitment to widening participation, suggesting that its real mission is teaching and research:

I don't know, really. I don't know. Erm..... I think it's easy to demonstrate that the sort of students that go on Educational Studies courses across England are part of that very positive process I see of widening access. I think this (institution)... I don't know what its attitude is really. I mean it does from time to time, quite proudly and quite strongly, assert, Students here do very well, and we are not just existing in the same way that Oxford and Cambridge do; we have a very balanced intake. So they like to play that card, when it suits them, OK? They also like to play – and I haven't really heard this from the current (Head of institution), who's only been here a couple of years – but the previous one, there were some discussions with him about what we were all about. And he made it pretty clear that he thought there was a place for widening access, greater participation, all that sort of stuff. *But that's just not what we're about.* What we're about is teaching and research and that's.... (SM6:10)

I think there are certain contradictory things there; that they like to say – maybe it's not a contradiction; maybe it does fit together – what they like to say is, We achieve that sort of level by having a balanced intake. But they're not really, I don't think, necessarily saying, Oh yes, this would be a wonderful thing for widening participation. Mind you, having said that, when Subject Review came, somewhere round 2001, that seemed to be a subject that they were quite keen on having answered: you know, are you doing your bit for widening access etc? You know, we were very keen to say, Yes, absolutely we are and you know you can see the types of students we get and the way we bring them on and what we do with them etc etc (SM6:12).

However, the widening participation rationale is seen by the current Subject Leader as more than a pragmatic response to government policies, but an ideological position taken by the academics in the Department of Education.

That's one of the strong aims of the Department. Yes, to bring back people into education who perhaps missed out the first time around. And it's one of the things we do try to state in our prospectus and in our Programme Specification (SL6B:6).

When asked why it was felt that there was a need to try to attract widening participation students in an elite institution which can easily attract highly qualified students, s/he replies:

I don't think it's a question of *needing* to; I think it's the principle of *wanting* to extend participation (SL6B:8).

The widening participation ideology does appear to mean that Educational Studies has a lower level of entry qualifications than other subjects in the institution:

Compared to the rest of the (institution) we are, yes. But I think when the Degree began..... the standard offer was three Cs and we also had a number of .... 'partnership agreements' – with various schools to say that if you think that there are people who would have achieved more had they had different circumstances, then, you know, of course, point that out and we're willing to, you know..... etc etc.... (SM6:14)

Asked about entry qualifications the current Subject Leader replies acknowledges that they are relatively low, but expresses this in terms of 'a mixture':

Well, we get a mixture. Our 'A; Level typical offers would be BBC, BCC, and if we were to compare that with the English Department which is demanding straight As before they'll take a look at you, obviously we have lower requirements than that. Yes, so I would say possibly we do get a stronger mix of students (SM6B:84).

And there is a sense that the subject has relatively low status in the institution:

... when you asked me before about, you know, status of areas, I mean.... we'd just love to have as many applicants as they do for History. And it confuses me really, and I think, Why, because we're obviously more important than they are. So why aren't we being flooded out, and it's all because of status and if we can only get over that status issue then I think it's be really possible to push up (SM6:62).

At the same time, the institution tolerates this relatively low level of qualification in the Educational Studies undergraduates and the liberal view of Educational Studies appears to be sustained, perhaps because of its role in the origins of the institution.

## **The theoretical framework and curriculum content**

All three interviewees describe the loose academic structure of the early Single Honours Programme. Its originator, Subject Leader 6A, refers to the first structure of the Single Honours as a 'cafeteria system':

... when we put the Single Subject Degree Course together, basically all we did we had a pick-and-choose cafeteria system. We already had about forty modules on offer for people doing a combined degree, so to do the Single Subject Degree all you had to do were the same.... you'd chosen the same selection of modules, but you just did more of them, plus two dissertations, and that then gave you your Single Subject Degree (SL6A:30).

Its origins in the Combined Honours Programme where, being only a minor element in Degree, the academic coherence did not need to be clearly articulated:

When it was part of the Combined Degree we were more relaxed (SL6A:32).

But with the Single Honours Programme there was debate about a more structured framework:

.... people sort of said, Well, would it be acceptable for someone to do a three-year honours degree in Educational Studies and to never have done something on the Psychology of Education? Shouldn't that be compulsory, or something? (SL6A:32).

However, the 'liberal', loose structure prevailed, with no classification of content and no system of differentiated levels among the modules:

And initially, you know, I was in the camp that had a very liberal view and said, Well why don't we let the student just put together those modules that make sense to them? So I took a very, very relaxed view (SL6A:32).

There was one person that, I think, took a strong view that it seemed a bit too choice-driven and that there should be some restrictions on the choices. Erm... I think there were about five people that were indifferent and I think the vast majority thought that let's stick with the sort of liberal free choice (SL6A:35).

However, such a loose arrangement was not going to withstand interrogation by the QAA Teaching Quality Assessment and by the late 1990s it became necessary to introduce more structure with centralised control by the institution:

I think we were getting messages from the (institution) that every Department needed to get its act together to start doing things that were regarded as best practice. And so I think things like modularisation came in where the (institution) wanted to have a consistent module pattern across all Departments. Up 'til then, you know, modules varied in size, in length, in weight from Department to Department. So that was imposed. And then on the back of standardisation for modularisation we were asked to sort of think

how do different modules relate to each other; are some modules pre-requisite to other modules? And we said, Oh no, not in our Department; we have a free-choice system. And they said, Well does that mean that a first-year student can do the same modules as a third-year student. And we said, Yes, you know. And I think they started to think, Well, you know, when you are TQA'd don't you think that could be an issue? (SL6A:44).

Module content appears to have been determined by a mixture the expertise of staff who 'fancy doing a module', and by student demand:

.... it's worth saying for the record that up to that point we'd gone for a spread of module topic areas that was very much based on what students said that they wanted. So if students said to us, it's a shame that you don't do a module on, let's say, the impact of ICT on education, then we asked people would you like to do something on that? Is there an outside person we could bring in? And also when we had new members of staff join us we'd say, Well what module do you fancy teaching? Well, we've never had a Geographer in the Department, but if we did they might say, well how about Geography in Education and we'd have said, Yes fine. So it was all very relaxed and easy-going (SL6A:44).

The Senior Manager describes the tensions that were perceived about whether the subject content should be derived simply from staff expertise or from some other academic principles:

Well, to be honest with you I think that's a constant debate, OK? And actually we're having it now, again, have we got a course that's dependent on the expertise of the staff? So you say, What can we do? And let's put that in. There you go, you've got a programme. *Or...* has it been worked out in some more fundamental way? (SM6:26).

It appears that it was the downward pressure from the institution management in the context of the impending QAA Review that brought about the need for change in the form of a more rigorous academic structure. Such changed required new leadership for the subject, as the first Subject Leader was averse to such developments:

... what happened in my last year as Director of the Undergraduate Programme is, er, that I didn't like the idea of grouping of modules; I thought it looked a bit artificial and we couldn't get something together that I was comfortable with. But (SM6) became the new Director of the Undergraduate Programme and I think he saw the imperative of going down that road, whether we liked it or not, you know; that it was strongly hinted that we had to do two things: we had to group modules together to make sure it covered Education as a *discipline* and we had to think about progression from years one, two and three. And that's what really transformed a completely free cafeteria system to a system of groupings, differentiation between different types of modules – intermediate and advanced – and a new thing that (SM6) brought in which was an introductory course, like at the beginning of the three years that tried to present an overview of the area (SL6A:48).

The second Subject Leader (SL6B), who took over, expresses this as follows:

I took over at the time that we were running up to Subject Review and I think (SL6A) had started it, but I, with others, continued saying let's get a clear rationale for this. So it is not just, or doesn't appear, to some people to be based strongly around academic interests of particular members of staff (SL6B:26).

S/he formed a two-level grouping of modules into six themes, which s/he proposes as an academic structure:

.... you'll see that we've got those six themes. So we say, then, well what is Educational Studies all about? OK, so it's about those six themes and then, oh, you know, all the other stuff about skills and what not (SM6:30).

Interviewees are all quite open about the need to formulate this to fulfil the requirements of the QAA Review in 2001, and there was some cynicism about it as a 'just-in-time' process:

There was a lot of drying paint as we desperately scratched about to add things and change it (SL6B:78).

However, the debate about the academic structure for the subject continues and questions have been raised about it since the recent structure was derived:

..... we've had a number of new members of staff recently and in one or two meetings that we've had just lately I've noticed one or two people saying, you know, We need to review this programme because it's just based around what people can do. What's *really* the underlying..... And I must admit I sit there quietly thinking, No, no, we've done all that! It's all worked out and declared..... but.... So I think it's probably a process of needing to declare it and re-visit it and as we re-visit it get a bit of ownership of it and then understand where the links could be and put more links in that they themselves would be happy with (SM6:30).

The first Subject Leader (SL6A) sees the theoretical framework in terms of the subject disciplines in that modules are seen as discipline-based or drawing on a combination of discipline in a theme:

When I came to (Name of institution) .... I was quite surprised to find that there were other types of modules that weren't strictly discipline-based; they were quite inter-disciplinary. People took a theme that cut across lots of different disciplines. .... So now my feeling of Education is that it's a field of enquiry that combines both disciplined areas of studies *and* areas of studies that are much more thematic and completely inter-disciplinary. So, for example, a few years ago we had a member of staff who had a module called 'Images of Handicap' and he looked at the way in which people who are handicapped, and attitudes towards people who are handicapped in education, how that's portrayed in different ways from advertising at one extreme to how it's portrayed in films, what schools do to improve attitudes towards the

children that are handicapped, all those sort of things. And this was totally inter-disciplinary: there's bits of Philosophy there, Sociology, Psychology.... (SL6A:50).

Yes, they (the disciplines) are still there. I mean, I think we sort of, to be honest, I think that when we launched the Single Honours Degree we just kept the house-style of what was already there, which was about half the modules were discipline-based and half were inter-disciplinary or thematic. And I would say, looking at what we've got now, I would say it's probably about the same .... (SL6A:50).

However, there are other theoretical frameworks outside the disciplines, although it is not clear what these are:

.... and there are things that, you know, you almost can't regard as discipline-based at all; it's treading new ground. And there were quite a few modules like that that took an *area* and then brought together our knowledge and understanding from all sorts of directions (SL6A:50).

The current Subject Leader confirms that the disciplines are explicit and evident in the subject, but is uncertain about the students' knowledge or expertise in the different disciplines:

Yes, well I suppose it is, but it's also applied to an educational context particularly too. But again there's a variety of modules. I mean you might have one that might be looking purely at what are the educational philosophies which underpin Education. But again it's got that educational slant to it. So, whether you're saying that they're going to come out of a module and they've got a clear grounding in Philosophy, I'm not quite clear whether that's the case.

This appears to be the issue of students 'drawing upon' the disciplines, but not having a thorough critical analysis of the discipline in itself.

There has also been a move away from direct reference to the disciplines by title:

It's always hard to decide whether something is discipline-based or not, because we tended to move away from strictly calling a module, let's say, 'the Philosophy of Education' (SL6A:50).

This is seemingly to make things seem more attractive to students:

.... we could have a module called something like – I don't know – 'Conceptual Issues in Education', something like that, and then you'd have to sort of thing, well how much is that philosophical as against other things. So sometimes the titles could be sexed up if you like and essentially it's still a discipline-based course (SL:6A:56).

Both Subject Leaders suggest that the disciplines have differential appeal to different students:

Some are put off by it and some are happy to do it. ... I'm thinking of individual students that we've had on the course and some who would have been interested in that side of Education could take a pattern of modules through the course which allowed them to... and would thrive on it; others would find it difficult. For example, we have a module on Sociology and Education and students who haven't studied Sociology to some degree before they take that would certainly struggle when they do (SL6B:52).

Students' choice of modules appears to have a high level of significance in the thinking of the academics. It is described as a distinctive feature of the subject at the institution:

I think the most attractive feature of it is that it gives an incredible range of choice, even though we've grouped the modules together under different themes. I think that's more just to enable the students to get a sense of erm how their programme is looking across the different themes, but we don't insist that they have to do at least one from every theme. So I think that the distinctive feature is that free choice still dominates (SL:6A:68).

This is confirmed by the current Subject Leader:

then the principle is we do want them to be able to choose to make autonomous decisions to work and where they want to go....

Question: So student choice is a big thing in this...?

It's a very big thing, yes, very big thing (SL6B:54-56).

.... we want our students to have enriching empowering modules which they enjoy and which they're engaged with and they learn from (SL:6B: 62).

Again, asked about the distinctive features of the course, the current Subject Leader replies:

The autonomy and choice they have in mapping a course – a pathway – through the programme that suits their particular needs (SL:6B:100).

So it seems that the idea of choice and selection is seen as a form of academic structure in itself. This is interesting in relation to notions of academic freedom for students.

In the paper about the institution's programme referred to above the Senior Manager declares himself unable to formulate a theoretical framework for Education Studies:

We are, as a result of our analysis of interview data and descriptions of work undertaken at a variety of institutions, unable to identify a clear consensus about the nature of education studies (Reference anonymous).

And s/he goes on to warn that if Education Studies is defined in terms of skills, 'we might achieve only a greater bureaucracy that is closely related to mechanistic processes of assessment'.

In the interview, however, s/he engages in a discursive manner with the question of the nature of the subject and discusses two proposals. First Educational Studies might be seen as 'an area of study', simply a set of content. On the other hand, it might now be emerging as a discipline in its own right, even though the discipline may be broad with different perspectives, and he makes the comparison with History:

... there's something about Educational Studies that there's always – quite healthily in a way – going to be an ongoing debate between those who will say, in inverted commas, *merely* an area of study. OK, so it's not a discipline, it's an area of study and we investigate contexts, and as we investigate those contexts we draw upon the discipline from other areas. OK? Or the other way round to say, actually, because of all these new degree programmes, because it's such an important thing in the life of the economy and so on and so on and so on, it is becoming an academic discipline in its own right. And that might be very broad and vary like other academic disciplines. You know you get historians in very different schools, etc etc with different skills and insights. *But* it is becoming a discipline in itself now... and I don't know really; I hedge between one and the other really at times. I think I do see... erm.... I think I do see Educational Studies as being a bit more than an area of study. I think it's got something.

