

**Perceptions of Masters level PGCE**

**A pilot investigation**

**The University of Cumbria and the ESCalate Initial Teacher  
Education Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy**

**Final report**

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## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

This report presents the findings of a pilot research investigation into perceptions of the provision of Masters level PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) in England and discusses the questions raised by the research. The research was undertaken during the academic year 2007-8 by the University of Cumbria with nine other participating Higher Education Institutions and was supported by the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET). The research was linked to the Initial Teacher Education section of the Education Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (ESCalate) based at the University of Cumbria. The decision to offer Masters level credits within the PGCE marks a significant step for the teaching profession, and the findings of the research are relevant to the following groups: teacher educators involved in presenting Masters level PGCE courses to student teachers; student teachers embarking on Masters level PGCE courses; teachers and headteachers in schools; government policy makers; and all agencies concerned with teacher training.

### **Methods**

Grounded Theory underpinned the research in that there was no initial expectation, but rather a blank canvass on which everyone involved in the research wrote. The research was carried out using quantitative and qualitative methods; a survey produced and read by an Optical Mark Reader and semi-structured interviews. Respondents to the survey were from the following communities of practice: M level PGCE students, headteachers, school mentors and teacher educators. There were two student surveys, one in the autumn of 2007 and one in summer 2008. Participants for the interviews were volunteers from the survey respondents. The data was analysed using Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods which involved teacher educators only.

### **Main findings**

The main findings of the research are:

*The perceptions of students at the beginning of their Masters level PGCE course in autumn 2007 were:*

1. Masters level is important in addition to QTS;
2. Masters will contribute to their teaching;
3. Theory will contribute positively to the practice of teaching;
4. There is little real knowledge of what Masters is.
5. Masters level credits will enhance their prospects of getting a job as a teacher.

*The perceptions of students at the end of their Masters level PGCE course in summer 2008 were:*

1. Masters means such things as reading, conducting small scale research, linking theory to practice and critical reflection.
2. There is little clarity about what Masters is.
3. Approximately three quarters of survey respondents would consider pursuing Masters study in the future.
4. The pressures on students of the short PGCE course are so great that it would be later in their career that teachers would return to Masters study once they were established in the profession.
5. Masters was valued a little more at the end of the course than at the beginning.
6. There was no significant problem caused by different subject specialisms.
7. As they started the course, students considered that the linking of theory and practice was beneficial, but by the time they reached the end of the course, there was a suggestion that the reality had not lived up to their expectations.
8. Only 30% of students at the end of the course thought that Masters was beneficial in the job market.
9. Interview participants in the research showed began gradually to give positive perceptions about Masters level despite initial negative feedback – they had found aspects of the work enjoyable and valuable.

*The perceptions of headteachers in summer 2008 were:*

1. There is a limited idea of what Masters is amongst headteachers.
2. Opinions were split as to whether Masters would be beneficial to the teaching profession and 'time would tell'. However there was a strong negative response from interview participants regarding the value.
3. Masters level credits from the PGCE would not affect choice of candidates for jobs, but there was a hint that this may change in the future.
4. There was a split of opinion regarding what students who had studied at Masters level would bring to the classroom in terms of children's learning, the application of theory, etc. However there was evidence to suggest that greater ability to reflect on practice was perceived as an advantage.
5. It is not necessary for all teachers to have a Masters.

*The perceptions of teacher mentors in summer 2008 were:*

1. Opinions were split as to whether the Higher Education Institution had supported them with preparations for Masters level students but there was very little evidence of a great deal of help.
2. With one exception no interview participants thought that their role had changed since the introduction of Masters level PGCE for students.
3. Students had not changed significantly – it very much, as it always had, depended on the student.
4. The effect of Masters on students' engagement with children's learning, reflection, the application of theory etc. tended toward negative perceptions; there had been little positive effect.

5. It is not necessary for all teachers to have a Masters.
  6. The push towards an all Masters profession may cause demoralisation.
- The perceptions of teacher educators in autumn 2007 were:*
1. It is important that teacher educators have a Masters in order to teach the students at M level.
  2. There had not been adequate preparation before Masters was introduced, but over time this was improving.
  3. In training there tended to be a focus on assessment of Masters rather than teaching of Masters.
  4. 'Time will tell' regarding the value of Masters for the teaching profession.
  5. There have always been students more able to connect with Masters type work.
  6. It is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the effect of Masters in the classroom or in the profession.

*The perceptions of teacher educators in summer 2008 at the end of the course were:*

1. For students in the PGCE year, learning the trade is more important than Masters study.
2. Masters is not necessarily for all.
3. 'Time will tell'; a seed had been sown which might bear fruit.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The scale and scope of this study limited the extent of its findings and it was never intended to give definitive findings concerning the effectiveness of Masters level PGCE. The research has, however, been valuable in the following ways:

- The research has provoked debate amongst teacher educators;
- The research has raised many questions (see appendix xiv). This has been its fundamental and most significant outcome; it has kept the debate on Masters vibrant;
- The research, although originally focussed on M level PGCE has given rise to questions, perceptions and thoughts on the whole idea of teaching as a Masters profession and what that means and, specifically, the value and definition of Masters for the teaching profession.
- The research can suggest some recommendations for debate amongst all the communities – students, headteachers, teacher mentors, teacher educators, policy makers, parties with an interest in teacher education. These are laid out below.

### **List of recommendations:**

1. Prospective students of Masters level PGCE courses or other teacher education courses should be made more fully aware of what Masters study is and why it is presented to those intending to become teachers. This could be done through the prospectus and at base interview.

2. Attention should be paid at all levels to ensuring a link between Masters and classroom practice in order to dispel the perception that Masters is an unrelated adjunct.
3. In order for Masters to be meaningful in the job market, headteachers, school mentors and all teachers need to value it; this to be developed through closer working between trainers in schools and HEIs or other teacher education providers.
4. The initial enthusiasm of student teachers for Masters and their trust in its benefit should be encouraged by greater collaboration between training providers and policy makers.
5. Policy makers should re-visit, in collaboration with all providers of teacher training two fundamental aspects of 'Teaching – a Masters profession'; the best time for teachers to undertake Masters study, and its suitability for all.
6. Acceptance of the theory that 'time will tell' is wise, but it is imperative to act now for the present student teachers and children and young people in schools.
7. Realise that 'seed is sown which could bear fruit' and explore the meaning of this for the future of Masters study in teacher training.
8. Through the strength of the English partnership between schools and teacher training providers, develop greater 'joined-up thinking about Masters.
9. Be sure of why we are doing it and its value.
10. Measurement or evaluation of the success or otherwise of Masters, however difficult must be made at every level; be sure of what we are doing, why we are doing it and its value to the profession and children and young people.
11. Ask the Newly Qualified Teachers whether the 'seed that was sown' has borne fruit. (NB this research project does intend to send a survey to volunteers from the cohort of the students in this research. This will be in spring, 2009.)
12. Continue the debate on 'Teaching – a Masters profession'.

# FULL RESEARCH REPORT

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the research

1.1.1 In 1999 the Bologna Declaration on the European space for Higher Education was signed by 29 countries, including the UK. The countries pledged to reform their Higher Education systems in a convergent way and, significantly, it was stated that there should be 'adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years ... The second cycle should lead to the masters and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries' (Bologna Agreement, 1999:8). Following this, the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ, 2001) stated that any postgraduate award must show evidence of study at Masters level. This created a dilemma for those offering the qualification of PGCE for graduates wishing to train to be teachers in England; this acronym stood for Postgraduate and yet had no Masters level components. There was concern that the removal of the 'postgraduate' status from one of the main teaching qualifications would undermine the professionalism of not only teacher education, but, in many ways, of the teaching profession itself. A joint statement put out for use by Universities UK (UUK), the Quality Assurance Association (QAA), the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) set out the options available (ESCalate, 2007); Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) could offer a Professional Graduate Certificate of Education at Honours level (PGCE/H) or a Postgraduate Certificate of Education which contained some Masters level credits (PGCE/M).

1.1.2 In recent years there has been much debate concerning the professionalism of teachers and the perceived erosion of that professionalism due to competence-based training (Ball, 1999; Bottery and Wright, 2000; Ozga, 2000; Mahony and Hextall, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). Teachers in England, in the eyes of these commentators, have been de-professionalised by the perceived erosion of autonomy and the effects of globalisation and market forces which have stressed competitiveness, measurement, best practice and the intensive scrutiny of the workforce. This has been to the detriment, in their opinion, of teacher autonomy and critical reflection. However the new standards for classroom teachers (TDA, 2007:Q8 and C8) call for all teachers to: 'have a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation, being prepared to adapt their practice where benefits and improvements are identified'. There is also a push from government for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to be linked to performance management and also there is support for teachers as researchers. The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) suggests that teachers benefit from broader and deeper CPD that focuses on teacher individualism and career needs (GTCE, 2007). This encouragement to go beyond the competence model is mirrored in the FHEQ (2001) descriptor for Masters level which calls for 'a critical awareness

of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice'. Thus one could argue that there seems to be a fundamental link between the required professional attributes of teachers and the requirements of Masters level study.

1.1.3 The engagement with Masters level provision in the PGCE seems almost to have been founded on a technicality; that of correcting a misnomer which had been used without question for years and became apparent after the Bologna Declaration (1999). However, significantly, the Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures (DfCSF, 2007:4.24) states that, 'to help fulfil our high ambitions for all children, and to boost the status of teaching still further, we now want it to become a masters-level profession', indicating the government's intention to endorse the move to Masters level. The choice which HEIs have made to create the provision of Masters level credits in the PGCE constitutes a significant change for courses for student teachers. However with the range of influences and references to those who influence policy, there seems to be the assumption that all participants have the same shared understanding of what Masters level study means in terms of enhancing practice. This research explores whether or not this is the case.

1.1.4 ESCalate, the Education Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), at the University of Cumbria began in early 2007 to explore the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) sector's response to this. Two seminars with teacher educators from across more than 40 HEIs suggested that from September 2007 most HEIs would be offering the PGCE/M option in some form and that others would be following soon after. These seminars also highlighted the fact that teacher educators were feeling their way with Masters level provision and would welcome support from research. Therefore, ESCalate, in collaboration with the University of Cumbria, took the decision in 2007 to run a pilot research project on perceptions of Masters level PGCE.

1.1.5 The research has been conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Education at London University, the University of Southampton, Sheffield Hallam University, Edge Hill University, Huddersfield University, Liverpool John Moores University, Wolverhampton University, the University of Bedfordshire, the University of Worcester and the Maryvale Institute, and with the support of UCET. The range of institutions represented has given a wide range of data, as some institutions had already started Masters level provision, some were just starting and some did not start until January 2008. The institutions are also quite varied in size.

## **1.2 Research aims**

1.2.1 The aim of the pilot research was to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) provision in England during 2007-8, with the intention of investigating the value-added it brings to the teaching profession. For the purposes of the research 'value' and 'value-added' were defined as follows:



Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement.

<http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>

(accessed 17.7.07). In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits. It investigates attitudes and perceptions concerning the inclusion of Masters level elements in the PGCE course amongst four groups of participants; student teachers, school mentors of student teachers, headteachers and teacher educators.

1.2.2 As Masters level PGCE is very much in its infancy, there is very little research, if any, available at the moment. Teaching at Masters level is also under-researched<sup>1</sup>. This underlined the need for research engagement with this agenda.

### **1.3 Methodology**

1.3.1 The research was undertaken during the academic year 2007-8 by the University of Cumbria with nine other participating Higher Education Institutions and was supported by the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET). The research was linked to the Initial Teacher Education section of the Education Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (ESCalate) based at the University of Cumbria. It was funded by the University of Cumbria Research and Development Fund and UCET in 2007-8. Follow-up meetings and work were in the ESCalate ITE workplan.

1.3.2 The scope of the research project was that it was manageable within the funding and staff time available. This funding and staff time was limited for 2007-8, therefore the decision was taken to designate the research as a 'pilot' which might be followed up by the University of Cumbria, by ESCalate ITE, by other institutions taking the lead after 2007-8, or by a group comprising all of these elements.

1.3.3 The research project investigated attitudes and perceptions concerning the inclusion of Masters level elements in the PGCE course amongst four groups of participants; student teachers, school mentors of student teachers, headteachers and teacher educators. It involved Early Years, Primary and Secondary education.

1.3.4 The first part of the research project followed the Masters level PGCE cohort through the academic year September 2007 to June 2008. A survey will be sent to students who volunteered to give feedback when they are in their first teaching post. This report does not incorporate any data from this – it will be added as an appendix at a later date.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidenced by Tight M. (2007), University of Lancaster at C-Shen seminar held at the University of Cumbria, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007. One reference only cited: Knight, P. (1997) Masterclass, Continuum Internal Publishing Group.

1.3.5 As this project was a pilot study, it was decided to maximise diversity of data across HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) and programmes by gathering as much raw data as possible in the form of questionnaires from each of the groups of participants. Some semi-structured interviews with each group of participants were held in order to enrich the findings of the questionnaires. The research is based upon grounded theory techniques in order to ensure that there were no preconceived ideas determined in advance. It was therefore hoped that the theories, or more especially questions, which arose from the data collection 'are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). At each stage of the investigation, it has been important to guard against bias which might assume that Masters level training does add value and is beneficial; the findings might show that the situation is by no means black and white. The questionnaires were constructed for use with Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) and the results can show either the full data or answers from specific groups; for example one particular institution. The interviews have been recorded and transcribed and we have looked for recurring themes and deviant data. Full details of the purpose of the research were explained to all participants. Questionnaires were given to student teachers at the participating HEIs, making it clear to them that it was not compulsory to take part. For all other participants and all interviews, the sample was chosen by asking for volunteers.

1.3.6 The data was analysed using a basis of elements from Participatory Action Research (PAR), as described by Wadsworth (1998) and Horton and Freire (1990). This approach suggests that all relevant parties are engaged in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it. As the scope of the pilot is limited, teacher educators alone have been invited to do this at present, by means of presentations to colleagues from across the sector and group meetings with colleagues from the participating HEIs (see 1.3.7). At all these events, raw data has been presented and note taken of the ideas and reactions to the findings. The ESCalate network has been used to encourage all teacher educators from across the sector to participate in the analysis; to become co-researchers. This is looking forward in the pilot to possible subsequent research which would extend the PAR by involving student teachers and school mentors as co-researchers as well. As a pilot project, this research has limitations as it is deliberately taking broad brush strokes of what is happening in the ITE sector with regard to Masters level PGCE. It asks for perceptions, not truths, and it acknowledges that the questions it asks may well not be the questions that need to be answered. However, its strength lies in the unique and significant body of data which has been collected which encourages conversations about Masters level PGCE provision across the sector. The findings of the project may be used to inform a subsequent in-depth study of Masters level provision which would look to informing ITE practice in both schools and HEIs.

1.3.7 PAR meetings and dissemination to the teacher education community was as follows:

- 2007-8 Monthly meetings with University of Cumbria staff
- 11.07 Presentation at the UCET conference
- 30.1.08 Meeting at the Institute of Education (IOE) of colleagues from the contributing HEIs.
- 10.4.08 Presentation to the Education Faculty Away Day, University of Cumbria
- 18.4.08 Presentation to the TDA
- 8.5.08 Presentation to the TDA subject network
- 16.5.08 Display at the ESCalate ITE conference
- 5.6.08 Presentation at the UCET secondary committee discussion meeting
- 7.7.08 Meeting at the Institute of Education (IOE) of colleagues from the contributing HEIs.
- 4.9.08 Presentation at the BERA conference
- 4.10.08 Presentation at the Naptec conference
- 9.12.08 Meeting at the Institute of Education (IOE) of colleagues from the contributing HEIs.

## 2. Findings

Please note the following:

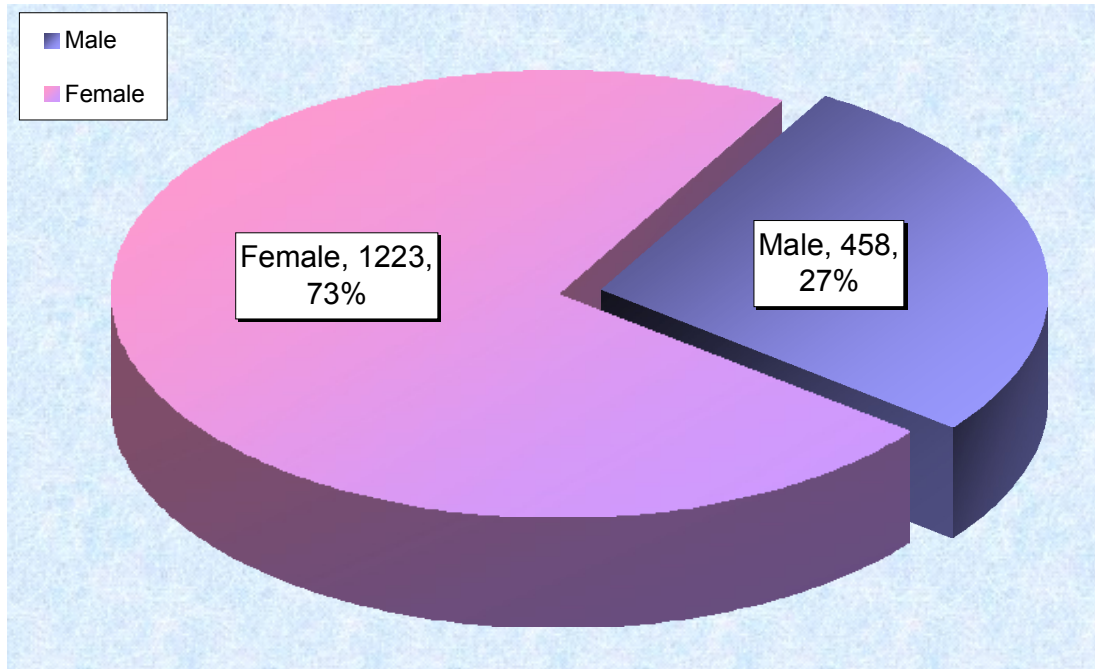
- In all the questionnaire bar charts, words have been added to aid the transmission of the data from the OMR reader – sic: Not at all / A little / Some / A great deal. On the surveys which went out to the respondents this was done numerically – sic: Not at all 1 2 3 4 A great deal. Thus respondents were not obliged to give a value judgment using a word but ring a number on a scale between 1 and 4 where 1 was least and 4 was most. Findings from the survey are given numerically and sometimes with an accompanying bar chart. The numerical information is given thus:  
1 = n% - this is 'not at all'  
2 = n%  
3 = n%  
4 = n% -this is 'a great deal'

- The reason for any discrepancies in numbers is due to spoilt papers or where questions were not answered or not answered correctly.

### **2.1 Students autumn 2007 (appendices ii and iii NB Question 5 in the questionnaire failed to register and is therefore omitted from the findings)**

2.1.1 The first student questionnaires were completed as the students arrived to start the course in September 2007. There were 1681 responses to the questionnaire from ten HEIs with a representative spread of approximately three quarters female students to male students.