So Educational Studies has 'got something' that qualifies it as a discipline, rather than merely an area of study. This, s/he explains is 'procedural', or 'conceptual' rather than 'substantive':

I think things become meaningful and distinct when some sort of relationship can be established between what I think people call the procedural and the substantive. I don't think that is just worked out in content terms, but I think it's a conceptual matter really. So I think that's fairly clearly worked out and reasonably well-established disciplines like History, where they say, What's History all about? Is it just looking at things... the content of the past? And clearly it isn't. It's something to do with, erm.... looking at... not content, not just *contexts*, like the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century or whatever, but looking at certain sorts of concepts. And then I think the historians tend to say that their substantive concept would be things like monarchy, power, revolution. And when they are looking at particular bits of content, they're doing so to explore those sort of substantive concepts. So they're not *really* interested in the French Revolution; they're interested in revolution, of which the French Revolution is an example. But then the way in which they look at those concepts – the procedures that they adopt – give you another sort of concept, the procedural concept which for the historians which I know reasonably well...the Scheffs... you can choose different ones at different times to suit your own preferences. Well, you know, there are things like causation, evidence, enquiry, whatever it is, chronology, interpretation. And so if you're a good historian, if you've had a good historical education, you end up being reasonably well versed in substantive concepts and being able to



develop an understanding of those concepts because you've got procedural understanding (SM6:34).

And there is a set of procedures and concepts for Educational Studies:

What would be the concepts that you'd have to explore? What would be the procedures that you'd have to use to explore them? But I think the same thing can be done of anything, really, and I think we can do it with Educational Studies. So what are those key substantive concepts for Educational Studies and what are the procedures that we would use to explore them (SM6:34).

This is enticing, although there isn't yet a formulation of the concepts for Educational Studies:

Now if you're going to say, well go on then, what is it for Education, well (phew) I'd have to think... that's another... (SM6:36).

### **Educational Studies and teacher training**

The relationship between Educational Studies and teacher training is complex and seems to have varied in emphasis over time. As noted above, the origins of the subject in the Combined Honours programme in the 1960s was intended as to give students insights about both the epistemological nature of their main subject studies, but also to inform them as possible future teachers. Information from individuals who were former students on Educational Studies in the 1960s confirms that for those who progressed from Educational Studies to the PGCE there was an assumption that theoretical material on Education had been already covered in the undergraduate course. So, taken as a minor combined subject it has a ready relevance to teacher training.

This is confirmed in the following:

Question: I gather that, in the 1960s when the Combined Subject was introduced, it was introduced for people who were considering teaching – so you could do, say Music and Education.

That's it. Absolutely (SL6A:21-22).

However, from the beginning, Educational Studies was conceived as being more than, or wider than, preparation for teacher training, and in that sense was probably unique in an undergraduate programme:

...when we had the Combined Degree Courses.... one of the things that really struck me was how much those modules *were* studies of education that weren't related to teacher training. I mean, that was a revelation to me when I came in 1979. You know, you had courses on the Psychology of Education, the Sociology of Education, how education is portrayed in works of literature, and so on. And when you looked at the content of them, they were very much educational research and educational study based. And they only very tangentially related to things that were preparation for teaching in schools.

So the original subject in the 1960s and up to 1993 saw a subject which was relevant to teaching, but not purely preparation for teacher training. The introduction of the Single Honours Degree, however, closed off the route to teaching because of DES Circular 9/93 which required school curriculum subject knowledge in a future teacher's degree course. The first Subject Leader explains that this ruling emerged after their preparations for the new degree had begun and the position in which they found themselves:

I thought at that point it was like an incredible irony and paradox in a way. But that was something imposed upon us and I'm not saying we felt very bitter, but.... erm....like... I think it was something like – it was called CATE, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education – they had pronouncements that made it look as though if you didn't do part of a National Curriculum subject at (institution) you couldn't go into teacher training. Since then the Department for Education – I won't say they've backtracked – but they said that was never a ruling, never a ruling. But at the time it certainly felt like that. (SL6A:24).

This was confirmed in his enquiries with PGCE teacher training providers:

..... when we were planning on launching the degree, I wrote to a number of PGCE courses, both primary and secondary, to say would you be prepared to interview any of our students who did a BA in Educational Studies with a view to becoming a primary or secondary school teacher. Now virtually all the secondary school training courses said, No, they need the main subject. And there wasn't enough of English in particular that would be acceptable. The primary school PGCE courses, I would say about 70% of them said no and about 30% would say, Well we'll look at each case on merit, but we wouldn't rule it out (SL6:28).

So this had to define the Single Honours Degree as exclusively for those not intending to teach:

..... the paradox we faced at that point was that by doing a degree in Educational Studies you almost couldn't go into teaching. So we had to sell the degree as something that would appeal to people who were interested in Educational Studies as an area of academic work and who had a variety of careers in mind, everything from that which was entirely *unrelated* to education – you know, like entry into the Civil Service, or something like that, where they have a graduate entry scheme regardless of the subject area - at one extreme to ones that were educationally related at the other. But we actually had a key phrase, because we were very worried that we might get people onto the course who wanted to go into teaching who would actually want to sue us at the end for saying we didn't make it clear enough that they couldn't do that. Well, we had a key phrase that this is not a teacher training course and you need to be aware that if one of your thoughts is that you want to become a primary or secondary school teacher you really ought to do a first degree that involves a main subject, or go down a BEd route.

The Senior Manager confirms that there are links between Educational Studies and teacher training because of students' career orientation:

There's a number of connections, I think, because the students themselves, some of them at least, want to go on to primary teacher training (SM6:24).

This is confirmed by the current Subject Leader:

Well, I would say that every year we get a significant number of applicants who see that as a career route and they would have an eye on going on to do a PGCE in Primary Education (SL6B:20).

However, another factor is that there has been a tradition of staff teaching across both the Educational Studies Undergraduate Programme and the teacher training courses and this suggests a strong link between the programmes. The Senior Manager explains:

I was an undergraduate here in the '70s, doing History and Education. So I've sort of experienced it from a variety of angles really. Erm, and I think it was always the case that everybody did everything. So when I first came here in '89: Yes, yes, you're here to do the PGCE course, but we've got some MA students you can supervise. Then, Don't forget you're teaching on the undergraduate programme and if you can write a few things now and then, that's great (SM6:20).

There is now more differentiated staffing between Educational Studies and teacher training:

Now, the people who are coming in now, increasingly they're new staff they haven't been teachers. And they'll.... Specialise, I think, a lot more than was previously the case in particular areas of the Department's work (SM6:20).

You see a lot of the PGCE team.... It's just becoming a different group of people really. You know what I mean? And the PGCE will be, er, staff who have got a great deal of professional expertise, and they're expected to get on with that, and they won't have as much as they did in days gone by into the other areas (SM6:54).

However, asked whether this is leading to a lessening of the relationship between Educational Studies and teacher training, the Senior Manager replies that there are still such links because primary teaching is still the main career orientation for students, and even for those not intending to teach, there is still an interest in professional matters:

I don't know about that, because many of our students do want to become primary school teachers. OK, they can't become secondary school teachers because they haven't got the subject knowledge. But they do want to become primary school teachers, so that's a big part of it. OK. *But*.... but it is very clearly pointed out to all candidates that it is *not* a teacher training course. It never has been.... and, OK yes, I expect I *sort* of agree with what you're

saying that now as well perhaps.... perhaps more they're pushed in the direction of an exploration of academic issues. *But* those students still do want insight into practical situations (SM6:22).

S/he goes on to make an interesting proposal about the relationship between the academic and the professional. S/he suggests that relating the academic to the professional is a perspective on the academic analysis, or even a pedagogical approach to academic theory, one which he is comfortable with as a former schoolteacher:

Another (connection) would be they do, I think – and maybe I'm just saying this because I was a teacher for ten years in different parts of England, so maybe that's just how I do it when I work with the undergraduates. But I think they do want bit of insight into what's going on in schools. So that's a connection. *But*.... we can't say anything else other than it's an academic course. Anything else would be misleading. If we were to say to people, Look, you can come here and you can get a real insight and preparation.... into teacher training, they'd be unhappy. I think it's the other way round, really. I think we say, Look this is an academic course, and as we explore this academic course we'll give you insights into professional issues and that could well be useful for you, if you want to go and do a whole range of careers, including primary teacher training (SM6:24).

And, even as an academic, s/he is still interested in the professional role and sees it as the core of Educational Studies:

I think that's vital really. I think it's important to have a bit of flexibility and personally I wouldn't just want to be within one particular area. I think I can't pretend, just because of limits of energy and limits of expertise you can't operate across all areas equally well, definitely not. But, I like going to schools, I like teaching the undergraduates, I like supervising the PhD students.... you know, and I find that very useful for operating in the different areas, because you can talk about when I was at school I did this, you know? Like with the PGCE, you can get some activities that you can do with the undergraduates. That would work well, so.... (SM6:56).

It seems, then, that the fact that the staff teaching the course are mainly former teachers is a factor that bonds Educational Studies to teacher training through their pedagogy.

Further, the Current Subject Leader sees the professional career element growing stronger in the future. Asked generally about future developments he replies in terms of career orientation, and emphasises teaching:

It's got to change, I think, and develop to meet the demands of the Twenty-first Century, hasn't it? And, interestingly, the way that our course is going at the moment is that it's moving more towards a vocational base, experiential model where students are going more into schools and to educational institutions and working that way. And I wonder whether the philosophical element that we talked about at the start might start to fall away a little bit.

... and I just wonder whether the idea of pursuing the study of education as an intellectual pursuit in its own way is going to change a bit (SL6B:108-110).

So, while the institution staff discuss the academic nature of Educational Studies and alternative careers, in fact the student focus on school teaching still seems to have a determining effect on the aims and curriculum for the subject.

### **Note on discourse**

All three interviewees spoke frankly and there is little attempt to conceal intentions. In fact they are open about the cosmetic methods they have used. For example, the Current Subject Leader is open about the need to hurriedly amend things for the TQA review and the first subject leader refers to the 'sexing-up' of module titles. The Senior Manager speaks openly about the institution's ambivalence about widening participation. There was no sense at any point that interviewees were offering anything other than their open and honest perspectives.

### **Conclusion**

This is one of the country's elite institutions which attracts highly qualified students. What is interesting is that in the case of Educational Studies the institution's normal entry levels do not apply and the subject appears to rely upon a 'widening access' population. This has an effect on the curriculum in that it is to some extent determined by popular student choice, rather than by a rigorous analysis of the epistemology of the subject. The curriculum in the subject is also strongly determined by staff expertise. Having said that, it is important to note that the team has engaged in debates about the nature of Education Studies and whether it should be just based on staff expertise. There has been some thoughtful analysis here which has been carried out in open recognition of limitations, not trying to conceal weakness.

An interesting feature of developments is the move from a loosely structured collection of modules determined by a combination of student choice and staff expertise with little apparent academic rationale for the nature of Educational Studies as a subject. The new structure in 2000 - a response to the exigencies of the TQA review - was described by some as a *post hoc* rationale. This raises the question of whether, for those staff who perceived the new structure as artificial, the original loose collection of modules could be seen as a sufficient academic structure for the subject. There appears, then, to be a notion that for Education Studies as a subject, anything concerned with education will do it. However, the Senior Manager has a strong theoretical model for Education Studies which requires further discussion (in a paper on the theory of Education Studies.)

In the relationship between Educational Studies and teacher training, the Senior Manager's suggestion is an important one that the staff origins in school teaching ensures that there is a strong professional element running through both the content and pedagogy of the subject. The strong career orientation towards teaching still appears to have an effect upon the nature of the subject.

The data suggests that this is an insular Education Department which has moved little in relation to developments in the sector generally and in relation to developments in

the institution itself. Insularity has been heightened by the lack of a common modular framework, such that students are able to link across subjects. Changes to the academic structure were made only under the pressure from a pending QAA review. The module content is dated and in particular there is nothing on science education. This is surprising in a institution which has built such a strong reputation in science and technology.

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 7 on 29 April 2005**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 7**

Case 7 is a small higher education institution of some 1250 students. Its provision has been predominantly in primary teacher training with some limited diversification in recent years, principally in the arts and humanities. There is Secondary PGCE teacher training in a range of subjects.

Part of its teacher training programme was a large four-year QTS Undergraduate programme which, in 2000, was reconfigured to form a three-year Undergraduate Degree in Education Studies plus PGCE teacher training, with graduates holding a guaranteed place on the Primary PGCE. At the time there was also a three-year Undergraduate QTS Degree which currently continues. There are currently some 500 students on the Education Studies Degree.

The Primary PGCE is currently differentiated for those who had taken the Education Studies Degree and those with no previous study of Education. The Undergraduate Education Studies Programme and the subsequent PGCE are, therefore, closely linked with the Undergraduate course including an assessed teaching experience which is accredited within the PGCE against the Teacher Training Agency Standards and the required period in school. Because of this the Undergraduate Education Studies course attracts HEFCE Band 'C' funding. Education Studies comprises 50% of study, with the rest in a second main subject. Those subjects are restricted to the primary school curriculum subjects and Early Years Education. Other main subject studies taken by Education students are all within the Education programme and students do not study alongside those taking other awards. The three-year QTS degree has no main subject study and is described as 'generalist'.

During the current year (2004-05) the Education Studies Programme is being revised to have a less teaching-focused orientation; the guaranteed place on the PGCE is to be ended. A new Subject Leader was appointed in September 2004 with a brief to make the changes. The rationale for the changes are expressed in a proposal document as follows:

- an increasing number of existing and prospective students who have expressed a strong interest in pursuing a degree which offers greater scope both in its content and exit routes including the potential for teaching in secondary as well as primary schools;
- an increasing number of students seeking education-related employment other than teaching;
- an increasing number of students seeking further study and research-based futures leading to other vocational and academic awards;
- a perceived requirement to bring BGC's Education Studies provision into academic and professional alignment with similar courses offered elsewhere (Reference anonymous).

The changes in the aims for the subject are presented as:

- drawing on a wider range of intellectual resources and theoretical perspectives to illuminate understanding of education and the contexts within which it takes place;
- providing students with a broader and more balanced understanding of the principal features of education and educational processes;
- encouraging students to engage more fully with fundamental questions concerning the aims and values of education and its relationship to society;
- providing opportunities for students to appreciate more the problematic nature of educational theory, policy and practice;
- developing in students the ability to construct and sustain more reasoned arguments about educational issues in a clear, lucid and coherent manner;
- promoting a range of qualities in students including intellectual independence and critical engagement with a wider range of evidence;
- developing a wider range of problem-solving and other analytical skills and techniques in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making as applied to various types of employment.

## **Interviews**

There are two interviews, with the Deputy Head of the Institution (SM7) who was appointed in 2002, and with the new Subject Leader (SL7). Formerly a secondary PGCE secondary course leader at another institution, he had taken the post with the intention of taking his own career away from teacher training. The interviews were carried out on a visit to the institution on April 29 2005.