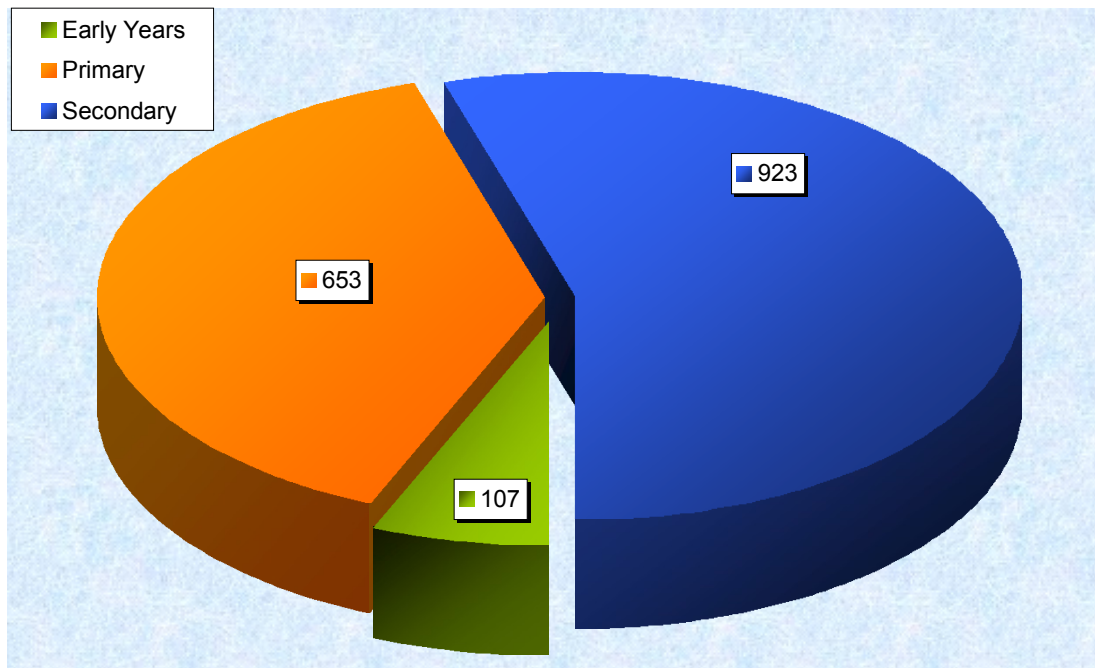
*Questionnaire results*



22 interviews were undertaken in 5 HEIs; the spread of female to male participants was in the same ratio as the questionnaires.

2.1.2 Approximately 38% of the responses to the questionnaire were from primary trainees, 54.8% from secondary trainees and 7.2% from Early Years trainees.

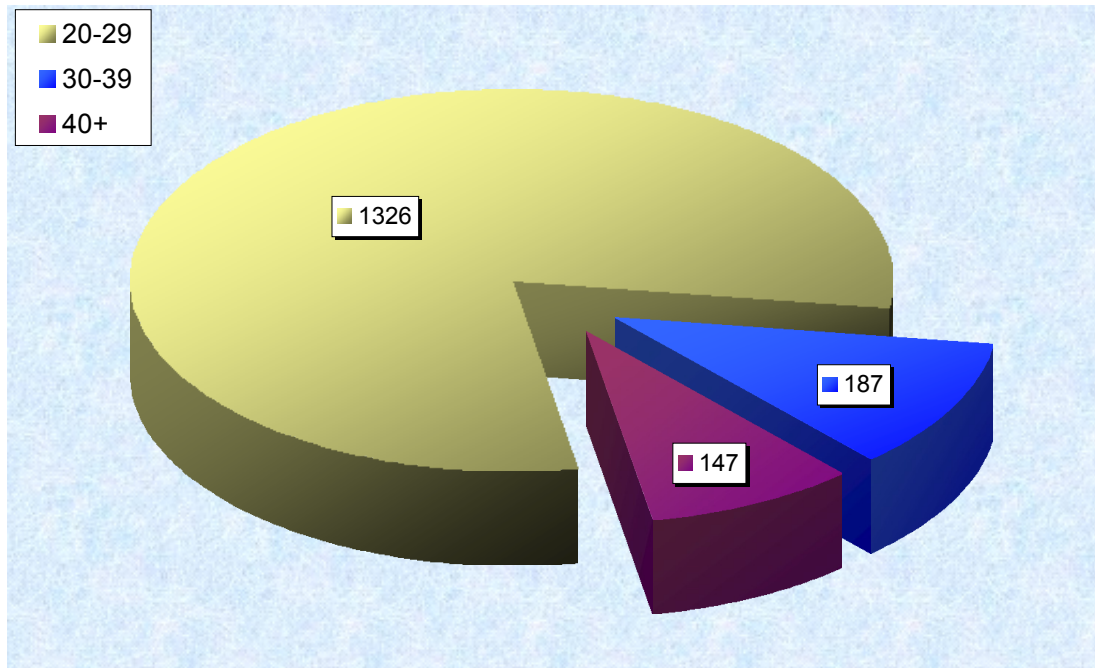
*Questionnaire results*



Approximately 65% of interview participants were secondary trainees, 35% secondary and there were no Early Years trainees interviewed.

2.1.3 1660 responses were received concerning the age of the students of which approximately 79.8% were aged 20-29, 11.2% aged 30-39 and 8.8% aged 40+.

*Questionnaire results*

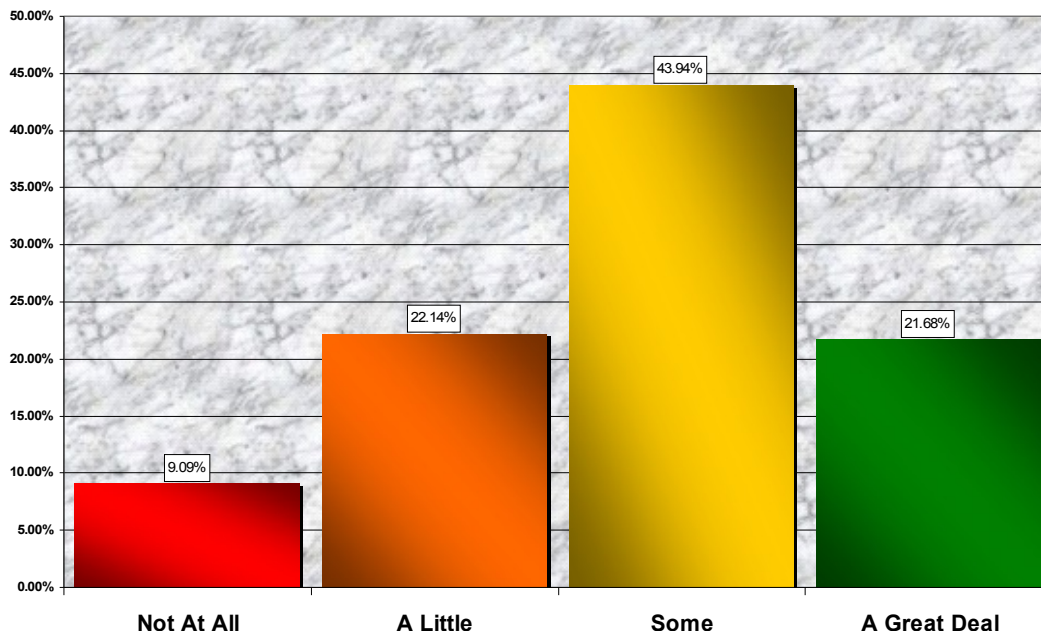


In the interviewees there were approximately 69% aged 20-29, 9% aged 30-39, and 22% aged 40+.

2.1.4 1640 responses were received concerning Masters study, of which approximately 85.9% had not studied at Masters level before.

2.1.5 In all the following questions, 1 = not at all, and 4 = a great deal  
How important to you is a Masters qualification in addition to QTS?

- 1 = 9.09%
- 2 = 22.14%
- 3 = 43.94%
- 4 = 21.68%



The question in the interviews was worded slightly differently – Do you value the possibility of gaining Masters level credits on your course? Of 20 responses, the majority (12 participants) definitely valued gaining Masters level credits:

‘Yes I certainly do. I think it seems like a really interesting and exciting angle just angle just for your own personal achievement and whatever work is involved should be of benefit at the end to your career and to the actual teaching profession.’ (Student 6)

However, 6 participants were unsure:

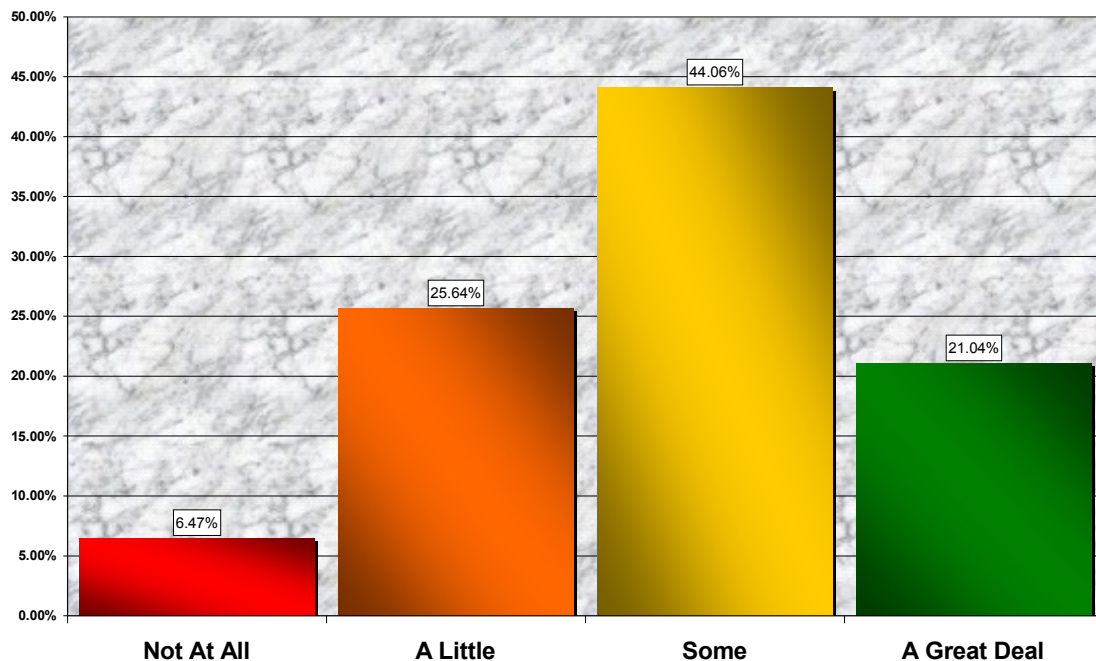
‘If it means employers are going to look at them, otherwise no.’ (Student 3)  
‘It’s quite daunting.’ (Student 22)

And 2 were definitely negative:

‘Not really – partly because of going into teaching. Teaching is the main concern.’ (Student 11)  
‘Don’t value it. I’ve already got a Masters (not in Education or related study).’ (Student 14)

#### 2.1.6 How far do you consider that studying at Masters level is likely to contribute to your teaching?

- 1 = 6.47%
- 2 = 25.64%
- 3 = 44.06%
- 4 = 21.04%



In the interviews, the corresponding question was 'Do you feel that studying at Master level will contribute to your teaching?' 19 participants answered this question. 9 definitely felt that it would contribute:

'It's critical for all of your career to be researching.' (Student 2)  
'Yes I think certainly having a Masters in Education can't be a bad thing towards your teaching. It's certainly going to help your personal and professional development just in terms of gaining the more theoretical side of education which can benefit and work alongside the practice that you're getting in teaching.' (Student 8)

5 were not sure:

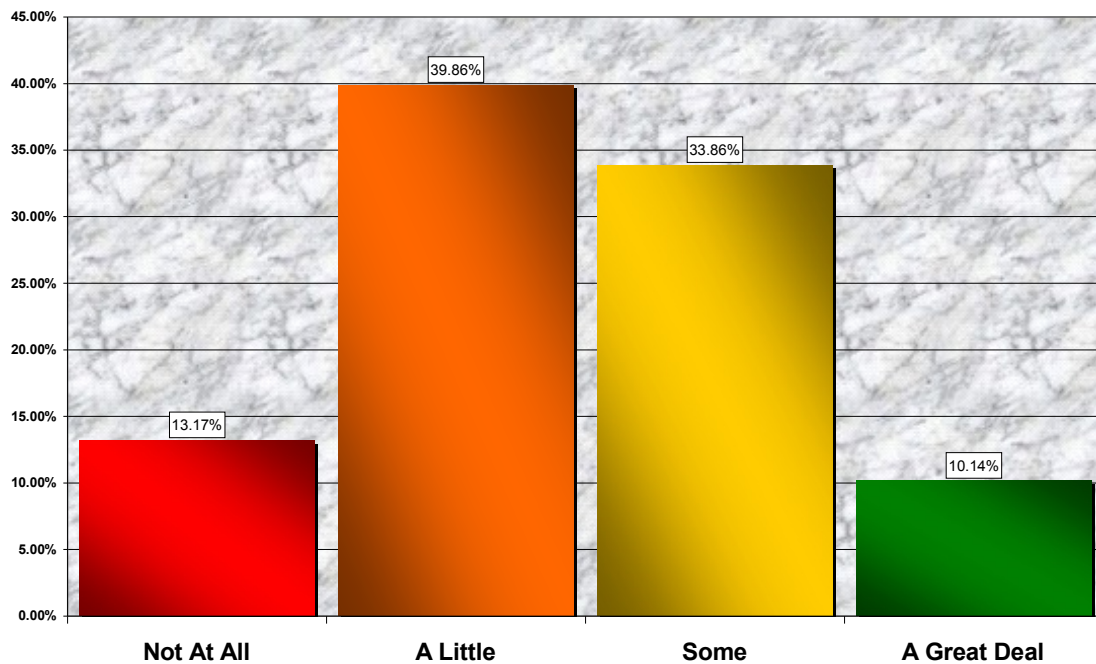
'Pass! I'm not experienced in the difference.' (Student 13)

And 5 could not see any connection with a contribution to their teaching:

'I don't think it would contribute to your teaching, it's more a personal achievement and children you will be teaching won't be bothered if you have a Masters or not.'

2.1.7 - How far so you consider that you have an understanding of what studying at Masters level involves?

- 1 = 13.17%
- 2 = 39.86%
- 3 = 33.86%
- 4 = 10.14%



The corresponding question in the interviews asked how well the students knew how to define what Masters level is. All students described it as 'something higher', 'a second degree'. But there were some elaborations to

this which do connect with Masters qualification descriptors: (NB It is important to note that they answered very early on in the course and could have been quoting what they had been told.)

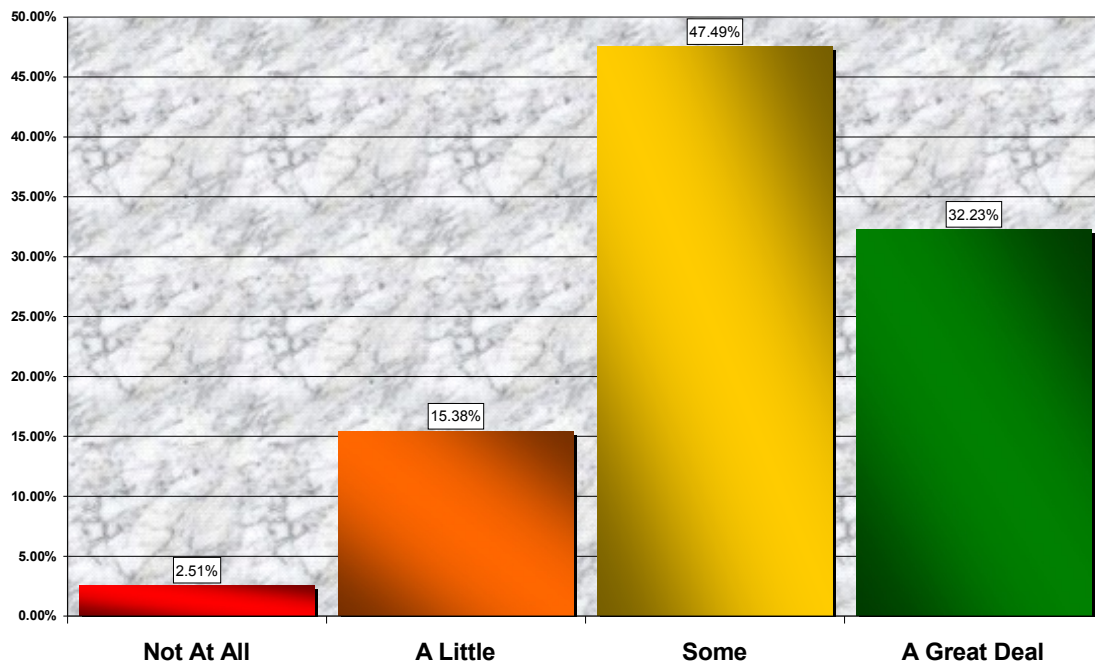
‘They’re looking for a little bit more research and hopefully to be a little bit more critical about what you are reading ... it’s doing the research to back up your argument but maybe at [first] degree level you’re not actually pulling apart what they’re saying as much as you would at Masters.’ (Student 7)

and one brief perception from student 18:

‘It is just doing extended essays.’ (Student 18) (This student had a Masters degree)

2.1.8 Do you consider that studying theory is likely to contribute positively to the practice of teaching?

- 1 = 2.51%
- 2 = 15.38%
- 3 = 47.49%
- 4 = 32.23%



17 answered this question in the interviews and seemed to be quite vague in their responses.

‘It only applies to some things – like teaching.’ (Student 3)

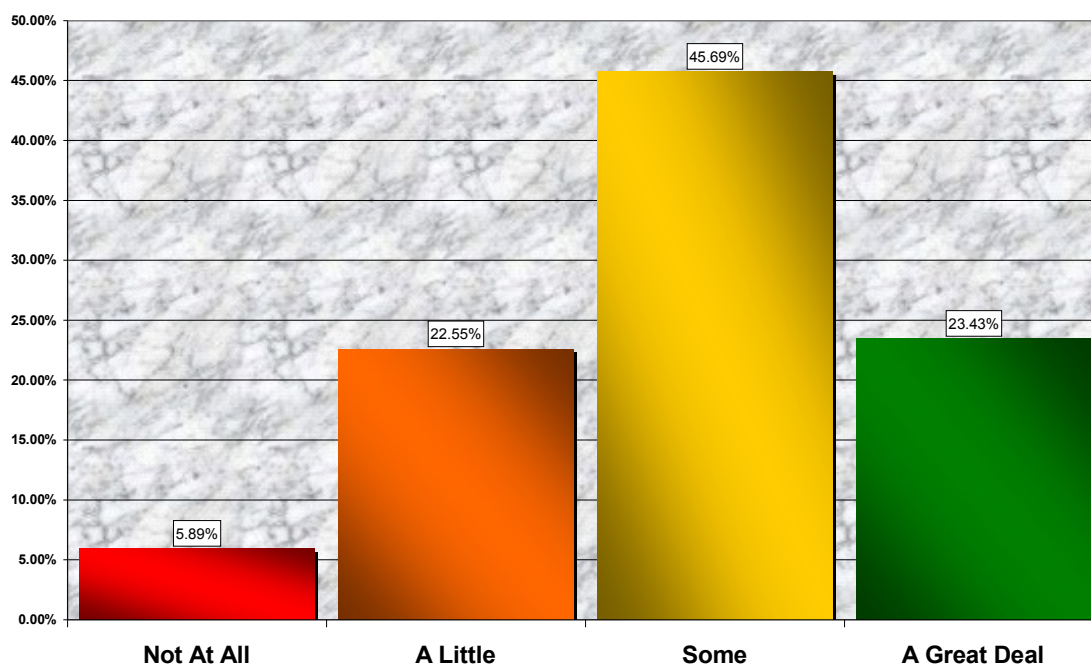
‘It’s an interesting question that.’ (Student 4)

‘I think [theory and practice] go side by side. They’re both requisites for being a good teacher in the classroom.’ (Student 8)



## 2.1.9 How far do you expect that Masters level credits will enhance your prospects of getting a job as a teacher?

1 = 5.89%  
2 = 22.55%  
3 = 45.69%  
4 = 23.43%



In the interviews, did the participants think that having Masters credits would be a means to better job prospects? Only 1 thought not:

'I don't think it will make a difference, it's whether you're a good teacher that counts.' (Student 9)

9 were unsure:

'If you say you've got 60 credits at Masters level, they'd say have you got a Masters yes or no?'

'It depends on the school I think and who's interviewing you.'

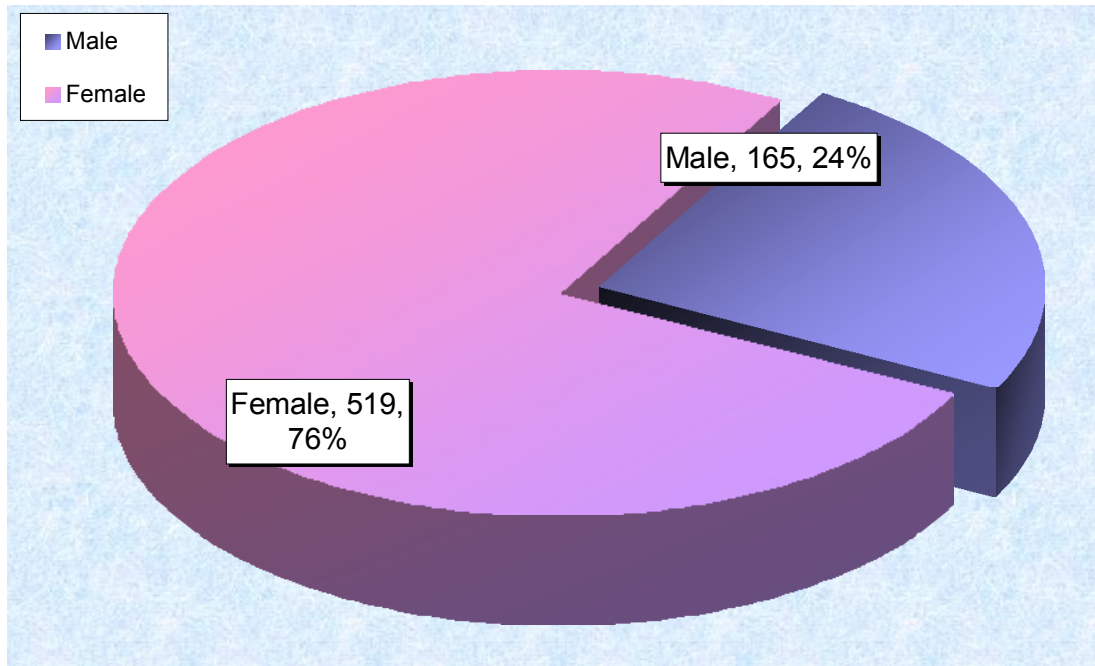
But 9 thought that Masters credits would help them to a better job:

'It just gives you the edge over someone with just a professional – it shows that I am actually trying to think about what I'm doing and they don't probably.'  
(Student 1)

## 2.2 Students – summer 2008 (appendices iv and v) (NB question 6 gave no answers and is not represented here)

2.2.1 The second survey for students was given to the same students in June 2008, at the end of the PGCE course. 684 questionnaires were completed

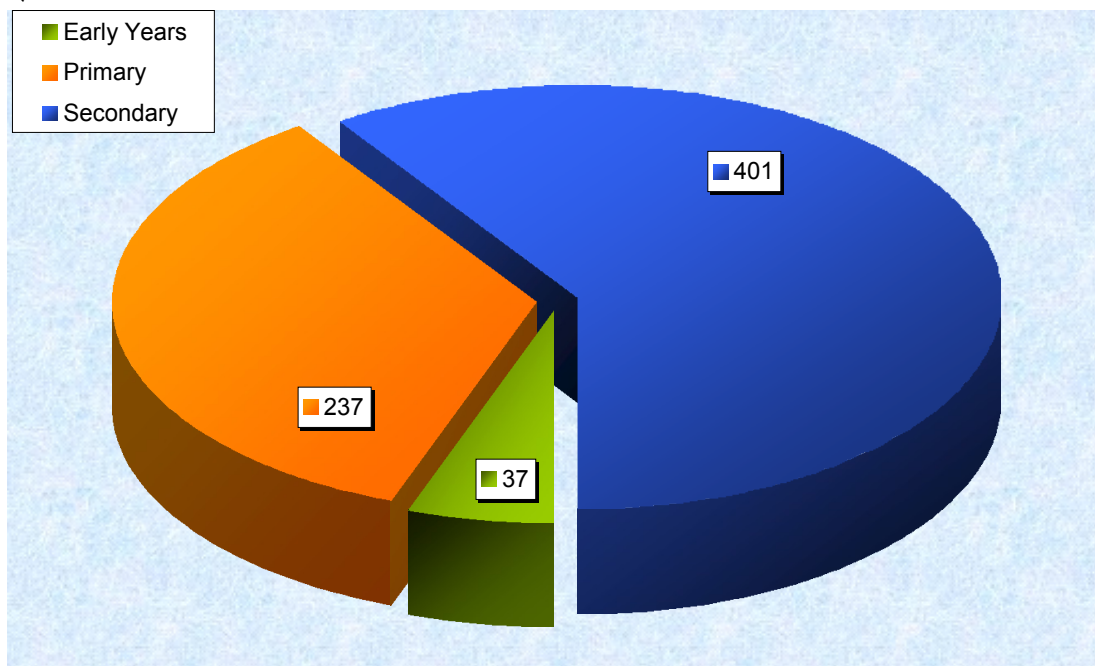
from seven of the original institutions – approximately 40% of the original survey group. There was the same ratio of female to male, i.e. three quarters female, one quarter male.



There were 15 interviews with students at the same time as the survey; the same ratio of female to male as before.

2.2.2 Approximately 35% of the responses to the questionnaire were from primary trainees, 59% from secondary trainees and 6% from Early Years trainees.

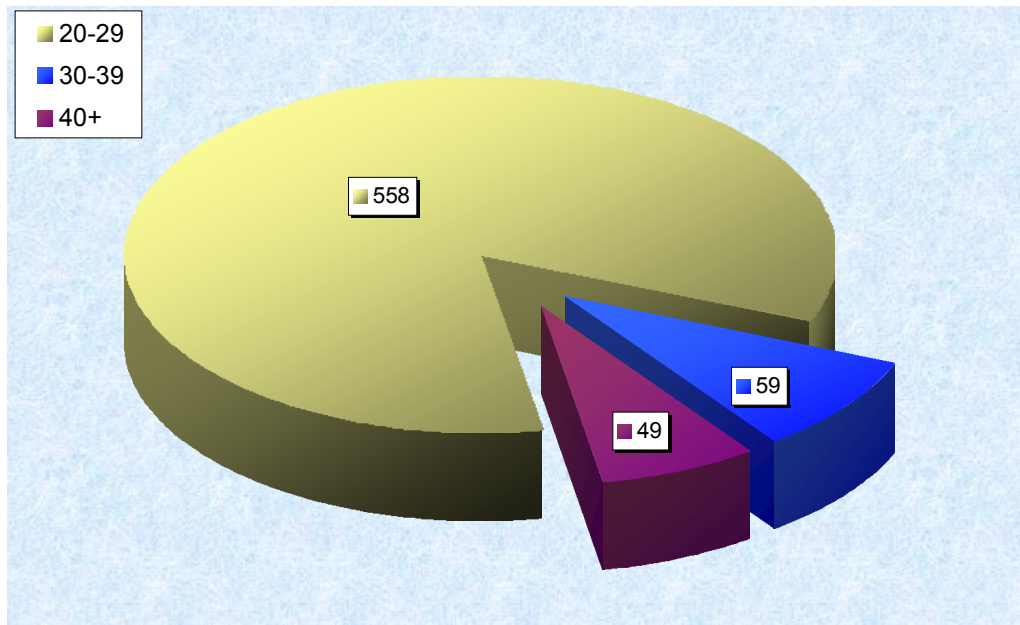
*Questionnaire results*



Approximately 93% of interview participants were secondary trainees, 7% secondary and there were no Early Years trainees interviewed.

2.2.3 666 responses were received concerning the age of the students of which approximately 83% were aged 20-29, 8% aged 30-39 and 7% aged 40+.

*Questionnaire results*

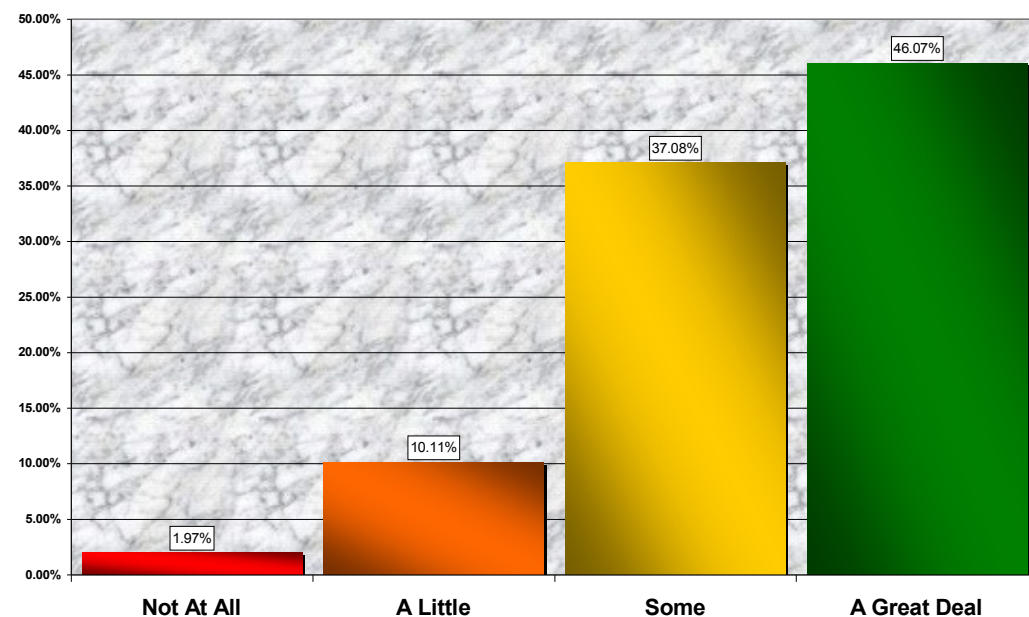


In the interviewees there were approximately 93% aged 20-29, none aged 30-39, and 7% aged 40+.

2.2.4 In the survey, specific questions suggesting what Masters level might mean to the students were asked – the answers to these are reported in sections 2.2.4 – 2.2.7.

To what extent do you feel that Masters level is involved with reading more widely?

- 1 = 1.97
- 2 = 10.11
- 3 = 37.08
- 4 = 46.07



### 2.2.5

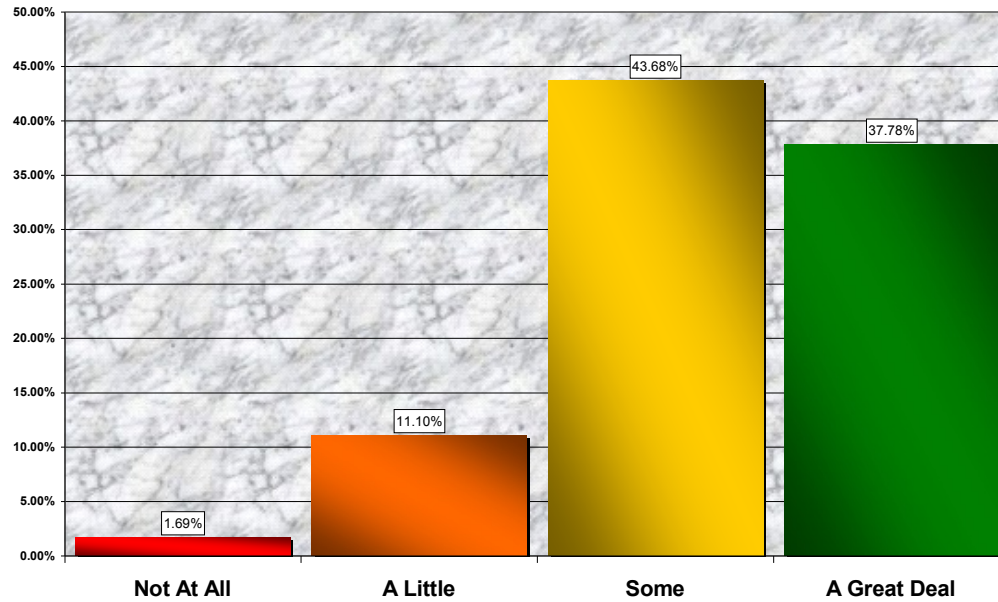
To what extent do you feel that Masters level is involved with conducting small scale research?

1 = 1.69

2 = 11.1

3 = 43.68

4 = 37.78



### 2.2.6

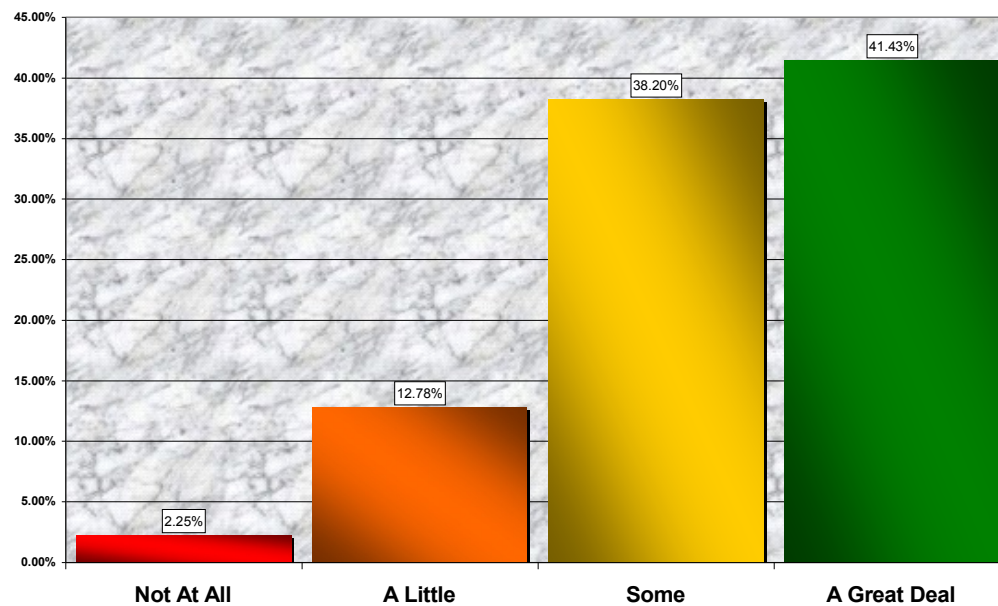
To what extent do you feel that Masters level is involved with linking theory to practice?

1 = 2.25

2 = 12.78

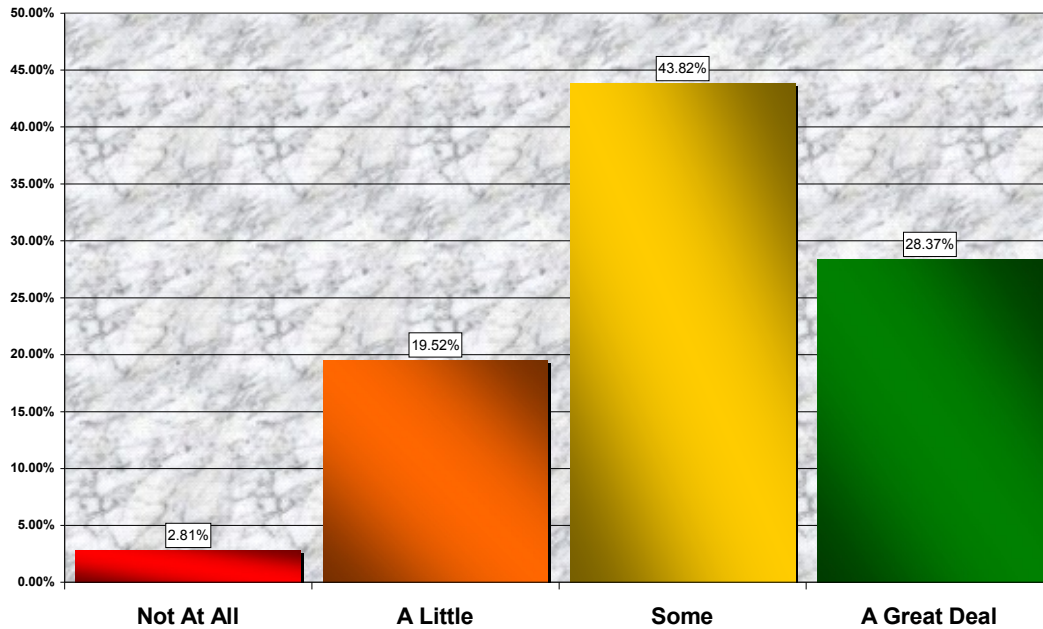
3 = 38.2

4 = 41.43



2.2.7 To what extent do you feel that Masters is involved with being critical of other people's research?

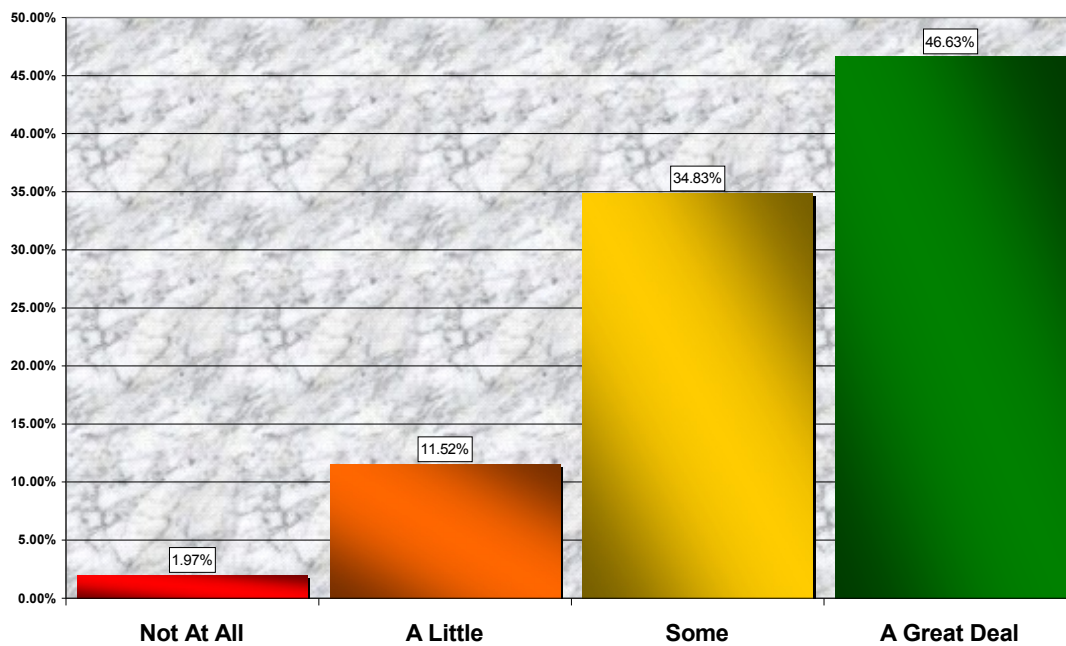
1 = 2.81  
2 = 19.52  
3 = 43.82  
4 = 28.37



2.2.8

To what extent do you feel that Masters level is involved with critical reflection?