## **Notes on the interview process**

The interviewer's previous contact with the institution was as an external adviser on the Validation Panel for the Education Studies Degree in 1999 and on the Validation Panel for the PGCE Primary in 2002. He had, therefore, already met with the SM7 who had chaired the PGCE Panel. He had not met previously with the Subject Leader, although had had some communication with him regarding a paper at the British Education Studies Association Conference the following July. Both agreed readily to the interviews and the interviewer was warmly received. Neither had had first-hand experience of the development of the Education Studies Programme and were less familiar with the background thinking to the origins than was ideal. The membership of the validation panel meant that the interviewer was more aware than them of some of the points.

## **Analysis of the interviews**

### **Brief summary of findings**

1. Education Studies had originated as a 3+1 re-configuration of a four-year QTS Degree with guaranteed Primary PGCE place. There had been little attempt to introduce different content into Education Studies. The curriculum resembled QTS degree and it had been seen as a HEFCE-funded teacher-training programme. From 2004 there was an institutional policy to diversify the Education Studies curriculum from primary teacher training.



2. The academic rationale for the change from four-year QTS to three-plus-one is not well articulated. Reasons offered were the financial advantages to students and the desire to differentiate it strongly from the three-year QTS Programme which ran alongside. There is no other rationale for the change of model in an institution with such strong primary initial teacher training culture and a lack of diversified staff in Education.
3. An Education Studies subject distinct from teacher training failed to grow in the institution for the following reasons: the lack of an academic rationale, the strong culture of teacher training in the institution and the limited range of staff knowledge and expertise which had been determined by appointments to fulfil Teacher Training Agency standards. Existing staff are said to be academically limited by their roles in compliance to the teacher training standards.
4. The newly appointed Subject Leader is highly committed to the diversification of the Education Studies curriculum. However, s/he was finding it difficult with the limitation of, and resistance from, some staff. The new programme for 2005 is still rather limited in its curriculum scope.
5. Both interviewees are uncertain about the academic framework for the subject and describe it principally in terms of 'breadth' and 'diversification' from teacher training. It is suggested that the theoretical framework might emerge *post-hoc*, rather being an explicit set of principles which governs the curriculum selection.
6. The new Subject Leader has a vision of Education Studies as not preparatory teacher training, is averse to the guaranteed place on the Primary PGCE and is intent on severing the links with it as far as possible. This provides a conflictual situation in that the Education Studies is strongly rooted in teacher training and is bound to retain a strong practical teaching element because of its HEFCE Band 'C' funding..
7. A peculiar feature of the programme is the inclusion of other subject studies within Education Studies Programme in a Single Honours Degree, such that subject-study is seen as part of, or integrated with, Education Studies. The way in which this is articulated is not expressed in the interviews.
8. Unusually for such a large programme there is no choice of optional modules. This is again due to the limitations of the staff and the narrow perceptions of the subject.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The two interviews are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

Both interviewees were appointed after the initiation of the Education Studies Programme and are surprisingly uninformed about the rationale for its origins, claiming lack of first-hand knowledge or briefings. Asked about the original thinking, the Senior manager is anxious to explain,

It is really before my time..... (SM7:4)

Now, you know, whether those who made the decision had that intention is something... I'm sorry, I'm handicapped here by not having.... (SM7:38)

And not having been party to that sort of decision really.... (SM7:40)

S/he tentatively suggests two reasons for the reconfiguration: funding advantages for students and to distinguish the four-year programme from the three-year QTS Degree which was coterminous:

I wasn't, as I say, really party to those discussions. I mean one of the things clearly was.... was the funding issue. I mean, I think clearly there was the HEFCE funding for the three years, but I don't think it was *primarily* driven by financial incentives, even so. I think there was probably a sense that the three-year programme was kind of growing – and indeed it had grown very rapidly and continues to do that – and probably having a three and a four-year programme that were perhaps running alongside.... (SL7:6).

There is little awareness, though, of a positive desire to develop an academic programme free of the Teacher Training Agency Standards. At least this form of thinking has not been made explicit to him as the incoming Deputy Head of the institution:

It's possible. I mean I don't recall hearing that..... as an explicit part of the agenda. There may have been a..... that might have been present. I mean it would be wrong of me to..... (SM7:12)

I suspect that was seen as at least a.... whether it was a real driver, I don't know (SM7:14).

The Subject Leader also professes innocence because of his recent arrival and gives a description of, but not the reasons for, the change:

.... It seems to have started... the process here seems to have started in 2001 when (Name of institution) decided that erm.... in many ways, I guess for various different reasons, it used to run a four-year BEd Course and it decided that it wanted to change and it basically introduced a three-year HEFCE-funded course... specialist subject in Education Studies and that was allied to.... for students that wanted to teach that was linked into a one-year PGCE course (SL7:2).

And s/he only 'imagines' there would be an intention to do this, and has not been so informed:

No, I haven't picked up on anything, but, I mean, I would imagine that the move there would be to er to try and break free from the compliance culture....

The reasons for the change to Education Studies seems rather nebulous, then, and the lack of a clear academic rationale may account for what both interviewees describe as the lack of development of a proper Education Studies subject and the continuation of the teacher training content as its academic basis. The Senior Manager suggests that there was indeed a lack of understanding among the staff about what Education Studies actually implied as an academic subject:

Possibly unfair of me to say this, but I think initially I think nobody realised what the full significance of making that change really was. And as those things sort of began to be assimilated, so the need to clarify things and really move things along really sort of er began to take shape. I think the point that you were involved obviously was when that validation the Postgraduate year was taking place and I think that some of the issues that were raised at that validation were very much part of that ... part of that process really (SM7:2).

S/he points to the continuing primary teacher-training compliance culture:

I think it's taken time, should I say, for that to become established. I think people now are recognising that. As I say, my feeling is that that probably is a cultural change that has taken time to really take route (SM7:37).

I mean, my impression when I arrived was that people were carrying on much as before.... you know seeing themselves as teacher trainers. And I think it has only been *gradually* the case that that .... sort of realisation that this was something more fundamental than just a nominal change from a four to a three-plus-one (SM7:42).

The Subject Leader confirms this:

Well the Undergraduate Route was Primary ITT before it changed in 2001 and I guess one of the issues for the (institution) is that when it became a *three* plus the primary focus – the primary education focus – sort of stayed with the three, so it never really became.... what you might call a fully-fledged, or fully emergent, Education Studies Degree (SL7:2).

And this is due to the limited staff range and the narrow academic framework of the institution:

The staff here were, to a person, all ex-primary teachers and that significantly closed down the flavour of the Degree, and it significantly closed down the options that were available to..... (SL7:48)

We need people who've got the breadth and background. And also, because of its history, it was essentially – I mean up until now – it has been essentially HEFCE-funded ITT (SL7:50).

...the (institution) has its own history; it is a small specialist provider. It's essentially... the Education Studies is essentially buried in ITT. It's geographically isolated. It's intellectually isolated (SL7:54).

S/he also confirms the rationale of distinguishing it from the three-year QTS course, but explains that the academic content in fact was little different:

Well there are clearly tensions there because the (institution) also then introduced the three-year BA QTS very recently. And that's expanded. And the issues then were quite straightforward; it seemed like we had two

completely different courses on different funding streams that were very, very similar....

It would be too cruel to call it a HEFCE-funded ITT programme, but it was close (SM7:2).

The origins of the programme in initial teacher training, then, have had a powerful effect upon the existing academic content. However, the institution has taken a decision move from its origins and to re-define Education Studies to make the distinction from the undergraduate teacher-training programme academically different:

But nevertheless there was clearly some confusion there, and some internal competition I guess. So the (institution) knew it was going to re-validate sometime around about now and so they appointed a new Programme Leader, which was the post I successfully applied for, with a view to making, I guess, more expansive changes in the way the Programme was organised and the way it runs.... (SL:7:4).

The Senior Manager also mentions that there had been discussions about this, even before his/her arrival about making Education Studies more distinct from the three-year QTS Degree and to provide more vocational options for students:

But I think, in a way, it was part of that sort of sense that these things somehow needed to be more distinct from one another. Why would anyone do a four-year QTS programme if they could do a three-year one..... discussions again that..... preceded my arrival here, was the sense that it needed .... (to) widen its focus a little bit. And erm certainly there was a sense, I think, that people wanted to at least make it possible for people whose main focus wasn't primary to that sort of Subject Studies and Education side of things. And possibly, you know to go over to secondary, but also people maybe who had aspirations to enter teaching-related, but not necessarily... (SM7:8).

### **The theoretical framework and curriculum content**

This section discusses two aspects: the current programme and the changed programme which the Subject Leader at the time was trying to introduce.

The Senior Manager has difficulty with the question about the theoretical framework for the subject, and 'breadth' seems to be the key feature, and s/he diminishes the role of the subject disciplines:

It's a fairly broad church, isn't it? I mean, erm..... And I'm trying to sort of think now.... of the..... I think again it's not..... Looking again at the programme that I think we've just validated, I don't see sort of one.... the disciplines kind of emerging predominantly in it. So I think it's still a fairly.... a fairly broad kind of wide-ranging.... (SM7:78).

And he sees a role for professional practice:

....what I'm clumsily trying to think really. I mean I wouldn't have said that one or other of those areas was predominant..... I think the practice side of it is probably still quite strong.

Question: So there's a strong professional element?

I think there is....Yes, that's right. I think it would be.... My impression is that it would be in that area..... rather, let's say, than people doing the Philosophy..... (SM7:78-84).

The Subject Leader admits to having difficulty with the question about the theoretical framework for the subject, particularly in respect of its relationship to the contributory disciplines:

Some people will say that Education Studies is underpinned by - its theoretical underpinning – is..... er... or has its roots in erm History, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology – the different disciplines. Other people say it *is* actually more about vocational training and all sorts of things. Some people feel that it should be atomised: you know, that you should do modules in the Sociology of Education; some people feel it might be erm more holistic, integrated and so on. What's *our* underpinning for it? I think our underpinning for it is somewhere in the middle there (laughs). Trying to articulate the theoretical underpinning is quite hard because.... and the reason I say that is because I have difficulties with it as discipline-based, but also I have difficulties with it in all the other senses. And I often.... I have given a lot of thought as to why it should be considered in those terms: why can't Education Studies be considered a..... You know, where is its own *pure* theoretical underpinning.... as a subject in its own right. In the same way that, you know, I was a geologist. Could I articulate Geology's underlying theoretical... (SL7:26).

Again s/he expresses uncertainty about the role of the disciplines:

.... I don't see it as being underpinned by..... I suppose it's underpinned partly by the disciplines, because we do all these different things, but it's also.... we like to see it in a more integrated sense and it does have a vocational significance too (SL7:30).

The term 'integrated' seems to be significant as an explanation for how the disciplines are treated; it appears to me that they are drawn upon, but not studied in an explicit and critical way. The term occurs again in:

No, no, but, you know, it's balanced. Now you could say that... it's balanced and integrated. Now, course the disadvantage of that is that you may not have the opportunity to do the disciplines in the depth that any more. That's the trade-off of this (SL7:36).

However, s/he is clear about the changes s/he intends to implement in the new course and these are to increase the breadth beyond primary education. However, these plans are limited in the first instance due to the current staffing position:

.... it's very difficult to think beyond primary teacher training when everybody around you is involved in primary teacher training, and your degree's evolved from ....(SL7:60).

This is not entirely to do with the wishes of the staff, but with the limitations that former teacher training work has imposed on them. It is not that they do not wish to depart from compliance to the standards, but that they are unable to do so:

Oh, no, it's not so much that they still want to do it, I think.... Oh, no, no, no, no, that's a completely separate thing. I think they're locked into that way of working, because that's *kind of* the way it was. It's not because they don't necessarily want to; I don't think we've had the right bodies here to actually move that... to move things along. That sounds awful, doesn't it? (SL7:66).

One of the aims is to broaden the focus into secondary and further education:

We're looking for people with a breadth. I mean, ideally, I'd like to get somebody in... Even though this still sounds very school-based, I'd like to get somebody in with secondary, largely because we've got a gap for that, and I'd like to get somebody in from FE with a heritage background (SL7:48).

Despite his/her uncertainties about the role of the contributory disciplines, the revised programme appears to include more explicit use of the disciplines as it moves away from pedagogical content:

... there are three modules in Year 1: The Child as Learner, Schools and Classrooms, and Education in Context. Now, if you look at Education in Context, which is a new-ish module, we pulled back from the first two modules the students do where they're really looking at .... well, The Child as Learner is underpinned by Psychology and it's supported by work in classrooms, Schools and Classrooms very similarly. When they come into Education in Context the story that runs through that module starts off with some of the great educational theories and philosophers. It then moves into how their work has impacted on curriculum development and so on. And then, erm, because we're trying to move out of mainstream-*type* classroom-based stuff, we then move that into education *beyond* the classroom. So we want to look at things like museum education, heritage, prison edu.... You know, all those things because we want to give the students a clear sense of, if you like, the philosophy and theory that underpins these things – the impact they've had on current and practical developments... and then the wider range. So they would be made very aware of it within the module, but the module isn't called .... (SL7:32).

And a new appointment is welcomed because of a sociological specialism:

.... the (institution) has made a very significant appointment only recently in the form of a new professor.... he's very much into the Sociology of Education and minority groups and, again, that will make a significant impact on.... (SL7:60)

However, the role of the disciplines is less than clear and the Subject Leader's uncertainty about the academic underpinning is confirmed when he suggests that the theoretical framework, rather than being explicit at the outset, will emerge as the new course unfolds:

.... at the moment, because we're revalidating and we're bringing about such sweeping change, I think we've got a sense that it's underpinned by all the above.... And as it unfolds over the next year or two I think we'll have a clearer sense of what drives it (SL7:30).

There is an interesting suggestion that the theoretical framework might be a *post-hoc* analysis, rather than an initial regulating principle which governs the choice of curriculum content. This is an idea which warrants further discussion (in a paper on the theory of Education Studies).

### **Subjects and module choices**

A peculiar aspect of the Education Studies programme is the inclusion of other subject studies within Education in a Single Honours Degree. This is in contrast with most universities in which Education Studies is taken as a separate subject, but in combination with and alongside other subjects a Combined Honours Degree. At the institution the subjects are located within Education in a Single Honours Programme and there are no other distinct groups of students studying the subjects, all are 'integrated' in the Education Programme:

... there's been some sort of discussion about that, as to what kind of animal it really is... they do sixty credits a year of Education Studies and sixty of Subject Studies and it's fitting almost exactly a joint honours degree. But I think we can certainly.... Early on when I arrived and that was the kind of question obviously that I was asking: Is this joint honours? And the answer that I got to that was always, no it isn't because the Education side of it, if you like, is the kind of glue that.... Actually, 'glue' isn't a very good analogy because in a sense it was something that they seemed to sort of think integrated this much *more* than would be typical in a joint honours programme (SM7:66).