1 = 1.97  
2 = 11.52  
3 = 34.83  
4 = 46.63



2.2.9 In the interviews with students, one open question only was asked: 'What do you understand by Masters level study?'

There were several long pauses from the students when asked this question; the answer was not immediately at their fingertips. Student 10 for example suggested this:

'I don't know, just I s'pose – is that just the education one – just really the essays that we've had to do, really that's how I see it – all the reading and then the research to go with it, and then combine it into an essay – yeah!'

The participants all cited research as the significant factor in Masters level work and there were one or two hints at the need for criticality and a link to theory:

'To me it means being more critical than I was at Undergraduate level, with the writing, more research and, kind of, get from what you teach in the classroom to what you read in the book, and making the link.' Student 1

'It's about looking at what everyone else has done in the past, you know recently in the last 10 years, and then trying to find out where it can improve your teaching.' Student 2

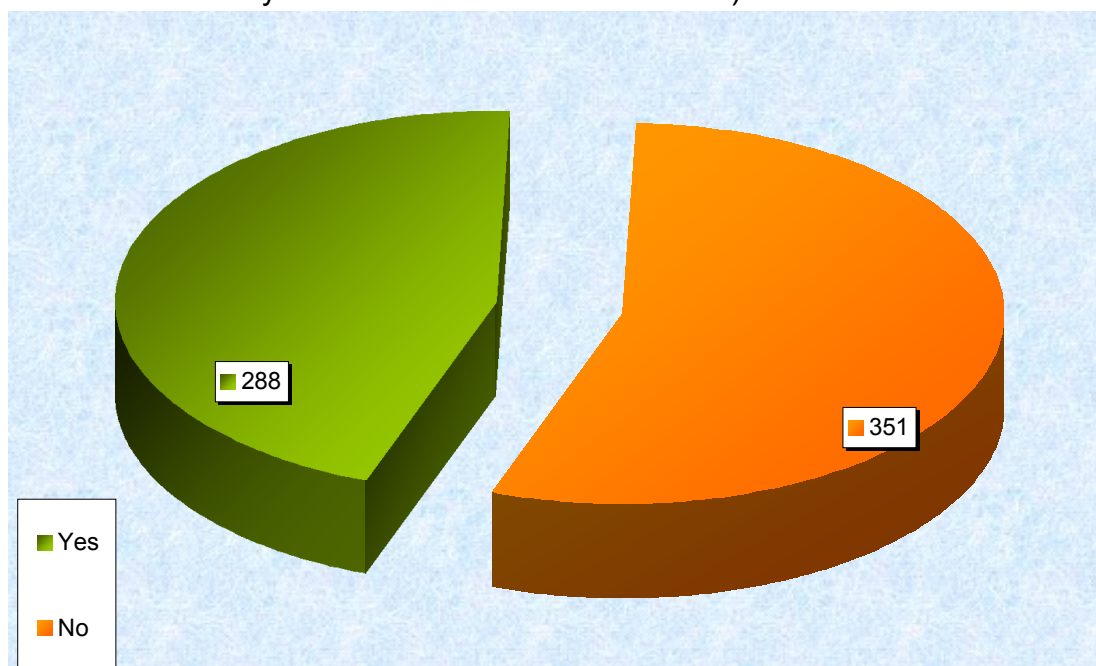
One student mentioned how Masters level work was marked in the PGCE suggesting that a different set of criteria was used:

'Well it's not at a level that you would be marked against if you were doing an entire Masters degree.' Student 3

2.2.10

Have you continued with Masters level?

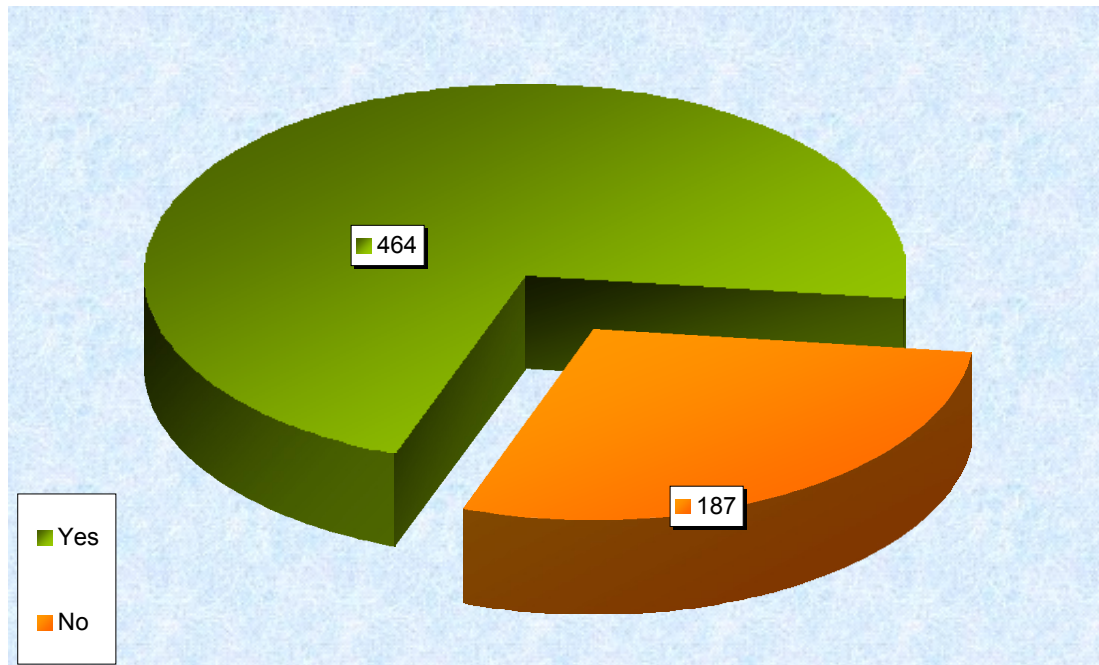
Out of 639 responses in the survey, approximately 45% of students had continued, 55% had not. (The students interviewed had all continued with Masters level study to the end of the PGCE course.)



### 2.2.11

Do you intend you continue with Masters level work in the future?

Out of 651 responses in the survey, approximately 71% intended to continue with Masters level work in the future, 29% did not.



In the interviews 33% of participants had no intention of continuing with Masters work in the future, either because they struggled with the work or felt it unnecessary for teaching. 67% however thought that they might in the future. Student 2 sums up this feeling:

'[Laughs hysterically] ... To be honest, I really, at the moment, would just like to get a job, have lesson plans for every lesson throughout the year, start to refine them a bit and just get settled – it's such a whirlwind this year...I'd probably consider it – I do find some of the stuff interesting.'

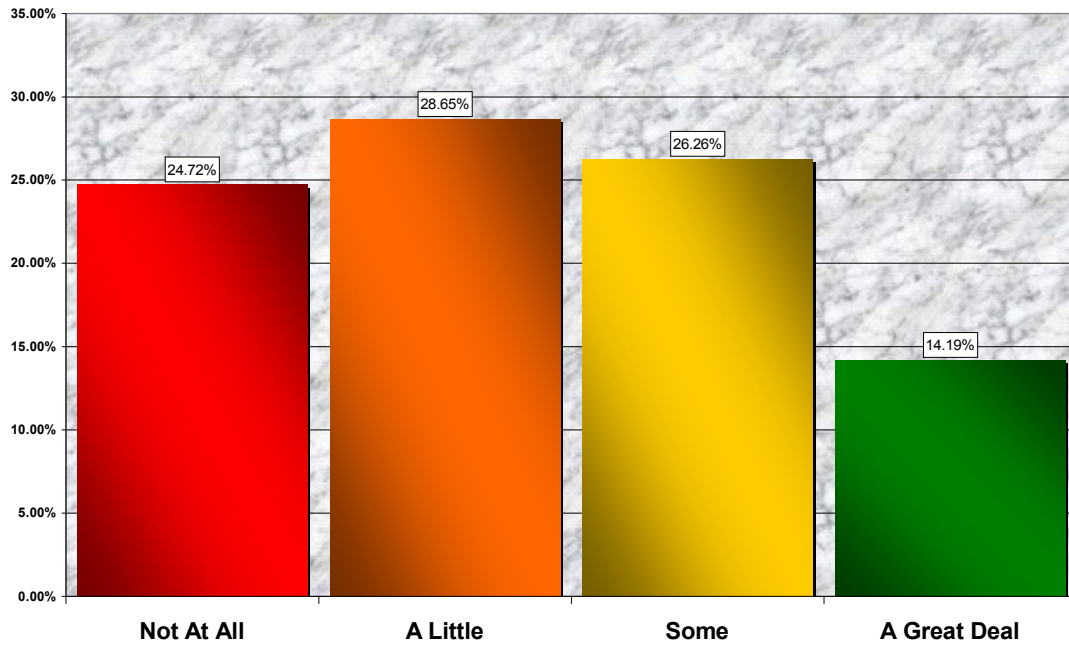
2.2.12 To what extent did you value Masters work when you started the course?

1 = 24.72

2 = 28.65

3 = 26.26

4 = 14.19



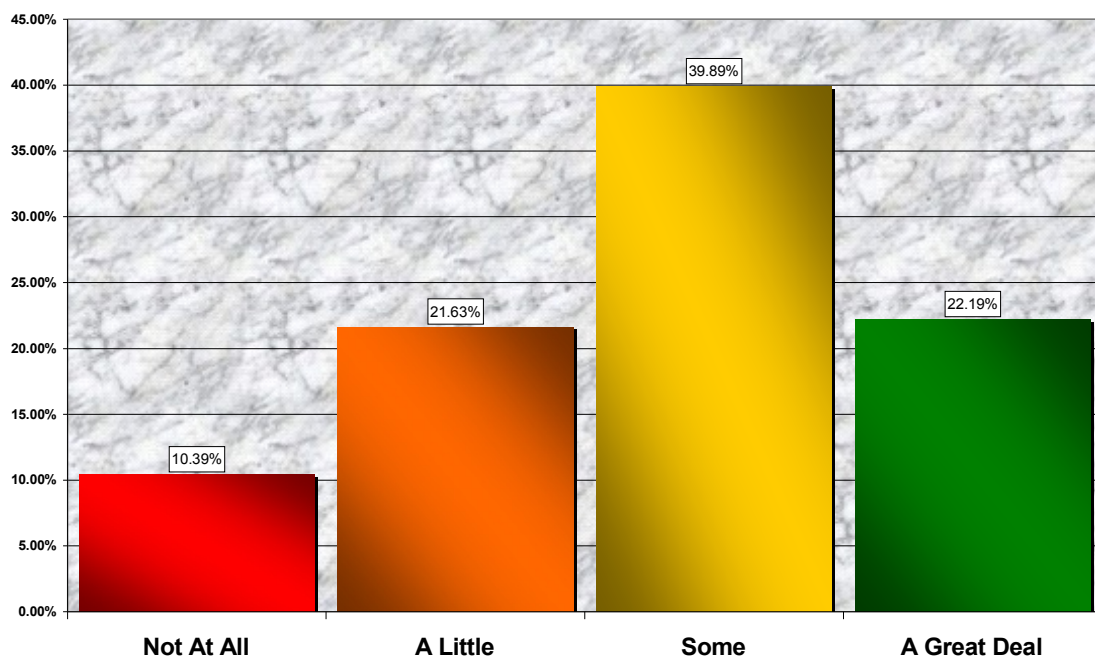
2.2.13 To what extent do you value it now?

1 = 10.39

2 = 21.63

3 = 39.89

4 = 22.19





2.2.14 In the interviews, participants were asked whether they had changed their minds about Masters level study since they started in September. This interview question links with 2.2.11 and 2.2.12. Most students (80%) were negative in their response; they had not wanted to do it in the first place; they had no choice so had become resigned to it; they had been against it and stayed against it; they had no opinion.

‘To me it devalues what I am after because as far as I’m concerned I haven’t got, I’m nowhere near a Masters level in education, I’m a beginning teacher. It’s a big challenge just to get into the classroom and I certainly haven’t got anything left over for what I would consider necessary to say that I was looking at education at a Masters level.’ Student 6

However there were some glimmers of guarded appreciation:

‘I was originally against it because I don’t want extra Masters credits ‘cos I already have a Masters, therefore the thought of extra work for no apparent reason, but then because the credits were on offer, you kind of want them – it’s a psychological thing, but if they weren’t there at all then there would have been less work.’ Student 9

‘I didn’t really want to do it because ... but when I’ve actually done the assignments, I actually really enjoyed that. It was interesting – the sort of thing I love to do but not while I have to worry about teaching at the same time.’ Student 2

‘I think it’s been enjoyable and it’s higher than a normal degree level (but sometimes when I’ve been doing my assignments I’ve thought God I wish it wasn’t!!) Student 7

### 2.2.15

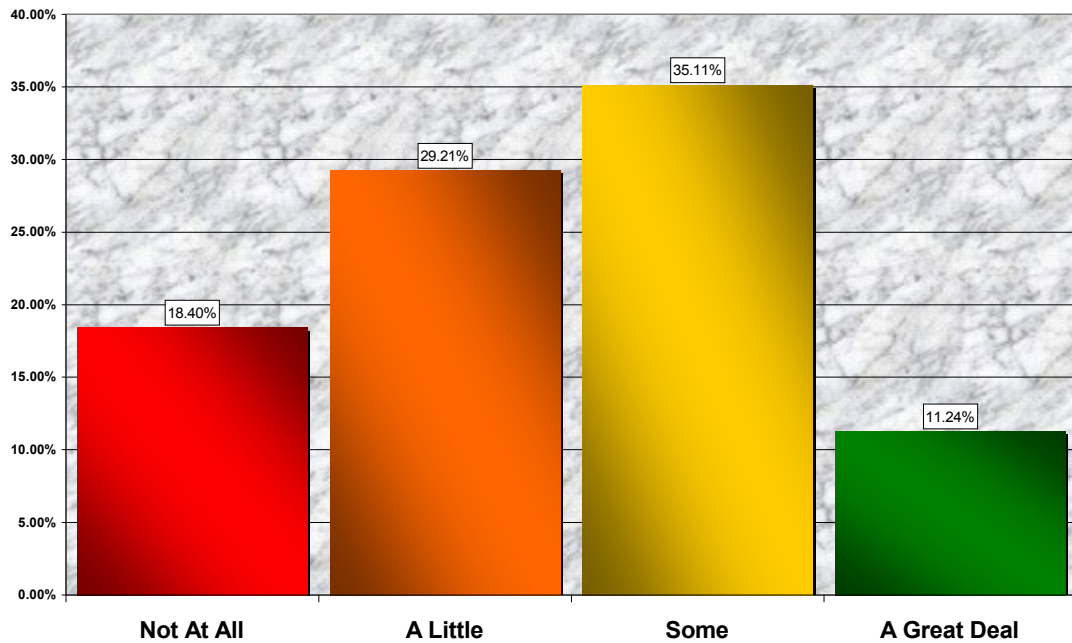
To what extent do you feel that studying at Masters level contributed to your teaching?

1 = 18.4

2 = 29.21

3 = 35.11

4 = 11.24



2.

### 2.2.16

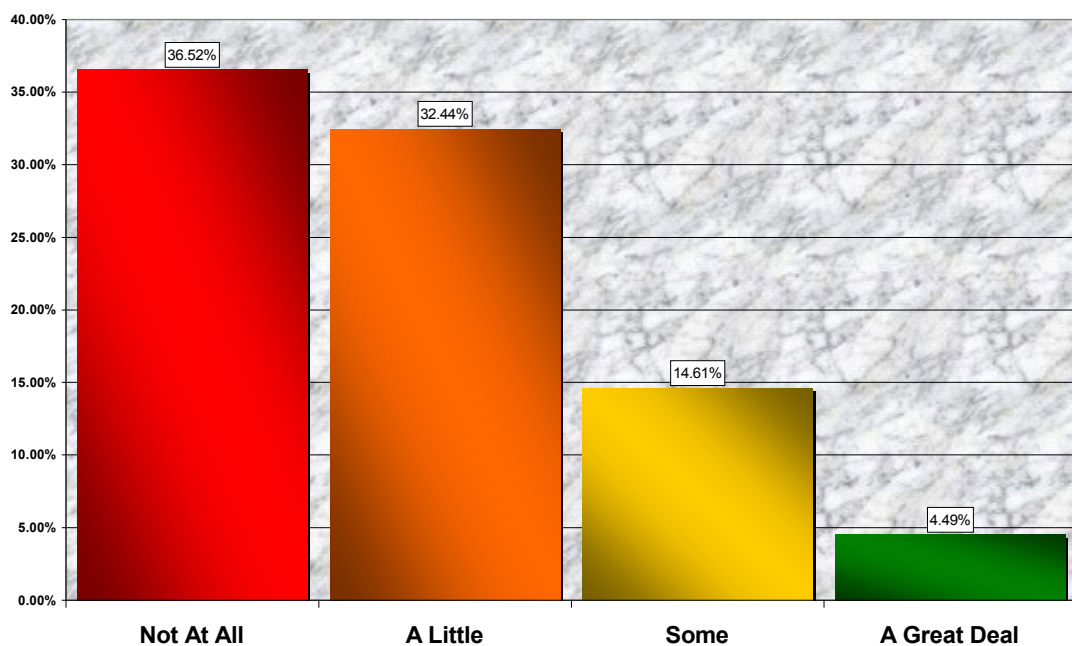
To what extent has your subject specialism made the requirements of Masters level problematic?

1 = 36.52

2 = 32.44

3 = 14.61

4 = 4.49



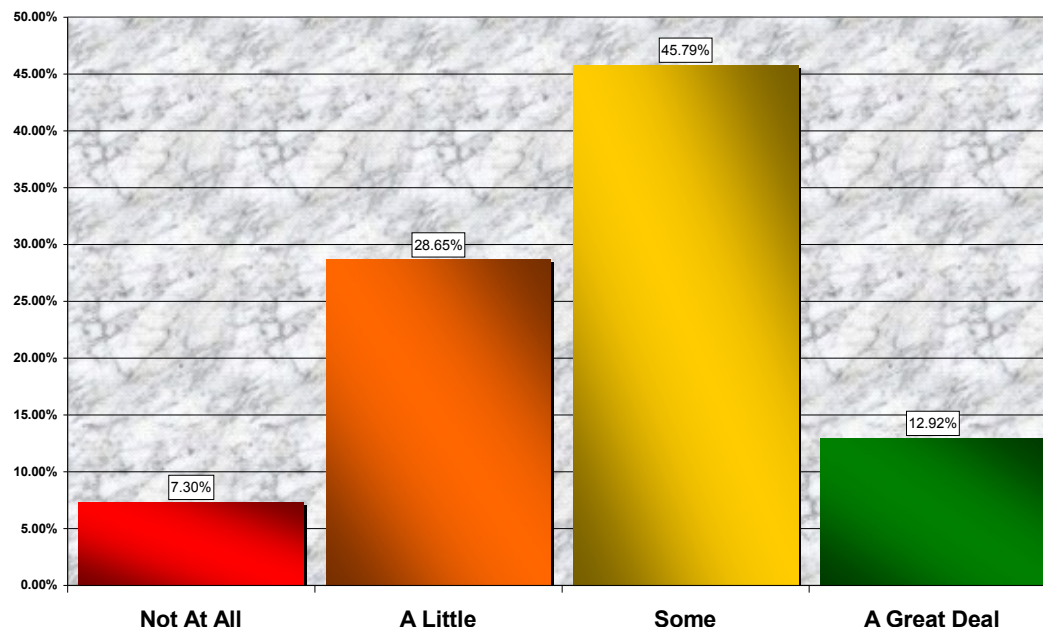
2.2.17 To what extent has you found the study of theory to be a help in practice?

1 = 7.3

2 = 28.65

3 = 45.79

4 = 12.92



2.2.18

In the interviews, students were asked two questions which link with 2.2.13; to describe the more demanding elements of your course and to give an example of how theory had influenced their practice. Most students spoke of the time factor and how it was difficult to fit in what one called 'the paperwork' in a busy schedule. Three students commented on the difficulty of the work they had been faced with:

'I've never been stretched before.' Student 6

'Linking the theory is tricky.' Student 7

'The breadth of knowledge that I didn't have about education, about research in education - I didn't feel that I had enough to build on. I haven't hated it but I haven't achieved at the level that I would have liked.'  
Student 6

All students, however reticent or negative they had been in the interview up to this point, started to speak with enthusiasm when they suggested an example of theory which had worked for them in practice. It may not have been immediately obvious to them:

'Subconsciously I think that theory did kind of help me a bit.'  
Student 10

'Erm...this recent one has influenced, I did it the right way round cause the last one I did my reading first and then took what I thought was good things from the reading and then tried them out and then evaluated them.' Student 1

‘Research definitely made me think.’ Student 2

‘Well, before I started my essays, I thought yes this is going to be pointless but actually, I did find out quite a lot from doing the essays.’ Student 3

‘It has potential A lot of teachers know what the children can’t do but don’t really know why.’ Student 6

Student 15 claimed that it was more what teachers in schools had said to her – the practical tips – but also concluded that:

‘It (theory) made me more aware of things like the questions I might use.’

### 2.2.19

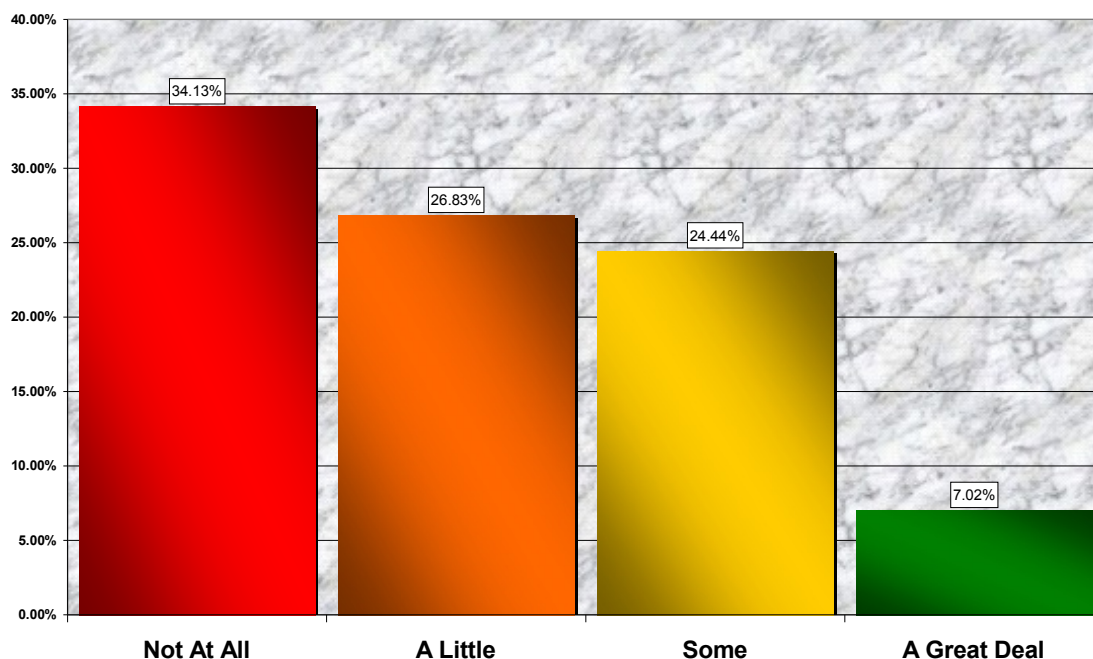
To what extent have you found that Masters level has been of benefit to you in the job market?

1 = 34.13

2 = 26.83

3 = 24.44

4 = 7.02

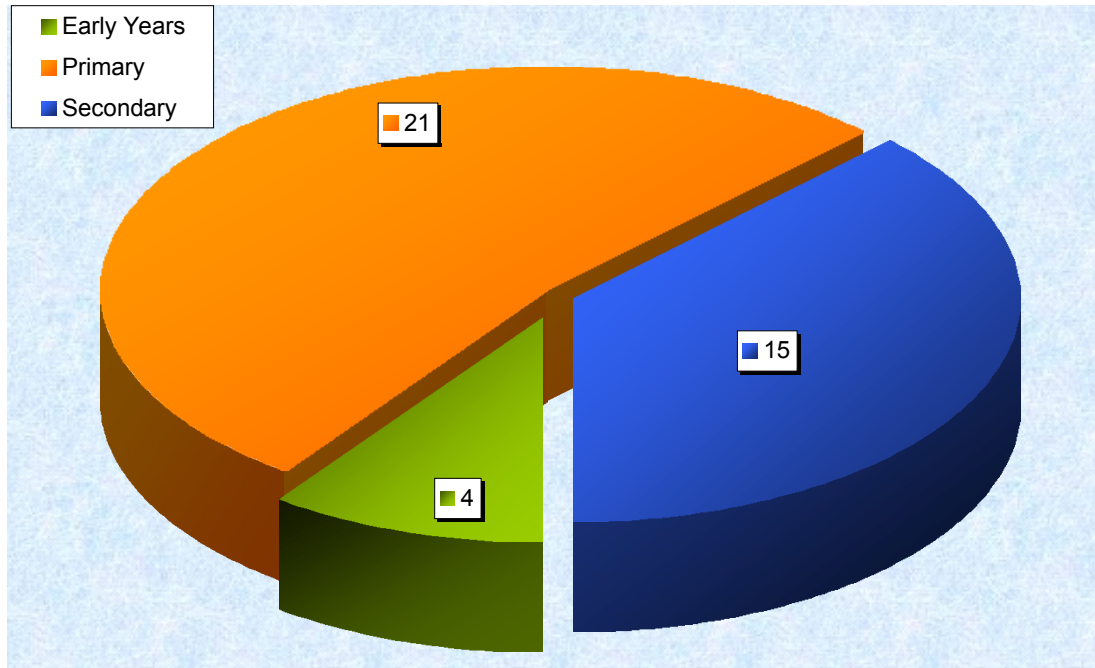


In the interviews all the students had got jobs for September and were not sure that the Masters study had been of benefit. They thought it might become so in the future and thought that it was really the opinion of the people interviewing that mattered. Student 2 sums up a common feeling:

‘I don’t think the fact that you have 60 credits towards it – I think if you actually had a Masters it would be of benefit. I think the fact that you’ve done it and you can then talk about the stuff you’ve researched and that – they’re thinking this guy knows what he’s on about – that helps you.’

### 2.3 Headteachers (appendices viii and ix)

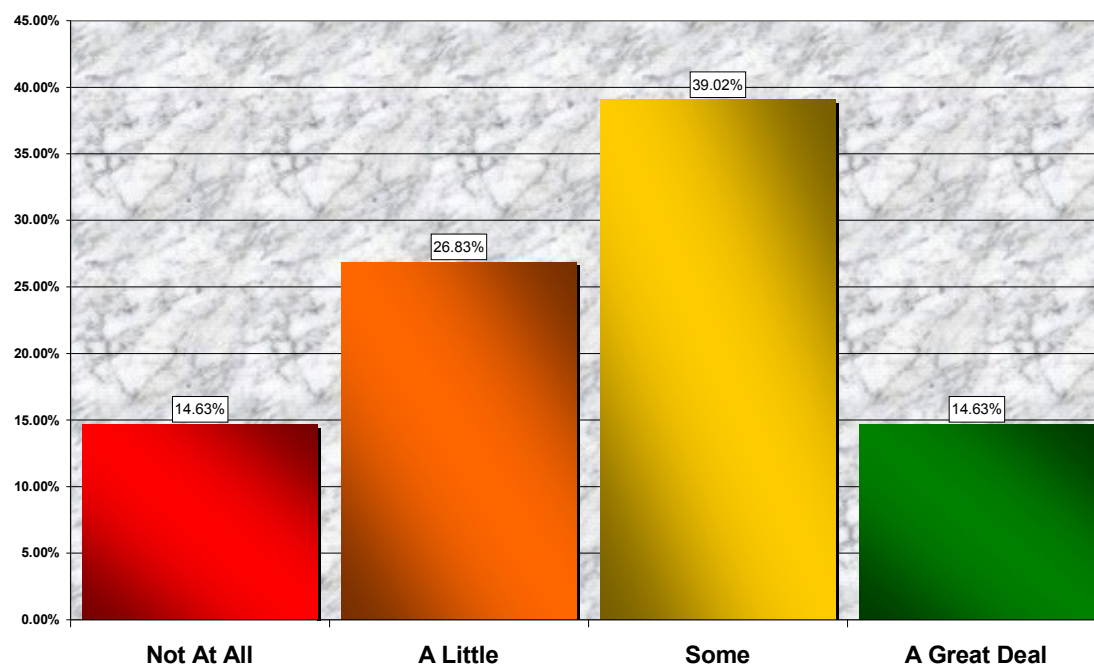
2.3.1 The survey for headteachers was answered by 40 headteachers from 3 HEIs, of which approximately 50% were primary headteachers, 38% secondary and 12% Early Years. The survey was sent out in the summer of 2008.



Interviews were held with six headteachers; three secondary and three primary. The questions in the interview mirrored those in the survey.

## 2. 3.2 To what extent do you feel that you understand what is meant by Masters level in teacher training courses?

1 = 14.63  
2 = 26.83  
3 = 39.02  
4 = 14.63



In the interviews, three headteachers (two secondary and one primary) had little or no idea about Masters and avoided the question or, like the students, said that it was something higher and something that was going to happen. Headteacher 2 (secondary) thought that theory was involved and saw a link to practice:

‘It should help them to put theory into practice and therefore be better teachers.’

Otherwise he saw Masters credits as a box-ticking exercise and HEIs’ role as a ‘toolbox’ provider:

‘ITT provides a toolbox; I want to know that the teacher can use the tools. I would not want it to be a barrier to entering the profession. The practical aspects of teaching are, to me, much more important. I want a class to enjoy and achieve.’

Although he admitted to knowing ‘very little about it’, headteacher 3 (primary) also suggested a possible beneficial link between theory and practice:

‘The impression one gets is that the level of either research or of learning that students take on will be more advanced. And a hope that at a school’s level that that will lead to greater understanding of children’s learning.’

Headteacher 5 (primary) had depended upon Masters level PGCE students for information about the course and intentions and had a negative view:

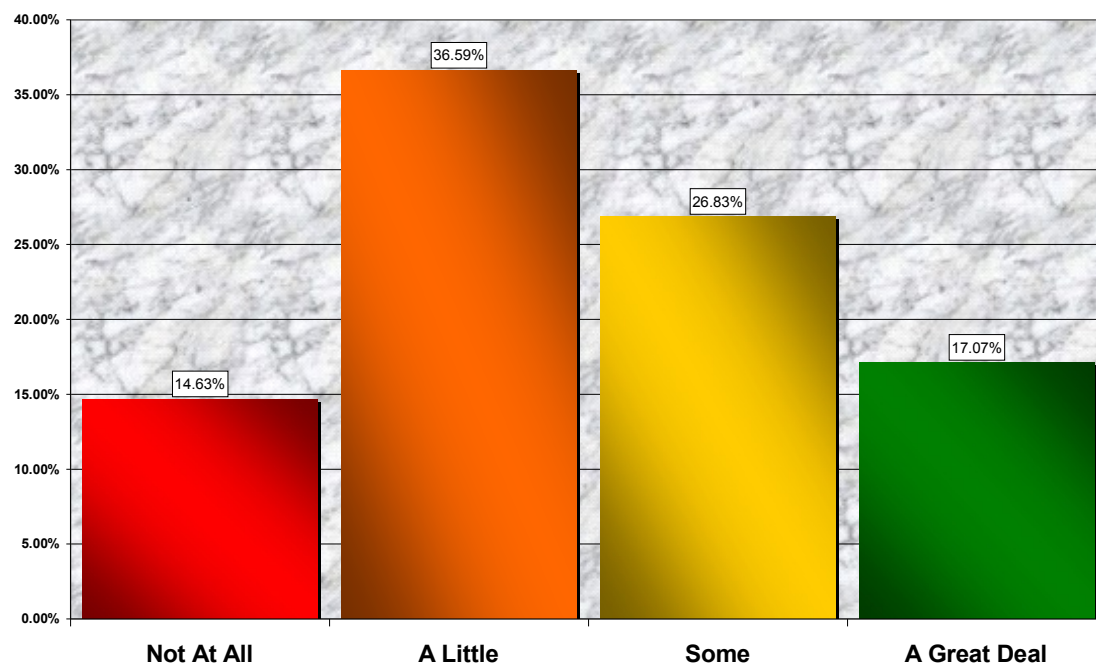
‘Well it’s an understanding I have from students and they find it quite unhelpful to start with, in the sense that they don’t see it as any particular use – they’re confused by it so they can’t understand why they’re doing it.’

One primary headteacher who returned the survey felt strongly about Masters; this headteacher’s perception (written on the survey) was:

‘Sorry but I think this smacks of dumbing down the profession. What next – a doctorate if you can spell!!!’

2.3.3 To what extent do you feel that Masters level is adding value to the teaching profession?

1 = 14.63  
2 = 36.59  
3 = 26.83  
4 = 17.07



In the interviews, headteachers were asked about the perceived value to the profession of Masters level. There was generally a hope that Masters level might add value; time would tell. Headteacher 1 (Secondary) referred to the dilemma posed by the standards agenda which he considered to be paramount and in opposition to the critical reflection offered in Masters level work:

‘Well you would hope so wouldn’t you, at the moment we area bit stuck because the standards agenda is all important and if youngsters aren’t achieving the standards that are deemed they should be achieving then judgements are made about the effectiveness of everything else really. I think

that will change over time but none the less where we are, that's the Ofsted review.'

Headteacher 2 (secondary) was more interested in a deeper subject knowledge and therefore felt that a Masters degree in the teacher's subject specialism would be more beneficial. However, as he continued to explore his answer, he also suggested a need for Masters level in education:

'There is also merit in explaining the 'new curriculum' and understanding the ways that children learn and other issues regardless of subject.'

Headteacher 3 (primary) hoped that Masters would allow 'more thinking time', linking it to thinking about the children 'without being in the thick of it worrying about lesson plans, discipline, meeting targets, parent's evenings etc'. This could only 'be a positive thing'. However, headteacher 5 did not think this could be achieved in the PGCE year and was something for later in one's career.

Headteacher 4's (primary) focus was 'higher credibility, and a higher status in the workforce' as the value that Masters might bring to the profession, but headteacher 6 (secondary) did not think that Masters would be or should be for all teachers, despite its benefits:

'The theoretical knowledge and understanding is always useful to any profession and I think it's useful to have those people with those sorts of qualifications in schools who can support other people to back up whatever you're doing with the research and knowledge and whatever but I don't think that everyone in the institution needs that level of academic rigour to be able to enlighten and encourage and teach young people.' Headteacher 4

'I don't think qualification makes any difference to the quality of what a teacher becomes and we have some learning mentors who do some teaching who are as good if not better than some of our teaching staff.' Headteacher 6



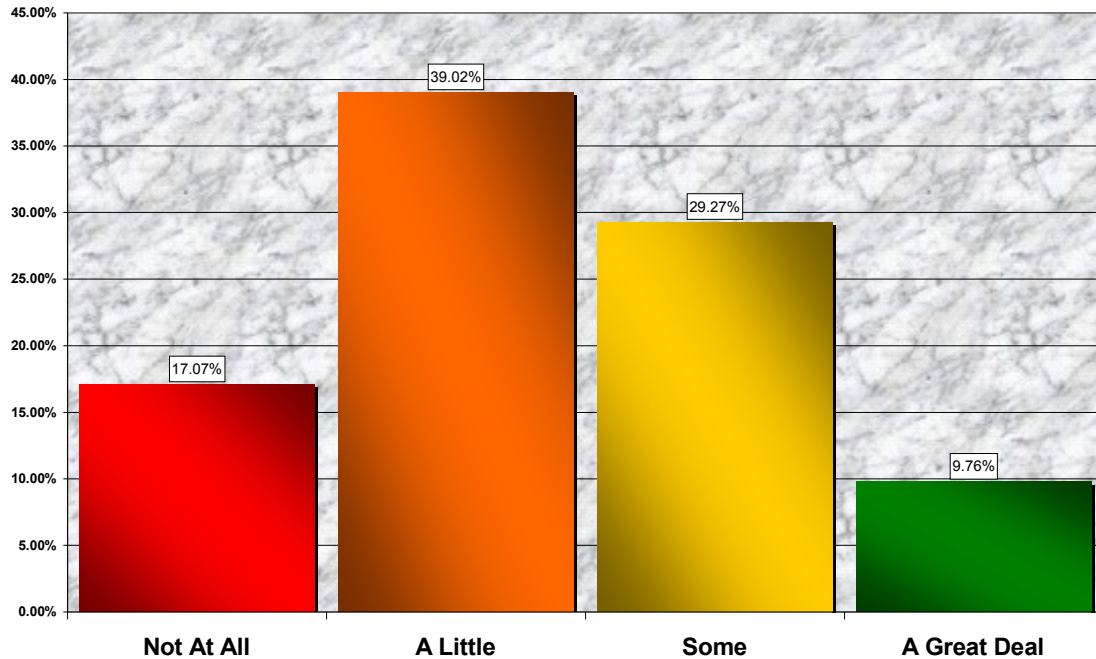
### 2.3.4 Are you likely to attach much significance to Masters level credits in making appointments to your school?