The process seems to be derived from the notion of a subject as a specialism for teaching, so the concept of the Single Honours Education Degree with a main subject is part of the old protocol of preparation for teaching where a specialist subject is seen as part of the trainee teacher's profile:

I think they do see themselves as doing a specialist subject.... Erm, but that that specialist subject, although it's not wholly pedagogy, in some senses is not completely independent, if I can put it like that, of the teacher training.... education flavour of the degree as a whole (SM7:68).

And the subject is seen, with Education, as part of 'an integrated whole' (SM7:74). The Subject Leader confirms this notion of integration with

....actually, we've made some significant steps in terms of bringing the *Subject Studies* component closer to the Education Studies. So that there isn't quite as clear a demarcation between Education Studies and the subjects as there used to be. Because, oddly enough, we have something quite unusual in a sense; it's actually a Single Honours Programme, although it very much looks like... (SL7:12).

The new course proposal indicates the ways in which there are modules which explore educational themes, epistemological and pedagogical issues in the subjects.

Despite the size of the programme with 500 students, there is little choice of modules for students and, again, this is due to the staff limitations and a narrow perception of the subject of Education Studies:

The staff here were, to a person, all ex-primary teachers and that significantly closed down the flavour of the Degree, and it significantly closed down the options that were available to... (SL7:48).

This is a remarkable notion that no one had an alternative vision of what might be offered. It also, probably, is a function of the fact that teacher-training courses have, under the Teacher Training Agency Standards, become so uniform that it has developed mind-set of singularity for course developers.

### **Education Studies and teacher training**

Much of the previous discussion has emphasised the strong relationship between Education Studies and teacher training. In some Education Studies courses it is a question whether Education Studies is a precursor to teacher training. At the institution the existing course is described as a teacher-training course in itself. This is because of its content in classroom practice and in the curriculum, and with the assessed teaching placement. The Subject Leader suggests:

up until now – it has been essentially HEFCE-funded ITT (SL7:50).

The this is confirmed more strongly by the Senior Manager:

I mean it's still formally an ITT programme, and it's recognised by HEFCE as an ITT programme (SM7:28).

As shown above, this has been largely due to the limited perceptions of the staff. However, the Senior Manager explains a further factor, that the student numbers gain HEFCE Band 'C' funding because of the school placement, making it necessary to preserve the school setting:

And it would be difficult for us for that reason.... I mean if we wanted to make it a purely academic programme it would be difficult for us in the sense that it's, you know, clearly it would be Band D, and the implications of that would be.... oh they would be serious, clearly. So we have to preserve, I think, that clear sense that it is classroom-based, to a degree (SM7:34).



So this makes it difficult to move the subject strongly away from its teacher-training origins, although the Subject Leader is determined to do so. His/her commitment to non-teacher training Education Studies is signalled by a major career move from a teacher training post in a high status university at the other end of the country. In fact the apparent antipathy towards initial teacher training is marked; s/he rejects the notion of Education Studies as preparatory to teacher training and is highly critical of the previous policy and practice at the institution:

The thing is there are all kinds of weird things going on there, you see. Because if you look at a degree in that way... If you were to say the Degree is a preparation for teaching, but it's not actually a teacher-training degree, then where does that leave you? So you have to decide which side of the fence you're going to sit on. You're either going to be a TTA-funded ITT course, or your not (SL7:20).

This appears to be contradictory in that s/he knows s/he must retain the teaching placement and acknowledges that there is still a strong school-based content. A long explanation of the changes to the modules is summarised as:

So what we now have is we've got some modules that form a continuous strand from Year 1 to Year 3, which still retain an element of education in a *school* sense, but we've put in a strand of modules which contain, which is more about education in a broader context (SL7:20).

And he acknowledges that the professional role is a strong vocational expectation for applicants, although s/he would like to see a shift away from and exclusively primary teaching vocational outcome:

...as I interview students and I talk to students on the course, yes, I think they do have a strong vocational drive; I think a lot of them do come in thinking they want to be teachers, thought they're not quite sure. But we've noticed recently there's a slight trend in the last few years for students at the end of the course not to.... to not want to go into teaching. So we're beginning to see some shifts. And I think erm.... one of the things I'm hoping – one of my own personal hopes for the course – is that, while we don't lose sight of that focus - because that's what the (institution) is – I'd like to see students come in to do the course for different reasons and I'd like to see them leave and go on to do different things. And I'm not quite sure what I'd like that balance to be, but I'd like to see that change curl back (SL7:102).

S/he goes on to castigate the notion of guaranteed places on the linked Primary PGCE course, and his tone is vehement:

We've stopped the guaranteed place. Now that often surprised me, because I wasn't even aware you could guarantee places until I came here. And I raised the issue early on and said, well doesn't this kind of contravene equal ops and all kinds of things? I mean, how can we guarantee somebody a place? What if my mate wants to come on the PGCE here and he can't, but I'm here and I can? And I do get a place because I'm here. Are we allowed to do that? You know, I could never quite get to the bottom of this in terms of how it was....

Because there was one thing.... It's one thing to call a course 'a three-plus-one'; it's a different thing to validate a course as a three-plus-one, especially when they're on different funding streams, and I could never quite get to the bottom of that. Nobody within the (institution) could tell me how that arose. Now we still want to retain those options, because for recruitment purposes and exit routes we don't want to lose sight of that – the fact that students can go on to PGCEs. But we're.... As the three-year course has changed, we've..... I was going to say we've *severed* the links with the PGCE, but we haven't. What we're doing is that we're making it less obvious that the route is natural progression. So students will have to be interviewed at that point; they will have to apply to GTTR at that point. Whereas right now we interview them there and they run right through, and that's just crazy. I can't see any logic to that, or reason for that whatsoever.

It appears, then, that he finds himself in a conflictual situation. He has a strong vision of Education Studies as not preparatory for teacher training, but the student profile is largely vocationally focused on teaching and he is committed to retaining professional practice in the programme because of HEFCE Band 'C' funding.

### Staffing

As already noted, with the exception of the new Subject Leader, staff have been drawn from primary teacher training and most teach across both types of programme. Interestingly, though, the Senior Manager refers to a new policy of allowing staff to define their preference for teaching Education Studies or teacher training courses, and some have chosen a preference for teacher training rather than Education Studies:

They are different sets of people. There is some cross-over between them, but they are different teams of people. Perhaps significantly from this point of view, what we've done – because we're making some new appointments this year – what we did do before we advertised for those was to ask our own people whether there were.... for interest that they might have in terms of changing. And in fact we thought there were vacancies in both those two programmes. I think significantly perhaps two people have elected to move out of Education Studies into one of the more purely professional training, and I think that's probably a symptom of, you know, they do see themselves again perhaps belonging more comfortably in a teacher training programme. So there are people making decisions on that sort of basis when they're invited to do that (SM7:56).

The new policy of appointing staff with a specific Education Studies focus and expertise is intended to create separate teams. It is interesting, then, that an institution which initiated Education Studies within a teacher training framework may now be heading towards a model in which Education Studies and teacher training are disconnected.

### Conclusion

The isn't is a most peculiar case of Education Studies which has remained locked within a teacher-training concept. The Senior Manager's suggestion that there was a

lack of awareness of what the subject entailed when it was undertaken is an interesting case of a subject coming into being because of the structural and financial factors operating in the market at the time: the arrival of the competing three-year QTS degree and the funding advantages of the three-plus-one model.

The lack of staff ambition, until recently, to cast it differently, is a function of both its origins and of the singular effect which the compliance culture of teacher training has had on higher education staff. The heroic new Subject Leader appointed to wrest the subject from the jaws of the TTA Standards has a considerable challenge ahead of him/her. At present s/he is an individual struggling against the odds to achieve a subject definition with less teaching emphasis. Against him/her are the lack of staff expertise, the nature of the student intake and the need to retain HEFCE Band 'C' funding. In his/her favour are the new direction for institution policy and some new staffing.

The lack of choice of modules is interesting in that, for courses where there is a large staff and student body like this, a number of modules on offer and this might be seen to be a function of the broad definition of Education Studies, and even its lack of definition. In Case 7 the subject has been defined narrowly as teacher training within the QTS standards and the question of options has simply been seen as unnecessary.

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 9 on 3 March and 4 March 2006**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 9**

Case 9 has a long history as a Church-founded teacher training institution in the Welsh language medium. The Faculty of Education is organised in five schools:

- Initial Teacher Education and Training
- Education Studies and Social Inclusion
- Early Years Education
- Theology and Religious Studies
- Welsh

The institution has a large undergraduate teacher-training programme as well as primary PGCE. The current undergraduate Education Studies course began in 1999 as a joint honours degree. The programme is divided between two separate subjects: Education Studies and Social Inclusion. An Early Years programme is in a separate school. Students can take two of the subjects together, or combine each of them with another subject in a Combined Honours Degree. Education Studies has been successful and grown to some 400 students on the combined programme.

At the time of the interviews all the teacher-training institutions in Wales were discussing the findings of the Furlong Enquiry (2006) commissioned by the Welsh Assembly to advise on the future of initial teacher training in Wales. The report recommends a 50% reduction in teacher training in Wales to meet demographic changes. The proposed means of reduction is to discontinue all undergraduate teacher training and to offer only postgraduate courses. It recommends at the same time that institutions should be allowed to retain their undergraduate numbers as non-ITT Education Studies programmes, so-called 'pre-professional degrees'. It further proposes that the teacher training institutions in Wales should be formed into three consortia to make complementary provision. The Furlong proposals have significant implications for the institution: they would be forced to amalgamate with another institution, they would lose all the undergraduate teacher training numbers and would need to substantially expand the existing non-ITT Education Studies programme.

#### **Interviews**

Interviews were carried out on successive days, first with the Head of the Faculty as the Senior Manager and then with the Subject Leader for Education Studies and Social Inclusion.

#### **Notes on the interview process**

There had been no previous contact with the interviewees, except to arrange the interviews. Another member of the Faculty of Education is a member of the British Education Studies Association (BESA) and the introductions for the interviews were made through him/her. The occasion of the interviews was a BESA Colloquium on Employability and Education Studies which had been organised at the institution. The interviewer gave a keynote address which the Subject Leader and Head of Faculty

attended after the interviews had been carried out. The interviewer was received very hospitably and interviewees expressed a high level of interest in the research.

### **Analysis of the interviews**

#### **Brief summary of findings**

1. The initiative to introduce Education Studies taken by an individual who later became the Principal in the institution.
2. Education Studies was devised as a diversification from ITT to preserve the institution from future funding threats. It has subsequently been responsible for preserving the existence of the institution in recruiting their student numbers.
3. Education Studies exists as a subject for a low-status former teacher-training institution which can't cannot compete with pre-1992 universities for admissions to the traditional subjects.
4. Education Studies is successful in the market for an institution with a strong teacher training background.
5. There is a strong commitment to the priorities of the Welsh Assembly and programmes are generally driven by national priorities and guidance, such as the QAA Benchmark for Education. National frameworks and constraints appear to be welcomed. The subject appears to be conceived as 'working to an agenda' which is externally-imposed, rather than to academic principles derived by the staff in the institution.
6. The theoretical framework emphasises employability and this reflects this institutional commitment to Welsh national priorities.
7. Concept of a 'pre-professional' degree with a view to employment or future training is a strong feature of the thinking, and this seems to be determined by the Welsh Assembly priorities.
8. The subject content was originated hastily by a single tutor in 1999 according to his interests, although it has since been diversified.
9. Psychology is the main discipline for Education Studies, although others 'creep in'. The role of the disciplines is not clearly expressed.
10. Education Studies is conceived as distinct from teacher training with employment destinations other than teaching.
11. Teacher training staff are kept separate from Education Studies staff, most of whom who do not have QTS. There is anxiety and uncertainty about Education Studies among the teacher-training staff because of the reduction in teacher training numbers and perceived threats to their posts.

## Analysis of responses to questions

### The origins of the programme

The Senior Manager explains the origins of Education Studies as a strategic bid to diversify from teacher training during the 1990s because of concerns about the frailty of future funding:

The (institution) decided in the early 90s to diversify.... And I think that the Management at the time were concerned that there was a strong possibility that teacher training would be – well the numbers would be reduced in future years. So strategically the (institution) decided to apply for the BA Education Studies course to offset any cutbacks in teacher training (SM9:14).

This initiative proved to be justified as the Furlong Report (2006) which recommends the termination of undergraduate teacher training in Wales and the merging of the institutions into three regional teacher-training centres. However, it appears to have been led by an individual head of department whose career has been subsequently enhanced by becoming the Principal of the Institution:

.... the then Dean of Bilingualism, and the present Principal, in fact, was keen to develop a BA Education course back in the late 90s – 97-98.... (SM9:2)

The original proposal had been resisted by the other subjects:

... and there was great animosity towards this development by your traditionalists: the Head of English, the Head of History, the Head of Geography at the time. Quite simply, they felt threatened by a BA in Education (SM9:2).

In fact, their fears had been justified in that the programme became very successful at the expense of the other subjects:

....the BA Education.... has become one of the most popular courses in the (institution) and it's quite interesting to look at the other subjects, because now we don't have a BA in Geography and a BA History. The students have voted with their feet to support the BA Education Studies Programme. A very, very interesting development in (institution) (SM9:4).

In the current higher education market, Education Studies has proved to be a successful initiative for this institution, a small teacher-training organisation, which is unable to compete with the pre-1992 universities in the traditional subjects:

The late 90s saw quite a disturbing picture in this (institution) outside ITT. As I mentioned earlier, we had validated a single honours in English, in History, in Geography..... what else? Religious Studies – probably seven or eight single honours. And in a way we were competing with the large institutions: with (Names of three Welsh institutions). You know, we couldn't compete with those larger places, so obviously the students didn't come to (Name of institution); they went to the large institutions, as you'd expect (SM9:24).

.... the development of Education Studies was, and is, and will be crucial to the future well-being of this institution.... If we hadn't secured the vote of the Academic Board that day we might not be sitting here today (SM9:44).

I think the development of Education Studies and the other non-QTS programmes – let's be honest - has actually saved this institution. I'd go as far as to say that, I would (SM9:92).