1 = 17.07

2 = 39.02

3 = 29.27

4 = 9.76

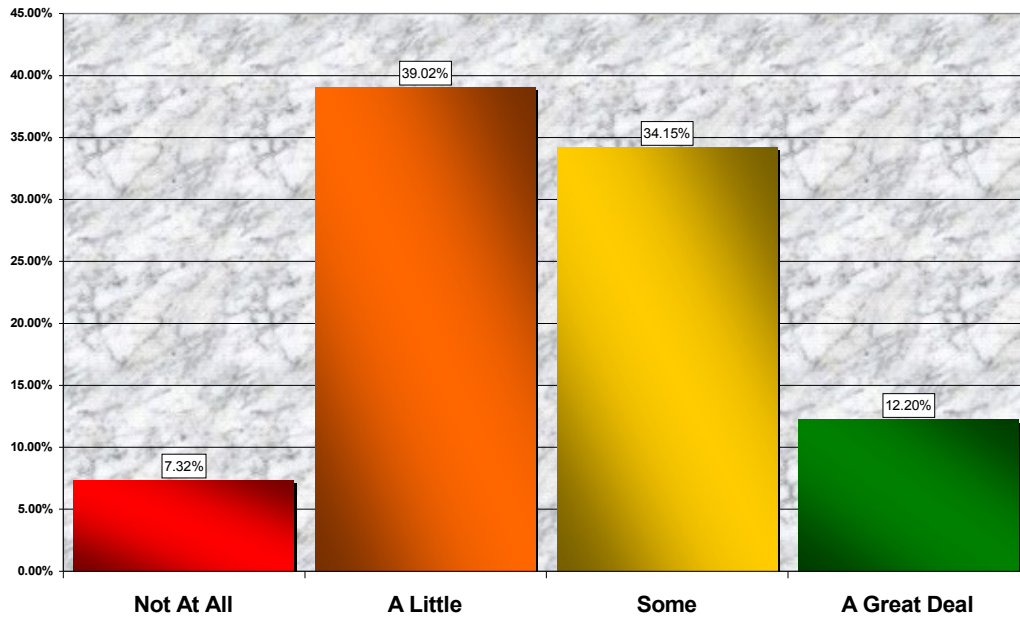


In the interviews, none of the headteachers thought that it would any difference if a candidate for a job at their school had Masters credits. They had no evidence that Masters credits would bring any particular benefits. However headteacher 6 (secondary) did suggest that things might change in the future:

‘At the moment now no, because there’s not enough evidence of the difference it’s going to make. Maybe down the line when it becomes evident then maybe it will become something that we’ll start to [see as significant]’

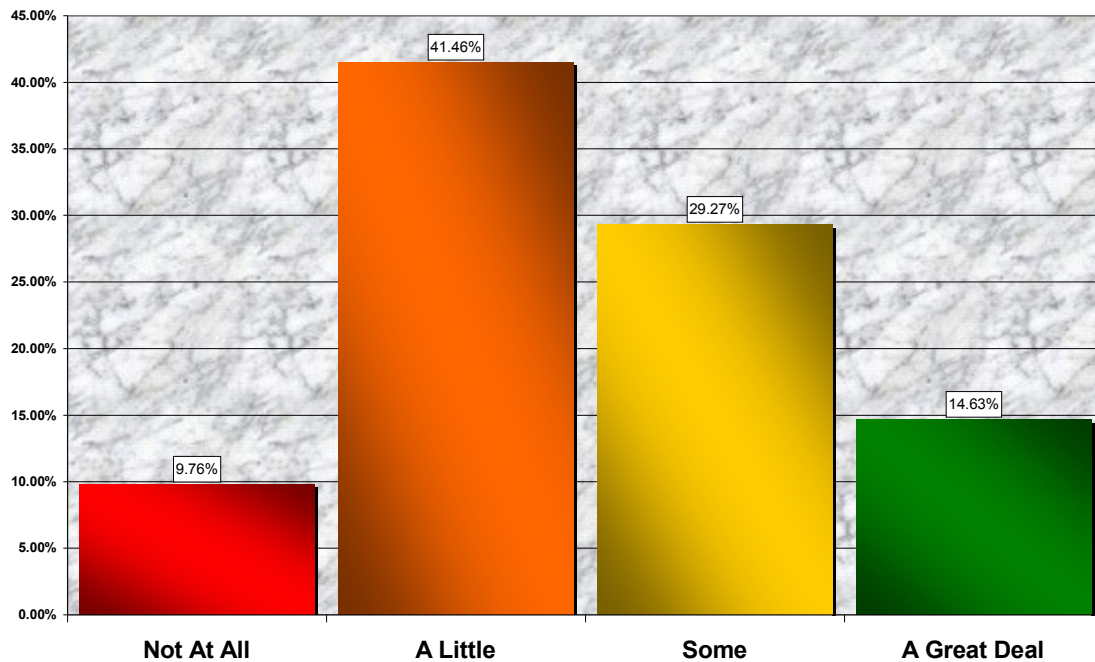
2.3.5 What do you think Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of the children's learning?

1 = 7.32  
2 = 39.02  
3 = 34.15  
4 = 12.20



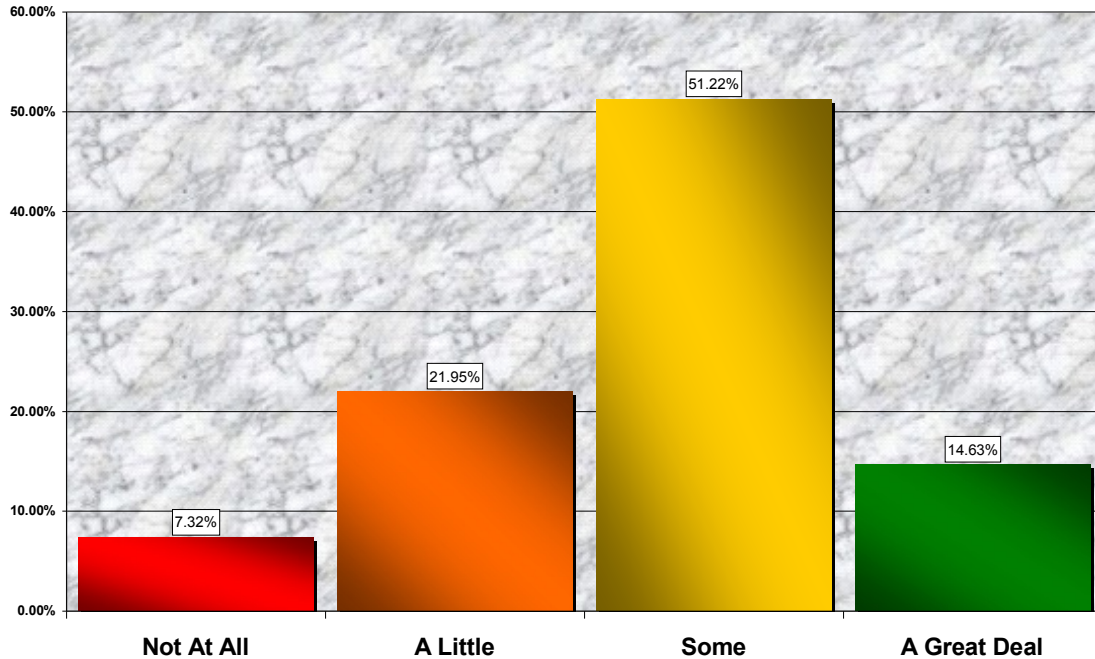
2.3.6 What do you think NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of the extent of student engagement with teaching and learning?

1 = 9.76  
2 = 41.46  
3 = 29.27  
4 = 14.63



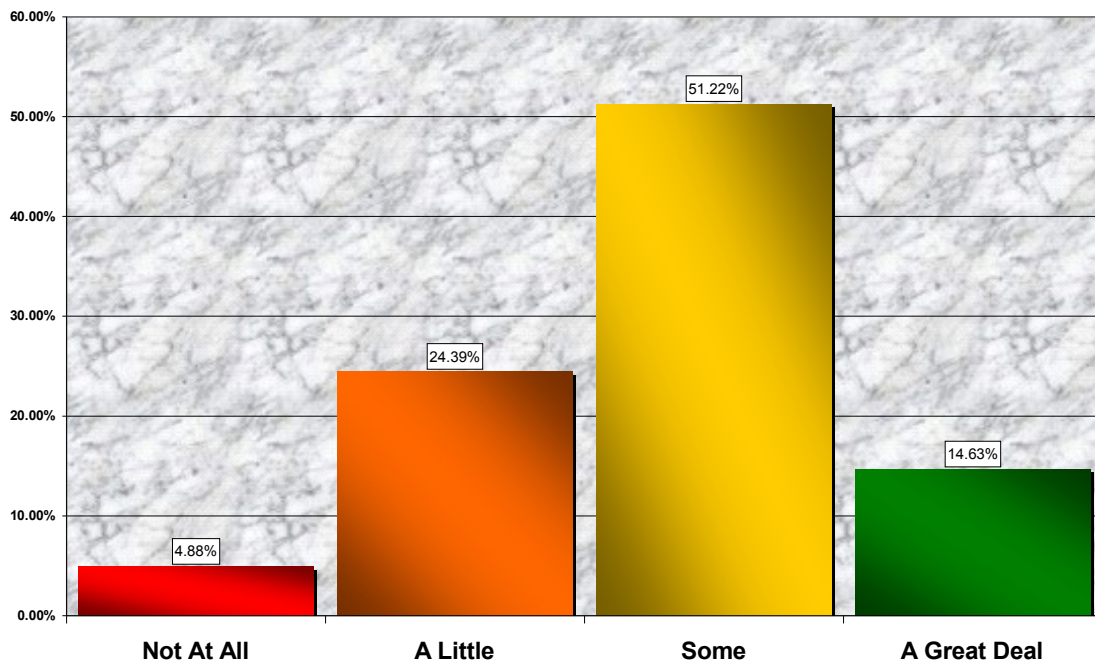
2.3.7 What do you think NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of the students' ability to reflect on practice?

1 = 7.32  
2 = 21.95  
3 = 51.22  
4 = 14.63



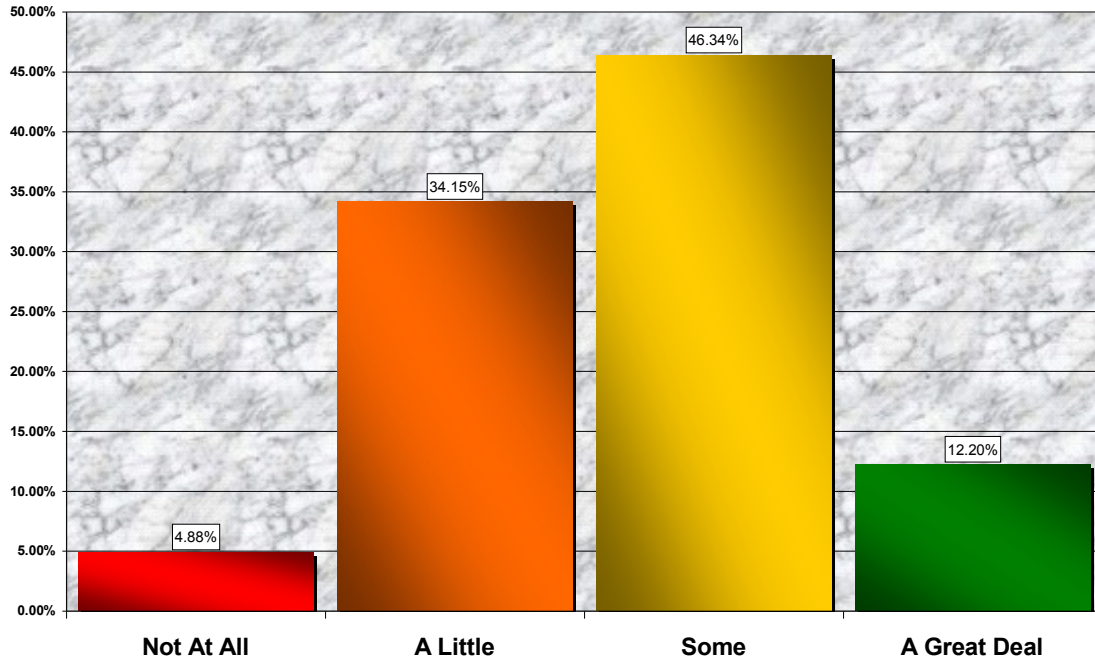
2.3.8 What do you think NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of the students' knowledge of how children learn?

1 = 4.38  
2 = 24.39  
3 = 51.22  
4 = 14.63



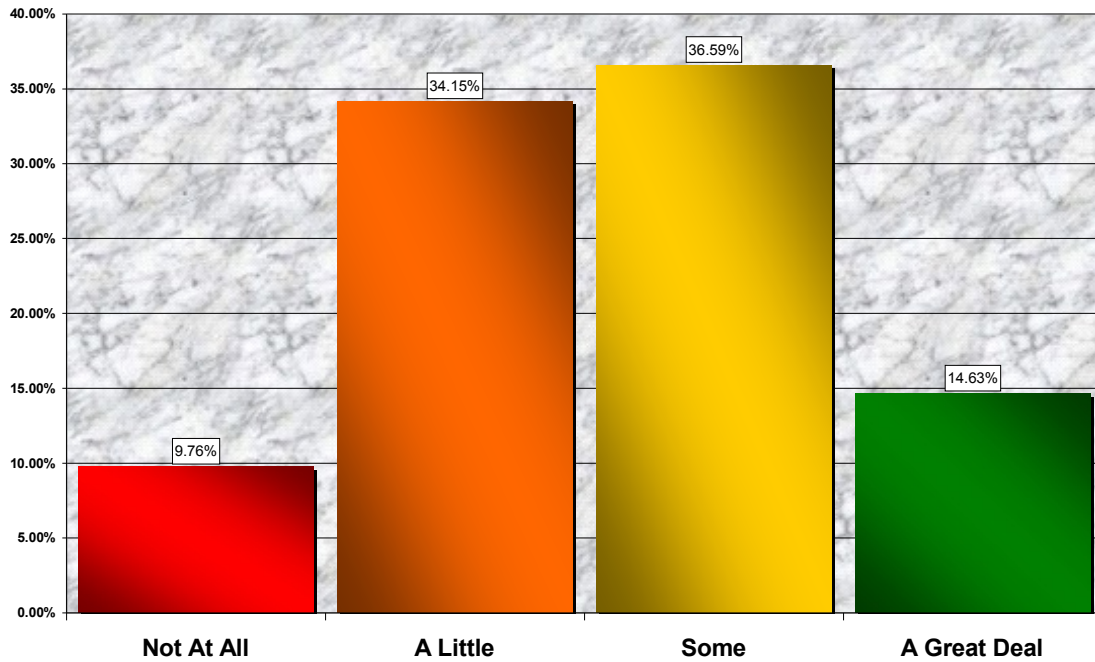
2.3.9 What do you think NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of the extent to which they apply theory into practice?

1 = 4.88  
2 = 34.15  
3 = 46.34  
4 = 12.2



2.3.10 What do you think NQTs with Masters level will bring to their job in terms of the extent to which they reflect on lessons and discuss teaching?

1 = 9.76  
2 = 34.15  
3 = 36.59  
4 = 14.63



2.3.11 In interviews, sections 3.5 – 3. 10 were discussed with headteachers. Some of the comments were connected to Masters level study, but many were not. Headteacher 1 (secondary) discussed the need for NQTs to be aware of new technologies to help children's learning. Headteacher 6 (secondary) equated Masters level with box-ticking when it came to children's learning, separating the notion of a 'good' teacher and a teacher with Masters level:

'M level, QTS whatever, I'm a strong believer that, in terms of being able to assess how the children are learning, I'm not so sure it can be taught ... whilst I am interested in all that research, I think... in a good teacher is the ability to assess whether a child has learnt and use all sorts of [practices] and being able to box them off doesn't necessarily make you a better teacher.'

Headteachers here generally started to expand upon their hoped for benefits of Masters level work for teachers as they engaged more with the topic during the interviews. Headteacher 1 (secondary) suggested:

'I would like to think that they're prepared to be more creative in the classroom, more interested in the classroom, not be frightened to fail.'

By this he meant that he hoped that Masters would encourage teachers to try out new ideas rather than be nervous about going beyond the tick-box requirements of the standards.

Headteacher 2 (secondary) considered that 'the development of skills of analysis and reflection can only be a good thing' and headteacher 3 elaborated on the hope that Masters would bring 'a greater understanding of how children learn':

'If it opens up people's minds and broaden their horizons and give them a variety of teaching styles, then it could be very beneficial.'

Reflection was of prime importance for headteachers although they did not necessarily separate this as something only to do with Masters. Headteacher 1 (secondary) suggested that 'It's got to become a way of life' and headteacher 4 (primary) thought that the work done in the HEI on the reflective practitioner is 'very valuable'. If Masters makes them more critical, (it) is a good thing'.

Headteacher 4 (primary) suggested:

'For a graduate student, irrespective of whether they're doing a Masters, I would expect a level of performance in the classroom but also a level of thinking.'

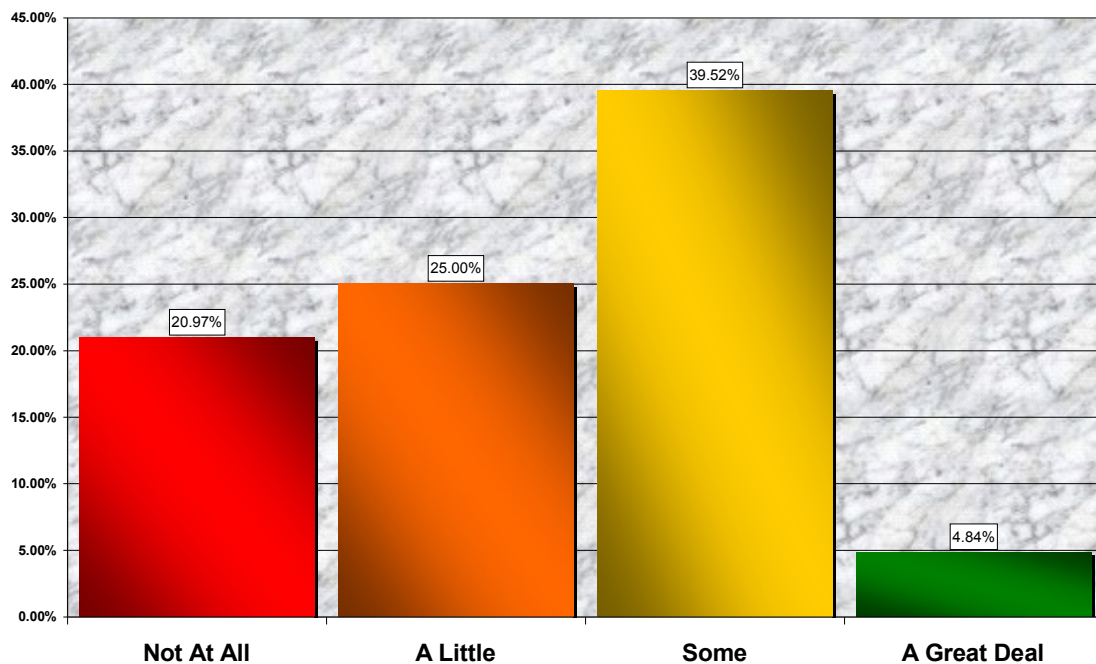
## **2.4. Teacher mentors (appendices vi and vii)**

2.4.1 The survey for teacher mentors in schools was answered by 121 headteachers from 2 HEIs, of which approximately 13% were primary headteachers, 85% secondary and 2% Early Years. The survey was sent out

in the summer of 2008. Interviews were held with eight teacher mentors; four secondary and four primary. The questions in the interview mirrored those in the survey.

### 2.4.2 To what extent do you consider that the HEI has supported you with preparation for Masters level students?

- 1 = 20.97%
- 2 = 25%
- 3 = 39.52%
- 4 = 4.84%

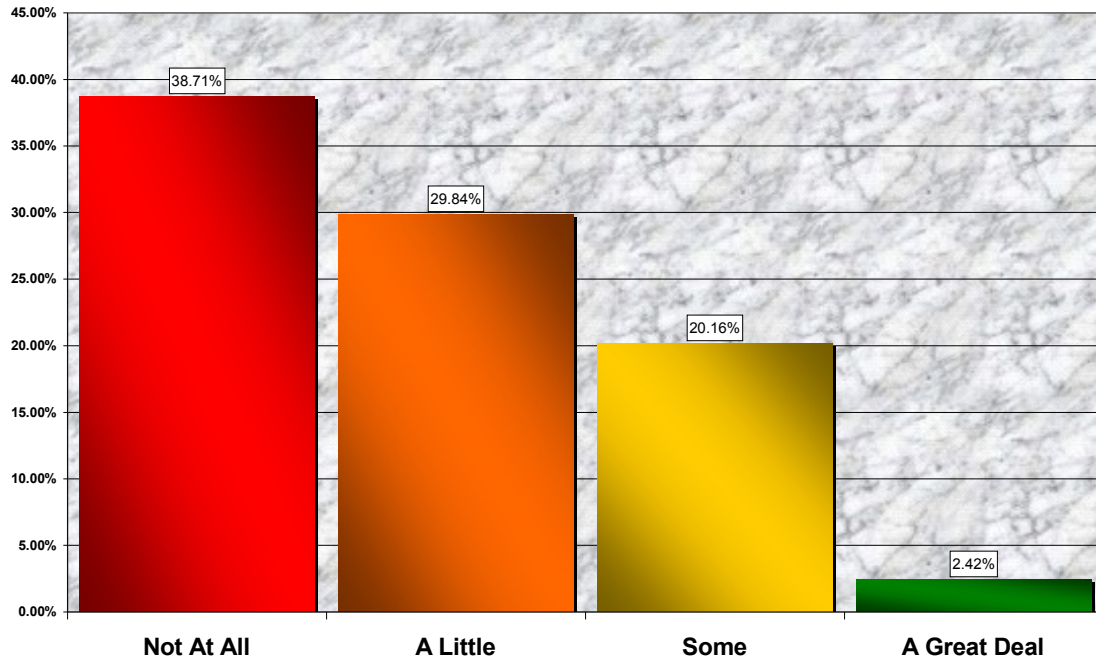


The question in the interviews was worded differently for this section and asked school mentors whether they felt their role had changed since the introduction of Masters level PGCE. Only one of the teacher mentors thought that the role had changed. Teacher mentor 5 (primary) had engaged with the idea of Masters level students being somewhat different and alluded to the fact that she found it helpful that she had a Masters herself:

'I do actually - in two main ways. Firstly I feel the expectations on me are much higher. I'm glad I've been through the Masters process myself, because possibly I've got some retrospective view on how you go through the process myself. Had I not had that experience I think I might have been intimidated over how to support an M level professional to develop on that journey so in that respect expectations have changed.'

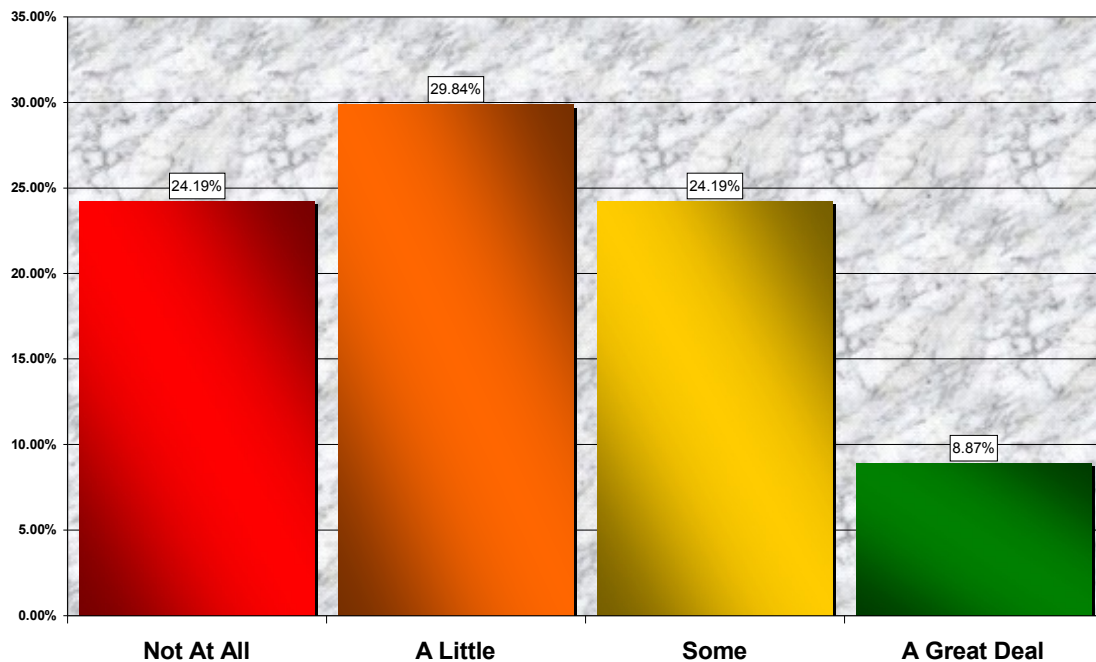
2.4.3 Have you noted any difference in the students who are now studying at Masters level in comparison to students last year who were not studying at Masters level in terms of ... the children's learning?

1 = 38.71  
2 = 29.84  
3 = 20.16  
4 = 2.42



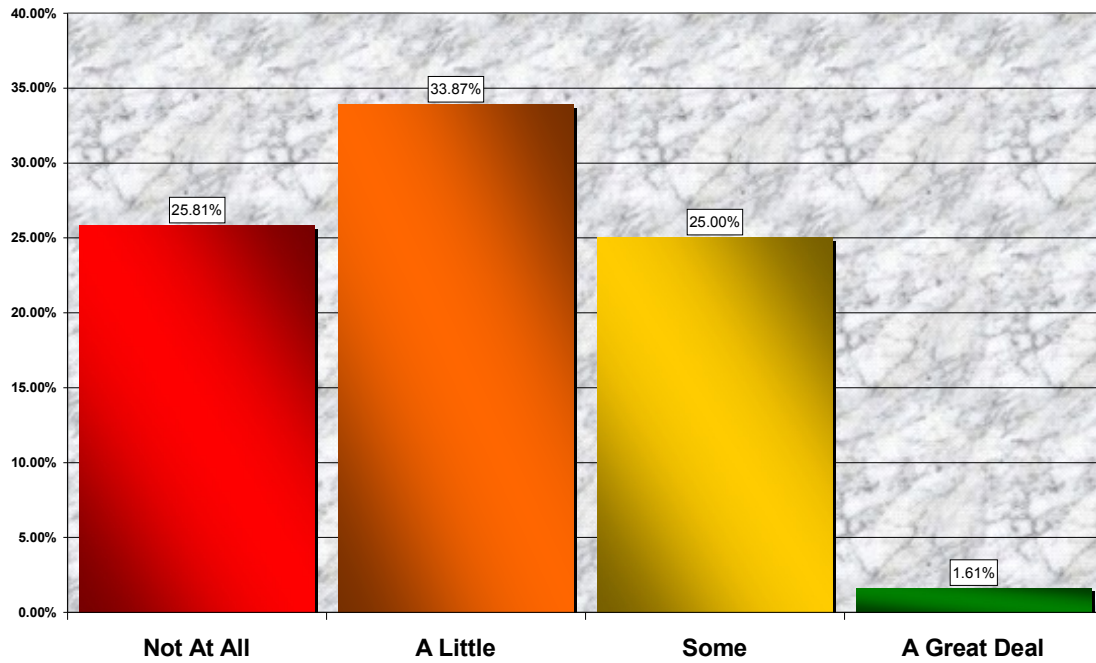
2.4.4 ... the students' ability to reflect on practice?

1 = 24.19  
2 = 29.84  
3 = 24.19  
4 = 8.87



### 2.4.5 ... the students' knowledge of how children learn?

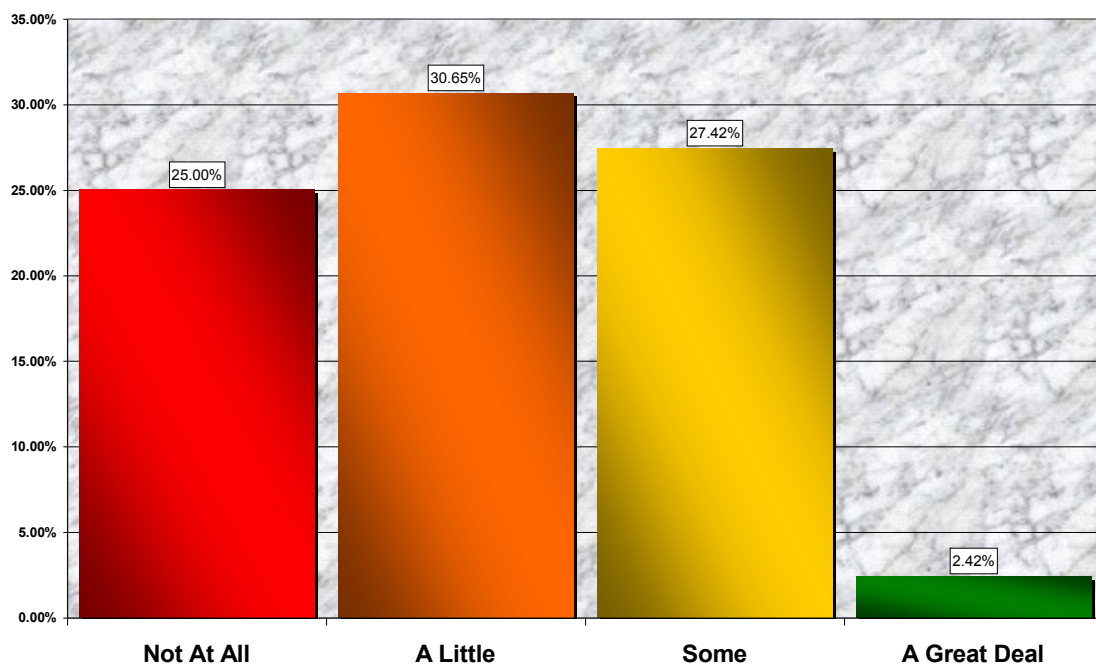
- 1 = 25.81%
- 2 = 33.87%
- 3 = 25%
- 4 = 1.61%



### 2.4.6

...the extent to which students apply theory into practice?

- 1 = 25%
- 2 = 30.65%
- 3 = 27.42%
- 4 = 2.42%





### 2.4.7

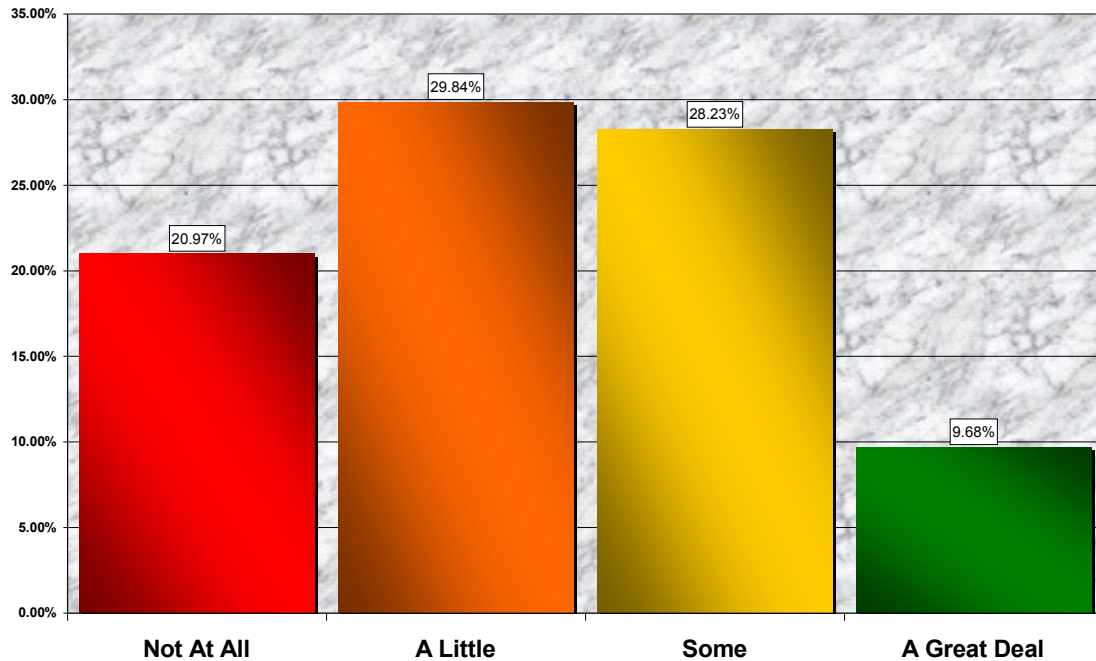
... the extent to which the students reflect on lessons and discuss teaching?

1 = 20.97%

2 = 29.84%

3 = 28.23%

4 = 9.68%



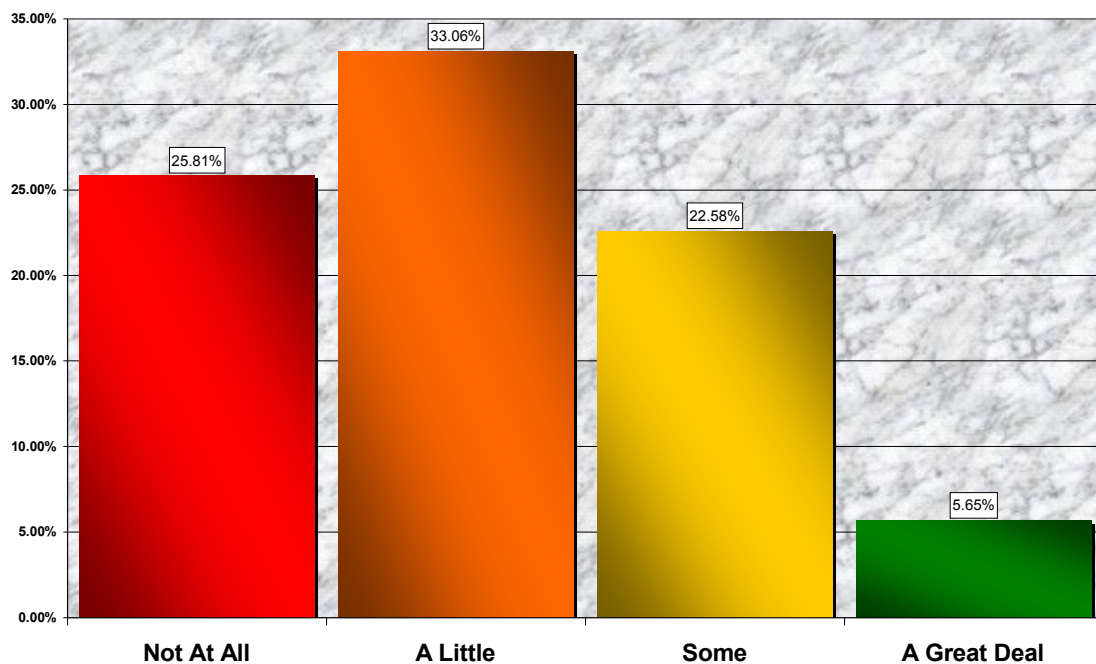
### 2.4.8 ... the extent of students' engagement with teaching and learning?

1 = 25.81%

2 = 33.06%

3 = 22.58%

4 = 5.65%



2.4.9 In the interviews, sections 4.3 – 4.8 were discussed with the school mentors. Most of the teacher mentors spoke from their own experience and tended to limit their comments to one or two students that they had during 2007-8. Any difference they had noted was by no means necessarily a positive difference. They pointed out that, just as always in the past, students were always different – some successful, some not as successful: ‘Generally, it has depended very much on the quality of the students’ (teacher mentor 2). Teacher mentor 1 (primary) felt that the difference this year was that:

‘There seems to be too much focus on students pushing themselves – but to specified criteria, rather than gaining knowledge and understanding of the concepts and their underlying implications for practice.’

The particular student she referred to had ‘made no impact on the children’s learning.’ She showed a poor grasp of understanding this concept. Teacher mentor 3 (secondary) thought that an emphasis on children’s learning was all well and good but it was at the expense of an emphasis on behaviour management and this ‘will have a (negative) effect’.

Teacher mentor 6 (secondary) thought that Masters probably had an effect on children’s learning because of a particular mini research project which the students had done which meant ‘they had to get out of their comfort zone and think creatively about what they were doing’. Teacher mentor 2 (secondary) was of the same opinion that a mini research project had been beneficial to children’s learning because ‘they latched onto something they were particularly interested in – but that was a very big thing’. Teacher mentors 7 (secondary) and 8 (primary) were more cautious, noting that it could just be the particular students they had had, but they had seen a beneficial difference with regard to children’s learning:

‘I think they are slightly more aware and becoming more aware as they went through the 2 placements – more actively involved.’  
Teacher mentor 7

‘The student does think deeply when doing her planning about where the children are and where she’s taking them and how she’s going to do it but that could be that she’s a particularly good student or it could be the course.’  
Teacher mentor 8

With regards to the ability to reflect, again it depends upon the student, but teacher mentors 5 (primary) and 7 (secondary) noted that it has always been that way:

‘I think we’ve always had reflective students from HEI. The university has always been an environment that has valued that a reflective practitioner.’  
Teacher mentor 5

There was a general acknowledgement of the imperative of reflection for the teaching profession:

'It could but I have to say because of the nature of the job we do have to be reflective, as teachers we have to be because if you don't do that then you don't survive.' Teacher mentor 8 (primary)

and some suggestion that it might be more noticeable (teacher mentor 6 secondary) although teacher mentor 1 (primary) suggested that weaker students 'had no capacity to take ideas on board'.