The success of Education Studies in the market is also explained by the institution's historical base as a Church-foundation teacher training institution and its appeal to local applicants:

(Name of institution) as a church (institution) directly linked to education since 1848, you know, it has always attracted a good number of students who wish to pursue a career in education, not just within teaching as such, and I think generally it has a good name for teacher training and I think students were in the late 90s to 2001-2002 students were looking for a course in the locality, in the region – obviously it's far more expensive to attend university these days

And Education Studies becomes one of a portfolio of new subject degrees designed to appeal to local applicants who would not achieve a place in a traditional subject at a pre-1992 university. The student numbers were converted from the single degree courses in the traditional subjects, which were failing to recruit:

That was the first thing he did: a review of the whole curriculum. And out went many of those single honours degrees. And in came, rather than your BA in English, you had a BA in Film Studies etc, etc. So the students came back (SM9:24).

A deliberative and strategic approach is apparent here, but it was initiated by the future decline in teacher training, rather than as a vision of a new subject. Asked whether there was a view of the market for Education Studies, the Senior Manager replies:

To be perfectly honest, no; I think that decision was linked to a probable reduction in ITT numbers (SM9:74).

And the publication of the policy for Wales conveniently provided a direction:

Well, with *The Learning Country* document being published as well, that was a great help (SM9:76)

Both interviewees refer to the Welsh Assembly (2001) policy for Education and the vision for the curriculum is expressed in terms of the Welsh Assembly priorities:

We've also tried to respond to some of the national agenda, if you like, that's come from the National Assembly in Cardiff....the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Minister in particular, had published the paving document, *Wales, the Learning Country*, back in 2001, and Early Years

Education was very, very high on that agenda. So we started by developing an MA in Early Years Education and then we went back to a BA in Early Years Education.... (SM9:18).

The Head of the School Education Studies (SL9) is a former employee of the Welsh Assembly:

The Head of School has come directly from the National Assembly in Cardiff. S/he was developing policies in the Assembly at the time (SM9:82)

and the document is always by his/her side:

Yes, well, actually I have a copy here of *The Learning Country* paving document. This was published in 2001 and it's basically a comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales. So what we did, we looked at this, and we highlighted some major issues here and we addressed these then through the new programmes we were developing.....(SM9:56).

And the development of Education Studies complies with the latest priority:

Now, of course, by that time, there were whispers that the government in Wales was looking for substantial reduction in teacher training numbers. So in a way, I haven't been able to develop the second part of the vision, if you like, but that now will be taken on with Swansea (SM9:28).

In fact Education Studies has been a successful new subject in the Welsh institutions:

It's quite interesting, since we validated that degree back in '97-98 (Name of another institution) developed a similar course, (Name of another institution) have just validated a single honours Education Studies, (Name of another institution), I think, has a similar.... you know, it's developed nicely across Wales (SM9:72).

The commitment to the national priorities of Wales does seem to define the ethos of the institution, and perhaps that of the higher education institutions in Wales, and there seems to be strong institutional support for Education Studies in the region:

To be perfectly, perfectly honest, I think erm.... all the institutions respect each other. The Heads of School, the Heads of Faculty, they get on well together. There's mutual respect at that particular level, but at a senior level, then – the Vice Chancellor, the Principal – of course, he or she does the best for his or her institution. In South West Wales you'll get two Principals – (Name of Head of institution) in (Name of another institution) and (Name of Head of institution) here in (Name of institution) who are very, very supportive of Education. So hopefully that will be in our interest as a future (area of) Wales School of Education. Both have come in from an educational background and they, of course, understand that Education is of great importance to the other institution as well. So that should help to provide a



stable environment (SM9:90).

However, the Furlong Report's proposal to convert the undergraduate teacher training numbers into Education Studies numbers will leave the institution with a problem in filling a further 300 places in non-teacher training programmes:

.... it's going to be quite difficult, given the location of the (institution) to try and develop new initiatives and recruit up to another 300 students through similar courses in the future. The credit, or funded numbers, for BA Ed will be ring-fenced in future years. So we won't lose the actual funding, but we will be in a position to further enhance the non-QTS provision – Education Studies, Social Inclusion etc. and to develop new pre-professional courses (SM9:62).

### **The theoretical framework and curriculum content**

While the development of the subject was strategically planned in the institution, it is notable the urgency to have it in place meant that the first curriculum in 1999 was derived by a single individual:

To be perfectly honest, erm, it was developed by one individual who was then a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education. Erm, he was asked to develop this; he did so and the modules reflected his own interests, to be perfectly honest.

More appropriate breadth was subsequently developed:

Over the next two years – by 2001-2002 – with the establishment of a School of Education Studies and the appointment of two or three members of staff then you had a far more varied curriculum, if you like, which includes modules in Psychology.... erm the National Curriculum.... the collection of modules you would find in any Education Studies degree (SM9:32).

The commitment to national policy and guidance noted above also appears to dominate the thinking in constructing the content of the subject. When asked about this the Senior Manager replies:

Yes, very much so. I mean there's a whole section here on early years, for example. So what we've tried to do is to develop an undergraduate and also postgraduate training for those involved in early years. There's a chapter there on special educational needs as well and youth and community work (SM9:60).

When asked about the theoretical framework for Education Studies, the Subject Leader says:

You see, we're constrained by legislative frameworks all the time and these theoretical frameworks creep in in our everyday life (SL9:12).

When pressed on what these are s/he replies,

Well, I mean, OK, just a basic one, you've got the National Curriculum; we're all supposed to be doing this. So there you've got your formal framework there; so that's statutory, isn't it? (SL9:12).

When reminded that the National Curriculum is not statutory for Education Studies students, s/he refers to the QAA Benchmark:

No, but we're constrained by what we do, what we deliver and how we deliver it and value for many of the students, which is my main focus because I'm sort of standing back from the teaching element at the moment. I've got the QAA guidelines, the code of practice is on my desk all the time. And you've got the 'threshold' the 'modal' and the 'best'.

Well Education Studies has got its own standards, hasn't it? The Benchmarks. It's just there (pointing to desk).....(SL9:14-18).

National frameworks and constraints on the subject appear to be welcomed. Pressed on how the QAA Benchmark has framed the curriculum, she replies in terms of non-teaching employment and non-school contexts for learning:

Oh, if you look at the aims in the first bit, you know, providing employability for students comes into it somewhere but I think you've got there five different aims offering them a broad and balanced overview of Education, and we don't just focus on the education system, you know. We look outside the box and we've got a variety of different of modules which look outside the school situation, and outside things like that. So I don't think that it's Education Studies as it used to be thought of, because we've expanded our portfolio now to..... we're looking at adventure therapy, forest schools and we're working outside what we deliver to our students to give them these experiences that there's education everywhere (SL9:20).

Education Studies looks from cradle to grave – we work a lot with adult learners – any placement opportunities the students get they're encouraged to not just look at one institution like a school – they can go to a school if they want to – but the next time you try to encourage them to get out their and work with adults or go somewhere else; go to one of the family centres (SL9:62).

The Senior Manager also emphasises employment as the central aim for Education Studies in the institution which seems to reflect the strong commitment to Welsh national priorities:

Well, one of the priorities for this (institution) when the Principal came into post was the employability of students. So I think the majority of the modules developed within Education Studies is linked to the employability of students at the end of their course. I think we look at the number of students from this particular course who either go on to a PGCE or are successful in gaining a post outside teaching. And obviously it's been quite successful because 80% of the students do get a post at the end of their course, linked to many, many aspects of education: museum officers, working with young children, special educational needs.... a range of employment opportunities (SM9:34).

Again, the role of the subject in keeping abreast of the national priorities is stressed, and it seems that its content will be determined by whatever priorities are signalled, although these could derive from Cardiff or Westminster sources:

.... to keep up with the current agenda, because, I mean, education changes as often as you change your socks, doesn't it? And the one thing that you really, really have to watch is that DfES will actually publish a document; well sometimes the Welsh Assembly don't adopt that. Now then, are we working to the Welsh Assembly or to the DfES and some of our students get very confused unless we are very clear ourselves in which way we need to go (SL9:44).

So the subject is 'working to an agenda' which is externally-imposed, rather than to academic principles derived by the staff in the institution. It is notable that there is no reference to critical analysis of government policies or professional practice.

### **Role of the foundation disciplines**

The Subject Leader has difficulty with the question about the theoretical framework for Education Studies and she turns to the disciplines in groping for a response:

Depends on what you're looking at, I suppose because you've got so many different theories out there. You know, are you looking at a psychological framework or are you looking at a sociological or political....? (SL9:10).

When pressed about the disciplines she suggests that Education Studies is basically Psychological, while there is Sociology in the Social Inclusion course:

Well the Psychology is quite a strong element in the Education Studies programme. You know, it comes into the language, the language development modules; it comes into Psychology as a strand, because we've got three years of basic Psychology, you know, so students could come out with a broad understanding of personal development through a psychological process. Sociology: not quite as much in the Education Studies programme, but with the Social Inclusion element, which most of our students in the school tend to do that joint - 80% of our students do that particular joint degree. They've got this social background coming into it as well, so we do link the two very, very closely. That's our strongest degree programme, I think (SL9:26).

She does go on to claim that other disciplines are included in Education Studies:

Education Studies isn't just psychological. You've got philosophy, you've got historical competence. You've got all these strands coming through. And then there's the culture of change, international perspectives. Got all that (SL9:28).

However, the other disciplines are not explicit; they 'creep in':

Well, they know they're doing Psychology because it's called 'Psychology'. They know it's Psychology. No, they're not aware that they're doing.... that

this is some kind of a sociological element, because it's not called Sociology or anything. I mean, yes, it does creep in and you will say we're looking at a socio-economic this, and whatever (SL9:30).

The Subject Leader's explanation about the role of the disciplines does leave the role sounding ill-defined. However, the focus on Psychology has been strengthened by the deliberate appointment of staff with expertise in the subject:

(Tutor name)'s been able to (develop a strand in Psychology) since s/he came. S/he's been able to develop the Psychology strand because she her background. S/he's a clinical psychologist. And we're very, very lucky (SL9:32).

### **Relationship to teacher training**

Education Studies is conceived as distinct from teacher training and this is institutionalised in the structure of the School of Education with the separation of Education Studies and teacher training into discrete schools. This appears to foster divisions between staff in the two areas. When first mooted in 1998, Education Studies was perceived as a threat by the traditional subjects, but with the onset of cuts in initial teacher training in Wales it has also begun to be perceived as a threat by the teacher-training staff. :

Now then, I think it's fair to say as well that those involved in teacher training in the School of ITT began to see this subject area as a threat a year or so ago. You could see that the Faculty was developing non-QTS degrees and a lot of them were asking, well why? And, of course, with the proposed cut-backs – substantial cutbacks now.... (SM9:44)

The partition of Education Studies and teacher training is reinforced by the Welsh language medium which is prevalent in the teacher training courses:

I think one issue, erm, that maybe explains that situation: teacher training is taught through the medium of both Welsh and English, so three quarters of the ITT staff – more than three quarters, probably 80-85% - are bilingual, OK? Now, obviously those within Education Studies, I don't think there are any Welsh speakers in that particular school at the moment. So they wouldn't be able to contribute to the primary course because of a lack of understanding of the Welsh language. So that has been one factor, I think, that has stopped the collaboration across the schools (SM9:54).

Staff appointed to Education Studies are not likely to be former teachers. Asked whether staff might have QTS, the Senior Manager replies:

No. No way, no. Erm, that's a good question, actually, I hadn't given that too much thought. Erm, Education Studies..... I think one or two do have QTS; the others have been working within different educational contexts outside teaching (SM9:82).

The separation policy has led to uncertainty about the nature of Education Studies among teacher-training staff:

..... I think it's fair to say as well that a number of the ITT staff here are still slightly confused, I think, or are uncertain about exactly what is taught within the Education Studies Programme. What is different (SM9:48).

However, the policy of keeping teacher training and Education Studies separate is not seen as sustainable in the context of the merger with the Swansea Institute:

I've deliberately kept them apart for the last five years. However, if we are to work closely with (Name of another institution) to forge links and to develop a (Region of ) Wales School of Education. I think the first step here is to see greater collaboration between the three schools internally within the Faculty (SM9:50).

Although she refers to the National Curriculum, the Subject Leader, as noted above, has no background in teaching and regards Education Studies as limited in its provision for future teachers. S/he says that while students used to do Education Studies with a view to teacher training, a minority now have this intention:

Up until two years ago I could honestly say that 60% of the students that came to us to do Education Studies with something else said that they wanted to go into teaching. But at the end of their first two years, well, I think the drop-out from the teaching aim then came down and we've got somewhere between 15 and 20% now who still want to.... (SL:9:20).

And Education Studies is an escape route for those who wish to change from teaching. S/he is sympathetic to this, with the suggestion that 21 year-old undergraduates might be too young for teaching:

.... I get students coming over from the BA Ed saying, 'I don't think teaching is for me. Can I come over and do Education Studies and Social Inclusion' because they can see that their options are open for a little bit longer. And that's not to say that teaching isn't right for them, but at this time they feel they can't do it. I always think a mature teacher is far better than a youngster because they've seen a bit of the world (SL9:24).

The concept here of a 'pre-professional degree' is referred to in the Furlong Report and the notion seems to resonate here:

I personally think that the pre-professional degree is better than the BA Ed.... Simply because you've got 18 year-olds making a decision for the rest of their lives and I think it's a difficult time for them to do it. Doing this type of pre-professional degree they can spend time looking to see what they want to do; they've got another two years, really, to keep their options open. So very much that depends on market forces and, you know..... (SL:9:50)

What seems to be emerging here is the concept of a pre-professional degree which is prepares students for future professional training or employment, rather than the

notion of academic study for its own sake.

## **Conclusion**

2006 is a highly significant year for the Welsh higher education institutions with the publication of the Furlong Report. This will see a transformation from undergraduate teacher training to undergraduate Education Studies, and similar courses. The institution congratulates itself on having already made the move to non-ITT Education Studies which provides the ready-made vehicle for the change. The initiative was taken to offset the forthcoming cuts in 1998, although the success of Education Studies itself was never envisaged.

The distinctive features of the subject at Case 9 are determined by its Welsh context. There is close proximity to the government priorities and principles in the form of the Welsh Assembly, rather than academic principles drawn up by the staff in the institution. There is a resolution to follow the guidelines, be they from the Westminster, Cardiff or the QAA. This gives a strong emphasis to the employability characteristics of the programme. What seems to be emerging is the notion of a pre-professional degree, which replaces the concept of academic study for its own sake. There is little, or no, mention of critical theory in any of the discourse. While the phrase 'outside the box' is used, the box is conceived only as state schooling. Critique of government policy or professional practice appears limited. Compliance is the dominant feature.

## **Interviews with Subject Leaders and Senior Management**

### **Analysis of interviews at Case 8 on 21 June and 1 July 2005**

#### **Background to Education Studies at Case 8**

The institution has a long and distinguished history of primary and secondary teacher training in the School of Education. Its four-year Primary Undergraduate Programme at its height included 1000 students. In 2000 the Primary Undergraduate course suffered a failed Ofsted rating and at that time the course was terminated, with the transfer of the TTA numbers to additional PGCE training and the balance to additional HEFCE numbers. At the time the institution did not allocate the additional HEFCE numbers to the School of Education but to other subjects and schools. Education Studies began in September 2002, with a small cohort of 30, being an additional allocation to the School and not those reallocated from the TTA. These students were recruited at a late stage in the year through UCAS Clearing. There is a link with the institutions PGCE course in that graduates are offered an interview, although as numbers increase this facility is to be withdrawn.

In September 2003 Childhood and Youth Studies (CAYS) was introduced as a new subject to run in parallel with Education Studies in the School of Education. This also recruited through clearing with a total of 19 against a target of 25. Both subjects were started *de novo* with no direct antecedents. Students are registered on either the BA (Hons) in Education Studies or the BA (Hons) in Childhood and Youth Studies. But the two are complementary and interdependent in that students are able to take two modules of four per year from either programme. In this analysis Childhood and Youth Studies is considered because of its close links with Education Studies, the joint staffing and its similar origins within the School of Education.

The institution plans for rapid expansion of both programmes in the coming years. The development of the two subjects has taken place in the context of radical reforms to staffing in the School of Education. The strategy is to replace former teacher training staff with research-active staff and a major redundancy policy was in place in August 2005. These changes have had a dual effect of invigorating the programmes with new staff, but in the short-term created a sense of uncertainty and difficulties in making reforms. Each of the Subject Leaders for Education Studies and CAYS had been newly appointed.

#### **Interviews**

The two subject leaders interviewed were the newly appointed research-active staff. The interviews were carried out on two separate occasions. The first was with the Senior Manager and the Subject Leader for Childhood and Youth Studies on June 21 2005 when the interviewer attended the institution as external examiner for the Childhood and Youth Studies course. The Subject Leader for Education Studies was not available on that day and she was interviewed on July 1 at a conference of the British Education Studies Association. Prior to the interviews there were informal discussions with the original Subject Leader for Education Studies. In the role as external examiner for Childhood and Youth Studies the interviewer had met informally with the Education Studies and CAYS teams on the evening of June 20<sup>th</sup>.

He had had previous associations with the Subject Leader for CAYS when s/he worked at Bath Spa during the 1990s. He also had conversations with the Head of Undergraduate Studies in his role as external examiner and there are some references to him/her in the interviews. A formal interview with her was not conducted. She was to leave her post at the end of the year as part of the redundancy scheme.

### **Notes on the interview process**

The interviewer's former associations with the Childhood and Youth Studies Subject Leader and role as the new external examiner for that subject affect the nature of the interview data. However, the relationship did provide good access to the participants. In particular, the examining role gave access to the Head of School who might otherwise have been reluctant to engage. In the event, s/he was very open with information about the history and rationale for the two programmes. S/he had published an account of the development of Educational Studies and this is referred to. Both the subject leaders had taken up their posts within the last year, and so were not always familiar with the detailed history of developments, but they were also forthcoming with sensitive material.

## **Analysis of the interviews**

### **Brief summary of findings**

1. The strategic rationale for Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies is highly deliberative, while the academic rationale is still 'emerging'.
2. The rationale for both subjects is to generate funding to support PGCE teacher training and to enable the employment of research-active staff.
3. The institution expects Education Studies to be a form of Social Sciences. Other than that it appears to have little interest in the nature of the curriculum or its vocational outcomes so long as it produces high-profile entrants and high quality research-active staff.
4. The two subjects were selected in order to keep the institution in the rapidly expanding Education Studies and Childhood Studies market.
5. The market sensitivity of the institution is high and there is a self-conscious strategy of maintaining its national reputation.
6. Student profiles are currently low in relation to the institution's A-Level norms. The intention is to progressively increase the qualifications of entrants to AAB.
7. There are currently no explicit aims for the Education Studies programme and there was no consideration of students' vocational outcomes in the planning. The current subject leader had given little consideration to these and was only just beginning to explore the question. The programme appears to have grown in isolation and the current Subject Leader was excited about her recent discussions with staff from other institutions.
8. There was very little consideration of a theoretical framework in the setting up of Education Studies; the curriculum was determined entirely by ability of staff to teach modules. A *post-hoc* framework is being developed.
9. Childhood and Youth Studies is developing an imaginative and original curriculum with a relatively well thought-out rationale.
10. Currently the foundation disciplines are included unsystematically, but the intention is to make Education Studies a rigorously academic subject through



explicit study of the foundation disciplines of Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy. The same is true for Childhood and Youth Studies. The ambition is both to be high status Social Sciences programmes.

11. Links with teacher training are currently uncertain. A guaranteed interview for Education Studies graduates is to be discontinued and teacher training is not clear in the aims for the course, although students do progress to teacher training. Staff do not see the programme as a precursor to teacher training.
12. A redundancy policy and radical staff changes in the School of Education have tended to freeze curriculum developments.

### **Analysis of responses to questions**

The three interviews with the Head of School and the two Subject Leaders are analysed simultaneously.

#### **The origins of the programme and the theoretical framework**

The institution's original four-year QTS undergraduate programme had been removed because it was judged to be incompatible with the institution's mission:

The running-down of the programme occurred in several stages, but in the minds of the (Institution)'s Senior Management was largely brought about by a belief that the funding and staffing for the programme on that scale was incompatible with other higher education policy that was leading universities to become more specialised and differentiated (SM8:2).

This began in 1998 with the TTA numbers converted to HEFCE numbers, although these were not directly translated into allocations to the School of Education for Education Studies, but were allocated to other schools in the institution. Instead, a small number (30) was allocated later in 1998 for a start-up four years later. There was not, then, a direct transition from QTS to Education Studies, but rather complete termination of the QTS Programme with a delayed start for Education Studies under a new leader. Although it is not made very explicit in any of the interviews, the institution appears, then, to have transferred numbers from the School of Education to other areas before finally allocating the small number to Education Studies four years later. (This information is confirmed by another informal source.)

The Senior Manager explains that the origins of the Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies programme lie in a highly instrumental and deliberative strategy by the institution to generate funding which would support the PGCE teacher training which is said to be inadequately funded by the Teacher Training Agency. S/he explains that the institution is anxious to retain its high status as a teacher-training provider:

In this particular (institution) because it's very keen to, erm.... strengthen the budget for running all their Education programmes and HEFCE *Band D* students actually make some money. They're more profitable than TTA students. The (institution) could have decided not to put any of the HEFCE quota against Education; it could have put it into other disciplinary areas, but it had taken a simultaneous view that the reputational status of the PGCE, which

is a large-scale programme, was so strong that it didn't want to undermine the PGCE because it itself was under-funded. So part of the motivation was to provide more resources for a school that ran a very tightly-budgeted PGCE programme.... (SM8:6).

The strongest priority is staffing, as the Senior Manager explains:

The reason it's probably our most important development in the School is *all* to do with staffing. This is where I can have a good chance of recruiting staff who will look like the kind of academics that you find around the rest of the (institution) (SM8:44).

The strongest feature of the strategy, then, appears to be the need to maintain and enhance the reputation of the institution. The perception seems to be that Education Studies as a subject in itself will not do this, for it is currently a low-status subject in the institution:

We don't have quite the same status as our colleagues. When you go to meetings on the Streatham Campus, you know, Physics and English rather look down their noses at the moment, which is another reason to push up our profile on entry qualifications (SL:8A:84).

However, the income derived from the *Band D* undergraduate students will subsidise the budget for the highly reputable PGCE teacher training courses. Asked why the institution wants to develop Education Studies, the financial rationale is strongly confirmed by the Education Subject Leader:

Well my understanding is because it makes money. Basically, it's a financial imperative. As far as I can see, ever since Steve Smith has taken over as our (Head of Institution) the financial imperative has been the main imperative, which is why various departments have gone to the wall. And there's a belief amongst staff at the School of Education that ITT may not survive, and they feel that Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies are growing areas, which obviously they are. It was quite nice actually, in the session with Steve (Bartlett at the BESA conference) he said, which is quite right, Education Studies started off mainly in the *newer* universities, and now the old universities are jumping on the bandwagon. Absolutely right – a money-making opportunity (SL8A:84).

The Subject Leader for Childhood and Youth Studies confirms this:

But certainly the programmes are profitable - well considered to be profitable – and they want them to grow; there's a strong emphasis on them growing (SL:8B:14).

I mean, they're certainly viable on the books; they're viable and in fact profit-making. So if you're looking at it purely through a financial lens, that's the motivation (SL8B:18).

The financial expediency of increasing Education Studies does appear to be strong at the expense of academic concerns in that an increase for the coming September is to be announced in July:

We've got a meeting of Head of School next week when we might be getting even more quota than we thought we were getting, which may be slightly problematic – bit panicky. Can you imagine, you know, with about five or six weeks to go suddenly to be told that you might have another thirty fte. Erm, and the issue is - it's absolutely fantastic for the programme – but the logistics of it may be a nightmare because, simply, staff already up to hours... (SL8A:126).

This emphasises the way in which the TTA-to-HEFCE conversion was carried out, with the numbers being allocated elsewhere, but then later allocations being found for Education Studies because it appears to be a good marketable option.

A second the rationale for existence of Education Studies is the need for research-active staff in a research-intensive institution. The Head of School perceives the ageing teacher training staff as a problem in the context of the research-intensive institution:

It (the policy) looked at the longest-range issue which is when the current staffing, the average age of which recently was 54. When those people all retire together, what replenishment options will you already have activated to ensure that there is continuity of staffing in an institution which is becoming increasingly research intensive (SM8:8).

So part of the motivation was to provide more resources for a school that ran a very tightly-budgeted PGCE programme, but also to – and this is more my sort of gloss on it – this was the way to replenish the staffing. We were more likely to recruit bright, young post-doctoral candidates into lectureships under the age of 35 through this form of provision than we were to replenish the next generation of research-intensive ITT tutors (SM8:6).

In addition to age is the problem of their lack of research profile, caused by their commitment to the professional needs of teacher training. Education Studies is the opportunity to attract young, and therefore low-cost, staff who can develop a strong research profile:

I, as a manager, was particularly attracted to the issue I mentioned earlier which is the ability to recruit this kind of new younger academic back into the field. I felt I saw an ageing staff population which had a lot of ambivalences around the nature of the TTA standards and all that QTS now involves; erm.... and therefore I thought it was attractive from a labour-market point of view to offer something that was more disciplinary, but in an Education School-environment; I thought we could recruit, and recruit well. And we've got good people and good young people incubating at the moment (SM8:18).

The research dimension, then, is salient with a very deliberate policy of replacing staff in the School; this was being carried out forcefully with a number of compulsory

redundancies of older less research-active staff, including the former Subject Leader who had originated the programme. The policy was causing a degree of turbulence which, the new Education Studies Subject Leader explains, had had a damaging effect on the planning process:

At the moment we've left it alone for this year, apart from having to take on staff changes because simply we can't cope with all the staff changes we've had and really re-thinking (SL8A:20).

This is a strongly managed organisation in which the institutional priorities of research and high reputational status are the main factors in the decisions about subjects and staffing.

It would appear, although it is not explicitly stated, that the institution was slow in its perception of the role of Education Studies in the higher education market. Education Studies was first seen a subject for post-1992 universities and which (Name of institution) would not countenance, and this would explain why the TTA numbers were not immediately converted to Education Studies HEFCE numbers. Later, it seems, the market for Education Studies and Childhood Studies became too tempting to resist, especially as they coincided with the interests of staff. The following from the Senior Manager explains this and his opening sentences suggest that there had been uncertainty and a change of strategic direction:

You said a minute ago that it all sounds very carefully constructed. I think we didn't know very much about the emergent student markets for either of those areas, but had noted that they were developing quite rapidly in the country in both peer institutions and in institutions with which we don't normally compare ourselves for sort of bench-marking purposes. Erm... we had initially the view that Ed Studies was the natural starting point; those very much were starting to appear elsewhere and there were other places that had a slight lead on them. But that was the discipline that seemed most centrally to speak to continuity from the models of teacher education that were developed in the 60s and 70s, which are now finally eroding away with QTS standards and that generation start retiring and so on. And then Childhood and Youth played to a number of interesting strengths of staff who wanted to launch new programmes and themselves teach both on undergraduate programmes and also on PGCE. We had, for example, quite a strong group of Early Years specialists who were increasingly interested in childhood as an area of study to complement primary settings in the other sense. And also we had a number of staff who'd done work in the area of youth, adolescence and the sort of PSHE elements of the secondary curriculum, who were attracted to a more multi-disciplinary programme within which to teach. And the ultimate decision was to see if the two markets could be nurtured in parallel (SM8:10).

Again, the emphasis is on the market, although there is an acknowledgement here of the contingency of what staff were interested in, or able to teach. Another factor is the entry qualifications of students, a high priority for the institution in its reputational priorities:

.... they'd be looking for us to create – and this is quite controversial amongst colleagues – an A-Level threshold which *speaks quality*. So at the moment, the talk of getting above three Bs will be probably our current discourse (SM8:26).

There is, though, s/he suggests, resistance to this among colleagues in the School:

Colleagues in the school aren't very happy with that who feel: a. it makes too many assumptions about the origins from which students come, ie traditional sixth-form A-Level environments, and b. they don't regard A-Level thresholds as proxy of potential; whereas the (institution) is very keen on it for benchmarking purposes and league-table purposes (SM8:26).

However, raising the entry profile has been set out as a strong agenda for the Subject Leaders after the first Education Studies cohort was taken from clearing in 2002:

Well (Name of first Subject Leader) took them all off clearing the first year. The second year, I think it was three Cs and then we still had to go through clearing. Last year we didn't have to go through clearing we just took them, and this year for September we've asked for BBB to BCC, but we have looked at borderlines CCCs. And if they've shown a particular interest in the subject area then we've considered them.

We're hoping to bump it up every year. The (institution)'s told us the aim is straight A students (SL8A:80-82).

The Childhood and Youth Studies Subject Leader notes the tension between recruiting high numbers for financial purposes and the move towards higher entry requirements:

Yes. I mean, there is a tension because, erm.... you know, the required grades are lower than much of the rest of the (institution) and that's an issue and we're trying to creep them up every year (SL8B:20).

A point which is not clear in all the interviews is the precise origin of the subject: whether it was an institutional management decision to originate Education Studies, or whether it was at the initiative of the first Subject Leader. The Senior Manager states:

.... (Name of first Subject Leader) was asked by the Head of School at the time, probably in 2001, to put together the original curriculum framework for the Ed Studies programme. So he was developing that ahead of the launch of that in 2002 and three other separate colleagues formed a small working group to develop the curriculum for Childhood and Youth Studies. One was an Early Years specialist, one was a primary specialist and one was an educational psychologist (SM8:14).

But uncertainty about this is expressed by the Childhood and Youth Studies Subject Leader:

...when (Name of first Subject Leader) came he started up the Ed Studies, or s/he was brought in with that in mind, I'm not quite sure which way round it was (SL8A:2).

The overall picture, then is of strong direction from the institution management to create Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies as profit-making provision, but to convert it from the perception of a low-status 'new university' subject into a high reputational one with high entry qualifications, taught by research active staff. The following section shows how these priorities determine the actual content of the subjects.

### **The theoretical framework and curriculum content**

While the Senior Manager has a strong managerial theory for Education Studies, his academic rationale is much less confident. It is interesting that he does articulate the duality of rationale. Asked about his view of the theoretical framework for Education Studies s/he replies:

Well, I've got two..... You want the academic view as opposed to the sort of academic manager's view? (SM8:16).

When asked for both, s/he begins with the managerial one because:

The academic manager one is more on the surface of my mind.... (SM8:18)

And s/he details the financial and staffing priorities described above. When pressed for the academic framework, however, s/he admits that this has not been properly articulated and suggests that it is a matter of standards rather than content. S/he derides content as 'a bit of this and a bit of that'. In other words, the curriculum is less important than the entry qualifications and the student performance:

There hasn't been in the School extensive debate collegially about what this curriculum should characterise and you could argue that's either a sort of, erm, a timid stance which is betraying a lack of confidence about what it should display, or I think probably accurately a sort of pragmatic stance that we had to get a programme up and running fairly quickly and we will draw down the teaching that's available to teach it. I'm speaking quite frankly, obviously. And, therefore, the question I'm addressing now in thinking about the next five years is still really focussed on a collegial agreement about high standards.... high-calibre students and stretching demanding teaching. And that is very much the frame of discussion, *not* we must have a bit of that and a bit of that and a bit of that (SM8:36).

Pressed harder for a characterisation of Education Studies s/he suggests that the theory does not yet exist:

From an academic point of view that's an interesting question. I haven't yet looked carefully at the curriculum offerings – and probably you have more than I have – of what other programmes are doing.... (SM8:18).

and

Well, I think what I'm saying probably by implication is that that is the question that is up for grabs... (SM8:38).

S/he acknowledges that there was uncertainty about the target population:

And the first question for us in thinking about what shall we provide in relation to who do we think will turn up was to try to understand who we did think *would* turn up. Who would theses eighteen year-olds, or twenty-three year-olds, or even fort-five year-olds, be. And I don't know whether this chimes with other experience, but I don't think we knew until late on in the first recruitment round just what population would emerge. And, indeed, I think some of the people, it seems to me talking to the student group in the first year, they turned up quite accidentally; there were a couple of far-eastern overseas undergraduates who seemed to me to have just wandered in. It wasn't clear to me why they wanted to follow this programme of study at all (SM8:22).

And the programme was put together very quickly:

... it was in a great hurry, and the quota-release issue I discussed a minute ago were made late in the day, well after it was possible to advertise in UCAS. The decision-making in the (institution) was, do we want the School to have this quota and can they recruit through late advertising and clearing, just to get going, a plausible and credible cohort? So you could argue from that point of view it was highly reactive and opportunistic. And now, three years later, we're still – I mean we might be in the early stages of understanding the student market that we really want to reach (SM8:24).

The Head of School suggests that this contingent approach to the Education Studies curriculum is likely to continue in that the institution's priority in appointing staff is to appoint high calibre academics regardless of what they can teach:

And so to some extent I think we have not had an ideal model of the curriculum because some of the drivers in the (institution) – well a lot of the drivers in the (institution) – are around your job is to get really high-calibre academics in and then we'll work out what we want to teach (SM8:30).

The contingent nature of the first Education Studies programme is emphasised when he admits that the academic content was determined by what colleagues were able to teach:

... to be quite frank I would say that what we came up with was part-opportunistic: it was part about what we could teach at the time and part a groping towards a new model of foundation studies for the field (SM8:18)

This is confirmed by the Subject Leader who describes the process undertaken by his/her predecessor:

Basically, it was really led by (Name of first subject Leader). When he arrived at the (institution) I think it was part of a discussion – although I may be wrong – that he wanted to set up an Education Studies degree. So he actually talked to staff at the School of Education and found people that felt that they could contribute to an Education Studies degree. And I think to start with it was very

much of a hotch-potch actually in the first year, because he was literally drawing on what people's strengths were, rather than – and this sounds critical – rather than actually having a plan for the actual shape of it. My impression is that it was, well what can people do, well let's have a module on it. That's how it started (SL8A:2)

S/he suggests that the content of the modules was very much determined by this individual's interests:

ED1001 .... was (Name of first Subject Leader)'s Contemporary Policies and Issues and that was very much based on his *own* work in Education on School Effectiveness; he drew a lot on that and he examined the New Labour Government's policies since 1997 (SL8A:6).

I think that what's happened is that we've probably got.... I think it's become more coherent. It was very much based in the first place on the individual coming in and doing the odd session, and I do think it lacked coherence, or any real idea of a theoretical framework. I do think that's being.... erm, we're nearer to that... than we were, but there's probably still a way to go (SL8A:10).

And s/he is open in her admission that there is no proper theoretical framework. S/he reaches for the subject disciplines as a possibility, but this is not yet coherent:

I think we're still grapp... struggling with that. I mean, we want to have, sort of, the sociological discipline in there somewhere; we want to have the psychological; we're also interested in the political aspect of it. So we've got various strands which I would say are now more representative than they used to be, or at least we're more aware of what they should be: we have a better idea of what we're doing; we're not just doing the odd topic. But it's something that, in our Review and Development meetings from September, we're going to be addressing, so that we can look at it again from 2006. We've got so much change in the School of Education at the moment that we're just having to survive into 2005/6, but we will be looking at the coherence of the degree programme over next year.... (SL8A:14).

The new team under her leadership is revising the content to be less idiosyncratic and to offer a more coherent academic framework. There is a detailed articulation of the thinking in the following:

.... we're actually going to give the students a broader foundation, and understanding, certainly at a superficial level because it's Year 1, *of* the different sectors and what the key policy issues have been right across the board from Early Years through to Lifelong Learning. And so the first semester will look at the different phases of education and what have been the key policy issues, and the seminars will pick up an issue and get the students to talk about it and think about, Has it been effective? What sort of factors have been influencing that policy being made? And so on. But that's at a fairly superficial level for Year 1. And then in semester 2 we're going to look at, if you like, cross-phase issues or different sorts of issues. So faith schooling, sex



education, citizenship, race and gender. So we're going to give a really brush stroke as a foundation, because we felt that that was missing in Year 1. Another module is Educational Change and Continuity and that will actually go up from looking back at educational philosophies as far back as Plato, which it has done, and it will go up to 1997. That module has been evolved over the last three years. It's changed every year, depending on student feedback and it started off – because it was in a sense put together in a somewhat *ad hoc* way to start with – it had loads of inputs from all sorts of different people. Student evaluations *were* that there was a lack of coherence. They couldn't see where the common themes were; you know, they didn't know what the theoretical framework was; and that's now run by one individual who's actually doing it from a historical enquiry perspective; so it comes from a different dimension. Then we've got Learning from Learning, which is a more psychologically based module, and, erm, that stays the same for the three years. And we've got New Technologies of Learning which, as (Name of Head of Department of Undergraduate Study) will have explained, looks at the way in which ICT is now affecting the ways people learn, and that's also evolved over three years. Every year we're constantly looking to improve the modules. So the subject areas have stayed roughly the same – the topics covered – but the modes of teaching, the staff teaching have changed over the last three years, since the Ed Studies course started.

What is interesting here is that s/he is able to articulate a coherent structure for the programme in terms of the content, which she sees as structured through themes, or threads:

Making threads through..... because we do have a feeling that some of our Year 2 modules, again, are well, what do staff fancy teaching? And we've put them in there. And we are trying to get more coherence in Year 2, Level 2 modules, as well (SL8A:22).

However, she is unable to articulate an overall theoretical framework:

It is, definitely working towards it. I wouldn't say we've got one yet, no. And you picked that up in the CAYS Programme (Childhood and Youth Studies) when you externally examined..... and I would say exactly the same is true of Ed Studies (SL8A:24).

And there are as yet no specified aims for the programme. In fact, in the prospectus under 'Aim' it is stated for both programmes simply that 'information is to follow'. Asked about the aims s/he replies:

Yes, that's a very interesting one, because it should be in the prospectus (laughs).... Erm, how do we express them? I think it was something that was quite interesting, I discussed with my module coordinator in Year 1, because I haven't taught in Year 1 before; I've only taught Year 2 and Year 3, and I don't actually think that at any point at the moment at the beginning we set out the aims of the degree programme, I really don't. And it was interesting listening to Steve (Bartlett) talk about why we have Education Studies (at the BESA conference earlier in the day) and we don't actually make that explicit

to the students enough. We need to have that in at the beginning. So it's something else we need to bring in (laughs). We tend to plunge straight in.... (SL8A:46).

A significant point is his/her interest in a paper at the BESA Conference which outlined the aims for non-teacher training Education Studies. It reveals that s/he had been no involved in no previous discussion of the aims of the subject and its nature in other institutions:

And that's the point about coming to this (the BESA Conference) to find out what other people are doing. And actually talking to people we seem to be doing roughly what other people are doing (SL8A:94).

It does seem an unusual notion that the aims for a programme should be derived after running it for three years:

I wasn't involved with the programme right at the beginning – certainly we haven't actually sat down and articulated what we think our aims for the programme are in the last year or two. And I think that maybe we've got to the point where it's time to do that (SL8A:50).

The Subject Leader for Childhood and Youth Studies is similarly uncertain about the aims for the programme:

(Hesitant) Yes..... there is still the idea... when we present to them – I mean it might be interesting for you to come in and hear the blurb given to parents, erm, the kind of front-line version (laughs). When we talk to them we say you could go into teaching from Childhood and Youth, but only at primary level, of course, because you haven't got a subject. But it's also intended for this broader range of roles which there are. But equally people might just be interested in doing it out of academic interest and then...(SL8B:6)

However, whereas Education Studies seems to have developed without any reference to the national picture for the subject, there does appear to have been some discussion of the form of Childhood and Youth Studies by noting the provision in other institutions and making it distinctive from those. Again, the subject was initiated by an individual:

The first idea was to do Early Childhood Studies because a particular person, (Tutor name) who was going to start up the programme is an Early Childhood specialist. And then in doing her research and looking round the country and looking what else is being offered and thinking about it more, she settled more on the idea of Childhood and Youth as being perhaps less narrow than Childhood Studies and that was to do with what I think is being offered.... I think (another local institution) have a big Childhood Studies.... (SL8B:4)

....also there was the recognition that jobs are broadening, working with children are broadening so that you get a whole range of different professional roles working with young people and children that are beyond education; so the degree could cater for those. So not just social work, but museum

educators, play leaders, family workers..... all that sort of range of different roles, particularly in Early Years, it has to be said, but increasingly so across the range, youth workers and so on, and that the degree would somehow fit in with that. So it has got a vocational direction (SL8B:6).

So there is some articulation of aims in terms of vocational outcomes. There is also an initial notion of 'creativity' as an organising mechanism, although this has been found to be unsuitable in practice in that it makes the focus on childhood and youth too diffuse:

Well I suppose one of its distinctive features *was* that it was going to have this strand of creativity, but that's the bit that really hasn't worked, and that's why we're changing it: that it was trying to pick up people who had arts A Levels and then give them a broader focus with the view that there are so many jobs now in arts education and museum education and so on. But that really hasn't quite worked because it's looking back at creativity and it's looking back at learning and not focussed on Childhood and Youth (SL8B:24).

In fact, the original proposal based on creativity had been criticised by a reviewer for being lacking academic coherence, again, simply what the team could teach:

I have to confess I think it was partly just because of the team of people who got together. What does make interesting reading and what I do believe was the original comments from when it was sent out as a programme to be reviewed by expert reviewers and one of the rather perceptive comments from (Name of external consultant) was, is this just what people could offer, or is it really a coherently thought-out programme and I do think looking at that it was basically put together with what those.... with what that team could do and thought would be interesting to do, rather than a very well thought-out overall framework. And in a sense what we're trying to do is to put that framework back in retrospectively in conversation with one another (SL8B:26).

### **Role of the foundation disciplines**

This is a case where the role of the disciplines is seen as a way of strengthening the academic framework of both programmes, although they are not clearly articulated in the courses as initially taught. The Senior Manager intimates that his/her view of Education Studies is a disciplinary one:

I thought it was attractive from a labour-market point of view to offer something that was more multi-disciplinary, but in an Education School-environment..... I've been quite struck in passing that when Geoff Whitty came into his Directorship at the London Institute he had deliberately re-instituted a school called 'Educational Foundations and Disciplines', I think it was called, which was around a very traditional model of the Philosophy..... It had Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economics.... and the label was 'Foundations'. And I also noticed from reading recent journal reviews that that term speaks quite strongly in America still, the foundations of Education is a sub-specialism which academics understand the label of and it speaks to, I think, applying disciplinary understandings into the practical setting of

Education.... in action (SM8:18).

And he sees the disciplines in the traditional teacher-training terms:

.... what was called widely in British teacher training 'the Foundation Disciplines', in the 60s and 70s which, as you'll know, Hirst himself prosecuted in the early 60s (SM8:20).

This approach is drawn from perceptions of the role of the disciplines through his own research, but it is also a priority of the institution to Education Studies as a Social Sciences programme with highly qualified entrants. It appears that basing the new subjects upon the Social Science disciplines would be seen as a means of attracting highly qualified students and raising its academic profile:

The (institution) wanted a strong social-science degree, so they'd be looking for us to create.... an A-Level threshold which *speaks quality*. So at the moment, the talk of getting above three Bs will be probably our current discourse (SM8:26).

However, when pressed as to whether the 'Social Sciences' model entails a heavy reliance on the foundation disciplines, he returns to the account of the contingent origins of the programme, and admits that the disciplines are in fact not strongly represented.

Well I will say that I think what we have provided was more opportunistic than that. It was partly what we were equipped to teach, but there was a diffuse, I think, and general view that the Level 1 provision should be based around broad themes and.... wide perspectives; I'd put it as loosely as that. So we didn't have epistemological assumptions, for example, that there must be certain kind of disciplinary orientations, or that the first year was designed deliberately and consciously to inculcate in the students an understanding of the field into which they had entered, because I think we felt the field was only at an emergent stage and we regarded, probably for convenience, all programmes as in their early stage of development elsewhere in the country and the programmes were by no means near maturity. That will harden.... (SM8:30)

The disciplines will appear in the programme with the appointment of new staff:

Some of our options will both, in a sense, open and close as we make our first set of appointments against specifically teaching predominantly in this programme.

As noted above, the Education Studies Subject Leader is uncertain about the role of the subject disciplines;

I think we're still grapp... struggling with that. I mean, we want to have, sort of, the sociological discipline in there somewhere; we want to have the psychological (SL8A:14)

Well, they're not very strong. I mean, Psychology is probably the strongest discipline that runs through. Erm.... we don't really do much on Philosophy at all; that really just comes up in the Year 1 module when they.... (SL8A:16).

Sociology comes up I would say in a rather *ad hoc* way in different sorts of modules. But, again, this is something I'm not sure we're providing the students with a clear pathway through sociological theory, and I think we need to (SL8A:18).

Again, this is because, while there are some Psychologists, there is no one with a strong Sociological background:

Erm, I think the Psychology is, because the tutors feel confident. (Tutor name) taught Psychology and (Tutor name) is quite strong on that side of things as well. So, yes, I would say so. On the Sociological side of it, no, I suspect that staff are just drawing on their own bits of knowledge (SM8A:38).

..... I mean really what we could do with, we ought to talk to our Sociology Department and say, is there anyone there who would like to come down and have an input (SL8A:30).

The disciplines are not strongly evident to the students; there is only a limited critique of Psychology:

Yes, I would say that comes up. It's not necessarily dealt with in a holistic way. It will be in Phil's modules; it will also come up in other aspects of their work. So, for example, in dissertations students have looked at things like models of behaviour management and Skinner, and various things to do with that. So it comes up there and there'll be input from their personal supervisors on their dissertations at that sort of level (SL8A:44).

It is interesting, then, that, despite the institution's priorities for the subject, Education Studies appears not at present to be developing as an explicitly Social Sciences model without the introduction of new staff.

The development of the CAYS programme is seen through strengthening the disciplines, including law:

Well, the Year 1 modules now, one is going to be a Psychology bias, one is going to be a Sociology bias. Theorising Childhood and Youth is the Sociology one and Identity, or whatever it's called, is the more Psychology one. There's going to be a policy one which is Policy and Law. We've bought in... we're buying in somebody who's got an expertise in childhood law and policy, both national and international (SL8B:28).

There is a perception of a discipline-based approach to Childhood Studies:

Yes, very much taking the new Social Studies of Childhood: that whole field, that perspective...

It is not perceived as traditional Psychology, although the differences are not explained:

.... yes, the Psychology, but shifting that and not doing too much traditional Psychology (SL:8B:30).

This Subject Leader sees the disciplines as a framework which is to be developed in the subject:

Well I think that's been one of the problems of it is that it's not quite clear its disciplinary background, and the conversations that we have as a team - or rather tend to have over coffee you know in the staff room – are, well, does it have enough of that, the disciplinary background? I mean, equally, I think the inter-disciplinarity, the using ideas from anthropology, from Sociology, Psychology, from Cultural Studies or wherever – Media Studies is quite a strong component in it – that's the way that programmes are going to move, and that's really the way the thinking's moving in Childhood Studies (SL8B:32).

And s/he seems to regard the disciplines as a necessary academic framework to their thinking:

So it's trying to do that, but I think you can leave the students wobbling about too much without any real grounding. So we're trying to provide some grounding in the first year to which they can then refer back, and we have those strands coming through quite strongly, but then more of a variety (SL8B:32).

However, s/he is uncertain how explicit the disciplines are to the students:

I think they're not, and the interesting question is whether we should be flagging those up for them so that they have a sense that they're coming from a disciplinary background. I don't know, and that's one of the things we might.....(SL8B:34).

.... what we've found, I think, is that all the slightly kind of more contemporary ideas, like identity, constructions of childhood, representations of children in the media and so on, those can tend to occur in a soft and slightly woolly way in too many of the programmes if you're not careful and that we need to make sure the students are getting some solid input that isn't becoming too similar, particularly with the option modules, I think. So that's part of what our review and development processes are about (SL8B:36).

S/he is clear, though, about the need to use the disciplines as a signal of academic strength:

.... there's a feeling, you know, that this has got to be a bit more academic, and what interests me having coming from outside is that (Name of institution) looks at its neighbours and thinks, well, we have to do something that's a bit more academic than Rolle College and Plymouth and..... So there is a feeling that it's got to have some academic clout (SL8B:36).

So, while both subjects acknowledge the importance of the disciplines as an academic framework, it is Childhood and Youth Studies that has the strongest commitment, while Education Studies awaits the arrival of new staff before there can be a proper sociological input.

### **Relationship to teacher training**

Despite the facts that the existence of Education Studies is to give budgetary support to the institution's PGCE teacher training programme, and that many staff teach on both Education Studies, Childhood and Youth Studies and the PGCE, there is a lack of clear linkage between the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Asked about such links the Senior Manager replies

We've always said that you would have to compete with all other applicants to your programme, so there's no assumption that there's an ensured progression (SM8:52).

And asked whether it was ever seen as a three-plus-one programme s/he replies

No, absolutely not (SM:8:54).

It appears that the original thinking was not quite as clear as this, though. Initially, Education Studies students were offered a guaranteed interview for the PGCE, although this has recently been discontinued:

They have until now given a guaranteed interview and that was because the first year group was only 34 and it was thought, well that's not going to be a great number to guarantee an interview to. But it was raised at our Standing Committee meeting yesterday afternoon by the PGCE Primary Humanities Coordinator that she felt no longer able to guarantee an interview because it's so over-subscribed at (Name of institution) and if we have a cohort of 50, and say they all want to do Humanities, it's too much time and they know they're not going to be able to give them a place, so.... (SL8A:70).

Also the original Subject Leader had suggested to students that they would have a guaranteed place on the Primary PGCE:

I mean, (Name of first Subject Leader) sort of, almost promised them that they'd get a place on the PGCE, the first cohort... And he hadn't, I think, formally discussed it with PGCE tutors. Well (Name of first Subject Leader)'s quite like that. (SL8A:74-6).

So the original thinking had been for there to be a strong link, but they have progressively separated and the thinking about students' progression does seem confused. When it was suggested that students might want to come to do Education Studies at the institution with a view to progressing to teacher training she resists the idea, suggesting that intending teachers would do an undergraduate QTS course at a local institution:

No.... because we don't guarantee them a place on our PGCE; we don't even guarantee them an interview in the future on it. So there's no guarantee that they can get on our PGCE course. And also we've got (Name of nearby institution) just down the road that offers a four-year undergrad and actually who have a good reputation locally amongst the schools, so it would be considered to be a good alternative. I mean maybe it doesn't have quite the reputation of (Name of institution), but it actually seems quite a good provider.....

The Subject Leader explains that they have wrongly been advising students that they could not progress to secondary teacher training:

... if they come on our Ed Studies course they won't be able to do PGCE secondary. Now, I've discovered – and we may be wrong on that – they couldn't do PGCE secondary at (Name of institution), because our PGCE admissions tutors on secondary will only take students who have done a main subject like History or Geography.... So we've been giving out perhaps the wrong message, because I've discovered from talking to colleagues here (from other institutions at the BESA Conference) that their PGCE courses will take them if they've majored. Now, because we have the opportunity to give our students modular degrees we could have some of our students do 120 credits in History or something, and it may be that another PGCE course would take them at secondary. So I need to re-visit that.

However, she is uncertain of the number who are progressing to teacher training and she realises that this might be useful information:

What would have been interesting, and I think we need to do this as well – another thing I've been thinking about today – is we need questionnaire our students as they come in and ask them what their intentions are, and then find out how many actually do it (SL8A:56).

In Childhood and Youth Studies the Subject Leader suggests that the students taking the subject would be the ones who would to undergraduate teacher training:

It appeals to the same groups of students who would have a come in on BA QTS; it appeals to those same groups of students (SL:8B:88).

Yet she professes no idea of whether students might progress to teaching:

Oh, I don't know; we don't ask them that (SL8B:100)

And suggests that they have other career ambitions:

They're talking about things like going into the police and being, what do you call, paediatric policing. There's one going into the police, there's certainly one who's interested in youth work.... (SL8B:102)

The lack of a clear policy, or even data, about Education Studies students' likely progression to teacher training reflects the Senior Manager's original statement that



s/he did not know what the market would be and where the students would come from nor their career destinations:

... we never built in systematically and sort of with great prior thought any assumptions about student destinations (SM8:26).

It also is a function of the lack of a discussion of aims for the programme and is an interesting case of staff who are mostly drawn originally from teacher training, but seeing the programme as an alternative to teacher training, rather than as a precursor to it.

## Staffing

As noted above, staffing is a key factor in the School of Education's overall strategy for development. One of the perennial difficulties for universities is the deployment of teacher-training staff who are able to sustain sufficient academic study and research output. Another perceived problem is the age of staff in the professional training area, with an average age of 54. A part of the rationale for Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies is to have subjects which will, unlike teacher training, be consistent with a strong research profile. It allows the employment of young research-active staff who will 'look like the kind of academics that you find around the rest of the (institution)' (SM8:44). The strategy has generated the policy of a major staff redundancy programme in which the less research-active staff are replaced by new staff who can fill the academic and research requirements.

The need for such staff over-rides the curriculum considerations, such that the policy is to appoint staff for their academic and research strengths:

.... we have not had an ideal model of the curriculum because some of the drivers in the (institution) – well a lot of the drivers in the (institution) – are around your job is to get really high-calibre academics in and then we'll work out what we want to teach (SM8:30).

This might, then, be said to be a classic case of the institution which will subordinate the priority of the coherence of the subject curriculum to institutional demand for research and academic quality.

It is interesting, though, that, while subject teams are being created for Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies, the teaching is not exclusively in the teams and there is teaching across both subjects and the PGCE courses. Even the Education Studies Subject Leader supervises PGCE students in schools:

I teach Ed Studies only, but I do have some input on PGCEs because I go and supervise them out in school. I would say quite a lot of the Ed Studies staff... (SL8A:120).

And the cross-teaching is seen as a strength in for the students and staff:

My impression is actually I think they do like it; they like the variety. And I think also – I know we don't want our Ed Studies course as a pathway directly

into PGCE – but it does help if you have people who are still at the chalk face, if you like, by being out in schools all the time. But even those of us that aren't doing PGCE, because we do a lot of research in schools, we still have good knowledge (SL8A:124).

One of the questions about the programme is why it is split into the separate subjects of Education Studies and Childhood and Youth Studies. The Subject Leader for Childhood and Youth Studies explains division as staffing 'factions':

I think it's... At the moment it's... historical, because of the two different factions. I mean, you know, (Name of institution) has a lot of factions; it's quite surprising. So it was one faction setting up its own thing, as simple as that. And I've never come across anything quite like that in previous institutions. So you'll have to edit that out, but I think it was literally it was two groups doing their own thing and not coordinated in its inception. So that's partly a management thing when it was set up. And so there.... It's a historical background being distinctive and the fact that there's now a small team who find their sense of identity by being the CAYS tutors and are quite keen to preserve that. But whether it's viable to keep it separate, or to become a whole integrated programme.... (SL8B:92).

However, s/he does note some advantages to the separate teams and subjects:

I think they feel a strong sense of identity and I think that.... and an enthusiasm and interest in what they're doing, and I think that can have advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages are you tend to get a bit in-house and inward.... (SL8B:94).

One effect of the staff profile on the curriculum is the strength of the research activity for students:

I do a module which is called 'Evaluating the Curriculum' where I take my module group into a local secondary school, as a group. We negotiate with the school a focus for a research project and then the students..... the ownership of the research methodology is left up to my group of students under my direction and they will go and they will do questionnaires, interviews with students. They might do questionnaires with parents, interviews with teachers, whatever. And then the outcome of that is a written report which would actually, if the school had to pay for it, would probably cost them about £10,000. They get a written report which they then use for their in-service training, or whatever, or they flash at Ofsted when they come. And so... but that's something that I've built up by doing research myself previously in schools. And that happens with lots of our staff: because we're working in schools doing our own research we have these networks (SL8A:110).

Another interesting point is made by the Subject Leader for Childhood and Youth Studies who speaks of becoming disaffected with teacher training and the way his/her new subject role has provided a career direction:

And I'm not fond of all the endless paperwork that there is, and to be honest I tend to do it rather quickly and not always..... I felt I just was no longer.... I felt that I was teaching very differently. The first five or six years I could teach with the resonance in my head of what it was all going on and what you'd done in the classroom, and that lasted five or six years. Another five years and I was just telling stories of what it had been and beginning to say to students, look I haven't done it for a long time and... I knew I had a different kind of expertise to offer students in that I knew how to manage student groups well, I knew how to work with students, how to teach students. But it really got to the point where I thought, I'm not enjoying this any more because I don't feel that I'm talking about something that I know about..... And I mean, re-configuring yourself... re-inventing yourself on another thing is quite a challenge (SL8B:80-4).

S/he goes on to admit that the subject is a matter is enjoyed by the students, but derived from his/her own interests, a mutual self-indulgence:

And the cohort of CAYS students we've got this year have said they find it just totally fascinating; they're loving it, and that's not just because.... I don't think they're just well-brought-up girls who feel the need to say that. You know, they'll write that they've been fascinated by it and I think it's because it's grounded, but it's also theoretical. It's trying to always span that recollection of their own experiences and theory, and draw it into the.... But I'm sure it's..... it's me indulging myself (SL8B:88).

## Conclusion

This is a strong example of the subject being driven by a market-sensitive institution, and an institution which sees its mission in reputational terms. Those are defined in three dimensions: the entry qualifications entry students, the staff research profile and high-status teacher training. The existence of Education Studies is seen exclusively as a means of strengthening the budget in the School of Education to subsidise teacher training and to attract research-active staff. The direction being taken of a strong disciplinary framework itself is determined by the need to attract academically strong students and to increase the academic status of the subject within the institution. The potentially strong links with the Postgraduate Primary and Secondary teacher training programmes are weakened of a staff perception of the nature of Education Studies as being an alternative to teacher training rather than as a possible precursor to it.