Regarding the ability to apply theory to practice, teacher mentor 5 (primary) was in no doubt that this was not what was wanted from student teachers:

'If I'm brutally honest – no (I don't think theory has any impact). Theory is all well and good but in the early days of being a beginning teacher it's a hands on basic theory that makes a difference and in the early days it's about having the opportunity to go back test things out, evaluate and go back and hone your practice. I think therefore the theory is quite significantly divorced from that, because of the context of each school and of the students you're working with. It's useful to have the theoretical knowledge and that perspective but I don't think it helps you to survive in the classroom.'

Teacher mentor 2 (secondary) stressed the practical nature of teaching and wondered if 'the academic type would fit together (with abilities needed to be a teacher)'. The notion of academic study and teaching being separate in some way was reinforced by teacher mentor 7 (secondary):

'We've had a couple (of students) who are clearly more academic, very thoughtful, very reflective, more analytical – but they stand out. Masters – why should it make a difference really?'

## 2.4.10

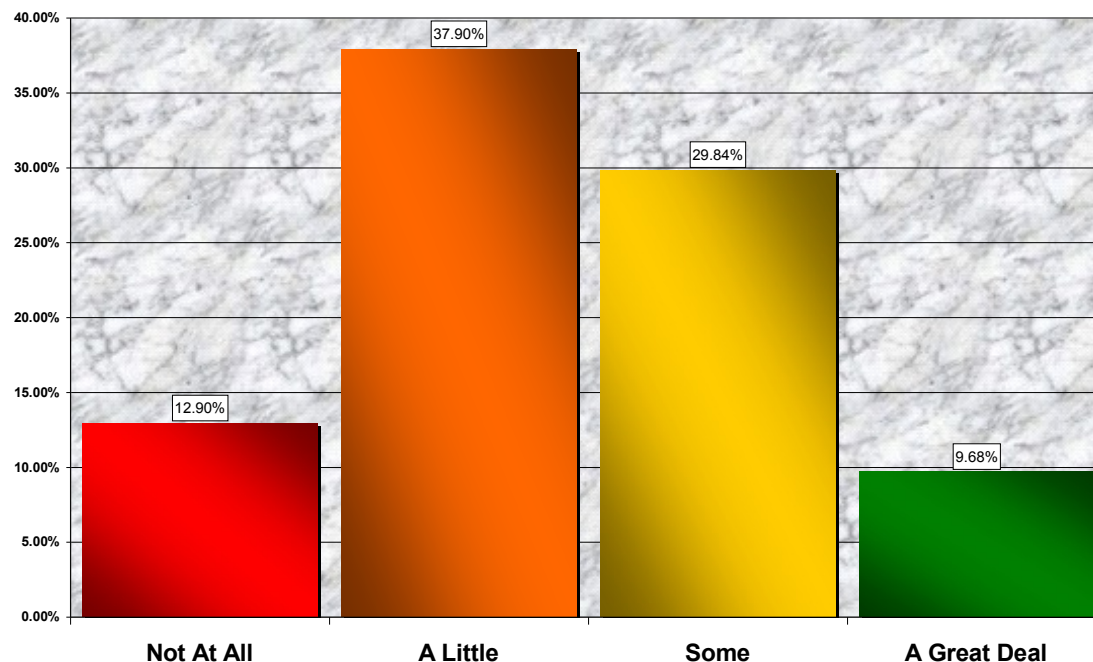
How far do you consider that you know what Masters level is?

1 = 12.9%

2 = 37.9%

3 = 29.84%

4 = 9.68%



In the interviews Teacher mentors' perceptions of what Masters is were similar to those of the headteachers in that some did not know except that it was something higher involving research. Teacher mentor 2 (secondary) like headteacher 6 thought it is not 'relevant or necessary to everybody'. Teacher mentor 1 (primary) elaborated on the idea of research:

'It is intended to create teachers that have a well developed understanding of teaching and learning, based on academic research.'

But stressed again that this is not necessarily what is needed to be a 'good' teacher:

'But what will this actually do? The focus on Masters content may hinder progress towards teachers being competent practitioners, due to over reliance on academic matters beyond their understanding. And this might lead to students thinking they can learn about teaching from a book. Teachers don't need to be academic high fliers; they need to understand learning difficulties.'

Teacher mentor 7 agreed:

'Teachers with further qualifications don't necessarily make good teachers. I think it's taking your eye off the ball – taking people away from what is important. You need the X factor!'

Teacher mentor 4 saw it as a qualification with no particular merit:

'It's a bit like a fairground, picking up prizes on the way – catch the ducks!'

### 2.4.11

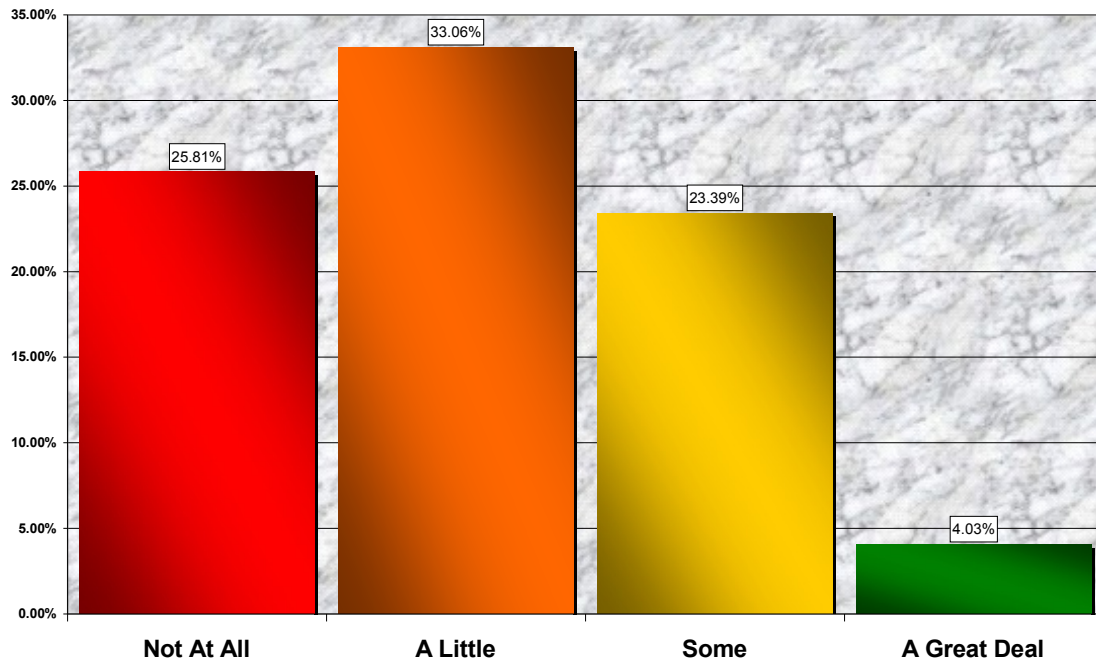
In overall terms do you feel that Masters level is adding value for student teachers?

1 = 25.81%

2 = 33.06%

3 = 23.39%

4 = 4.03%



In the interviews, there were two very negative responses to the idea that Masters level is or could add value to the teaching profession (teacher educator 1 primary and 4 primary).

'I would also have to question why a college feels that it needs to tag the Masters onto a PGCE course, unless it's for purposes of prestige. In the real world, this doesn't mean much.' Teacher mentor 4

Teacher mentor 4 went on to question why Masters was being presented at all, making a distinction between he saw as the idealist world of academe and the real world of teaching:

'We would also have to question why a college feels that it needs to tag the Masters onto a PGCE course, unless it's for purposes of prestige. In the real world, this doesn't mean much.'

Teacher mentor 3 was fairly confident that it is adding value:

'I think it is, for two reasons, one because I think they're being, I suppose, enticed along another route of Higher Education and continuing professional development, which is no bad thing. They're also secondly looking in more detail at their practice and how it affects the outcome and that's precisely what we've asked them to do.'

All the other teacher mentors' verdict was 'maybe'. Teacher educator 2 (secondary) thought it would depend on the student and feared the consequences for those who did not make the grade:

'For some it will be vastly useful and for others it will be a hindrance and pull them down – which will be a shame.'

Teacher mentor 5 (primary) rated the role of the HEI very highly:

'The barriers are being broken down now in terms of the way serving professionals are working with HEIs with the opportunity for them to develop their skills and get accredited. If this momentum keeps up there will be massive potential. I can see that the professionals will have huge part to play.'

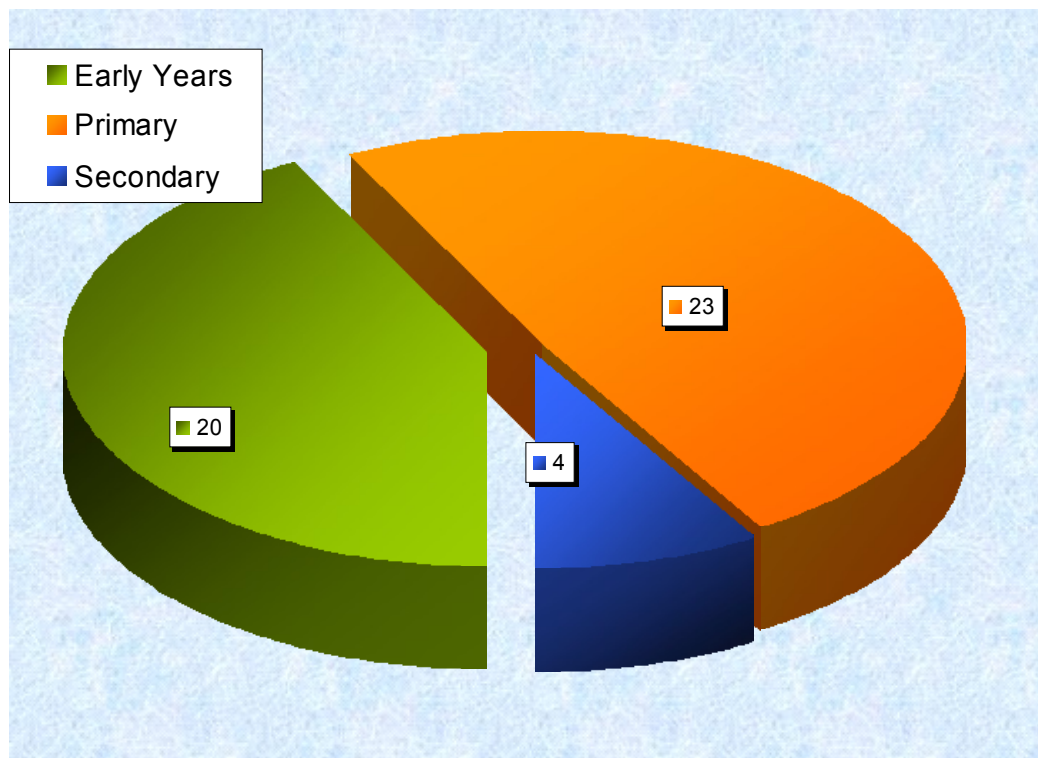
Teacher mentors 6 (secondary) and 8 (primary) both thought, like headteachers that time was needed before a verdict could be reached but teacher mentor 7 issued a word of warning about the certitude that time will give the answers:

'I don't know – in 5 years how will we really know?'

## 2.5 Teacher educators – autumn 2007 (appendices x and xi)

2.5.1 The survey for teacher educators was answered by 47 teacher educators from 5 HEIs, of which approximately 48% were primary headteachers, 42% secondary and 10% Early Years. The survey was completed in the autumn term of 2007.

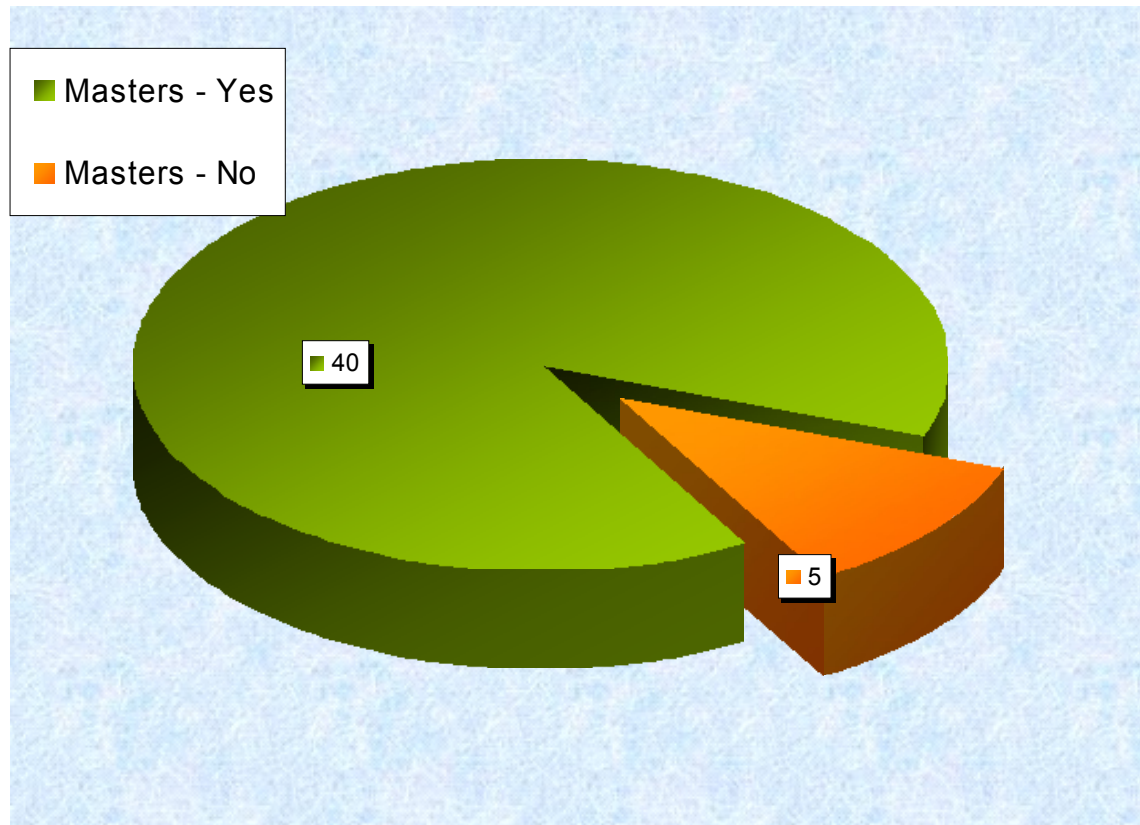
### Questionnaire results



Interviews were held with nine teacher educators from four different HEIs in the autumn term 2007 of which four were secondary and five were primary. The questions in the interview mirrored those in the survey.

2.5.2 Of 45 responses, approximately 88% of the teacher educators had a Masters degree, 12% did not.

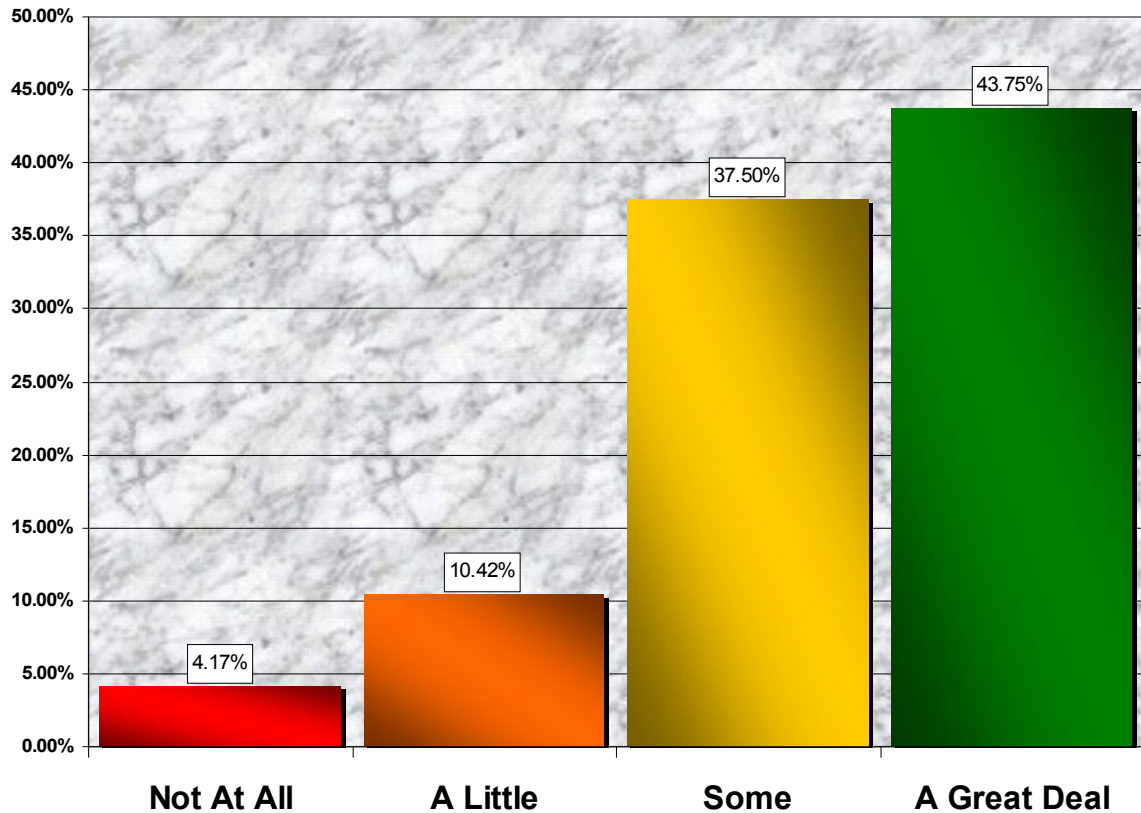
#### Questionnaire results



In the interviews, one teacher educator was in the process of studying for a Masters degree, the other eight had a Masters; all but one was related specifically to education.

### 2.5.3 To what extent have you felt comfortable teaching at Masters level?

- 1 = 4.17%
- 2 = 10.42%
- 3 = 37.5%
- 4 = 43.75%



In the interviews, all but one of the teacher educators were comfortable with teaching at Masters level; the one who did not had a Masters degree but not in education. It was noted by all but two of the teacher educators that the process of studying for a Masters degree themselves had been beneficial to them when faced with teaching students at Masters level. The two teacher educators who were uncomfortable were the two who had not got a Masters in an education related subject, or had not yet got a Masters:

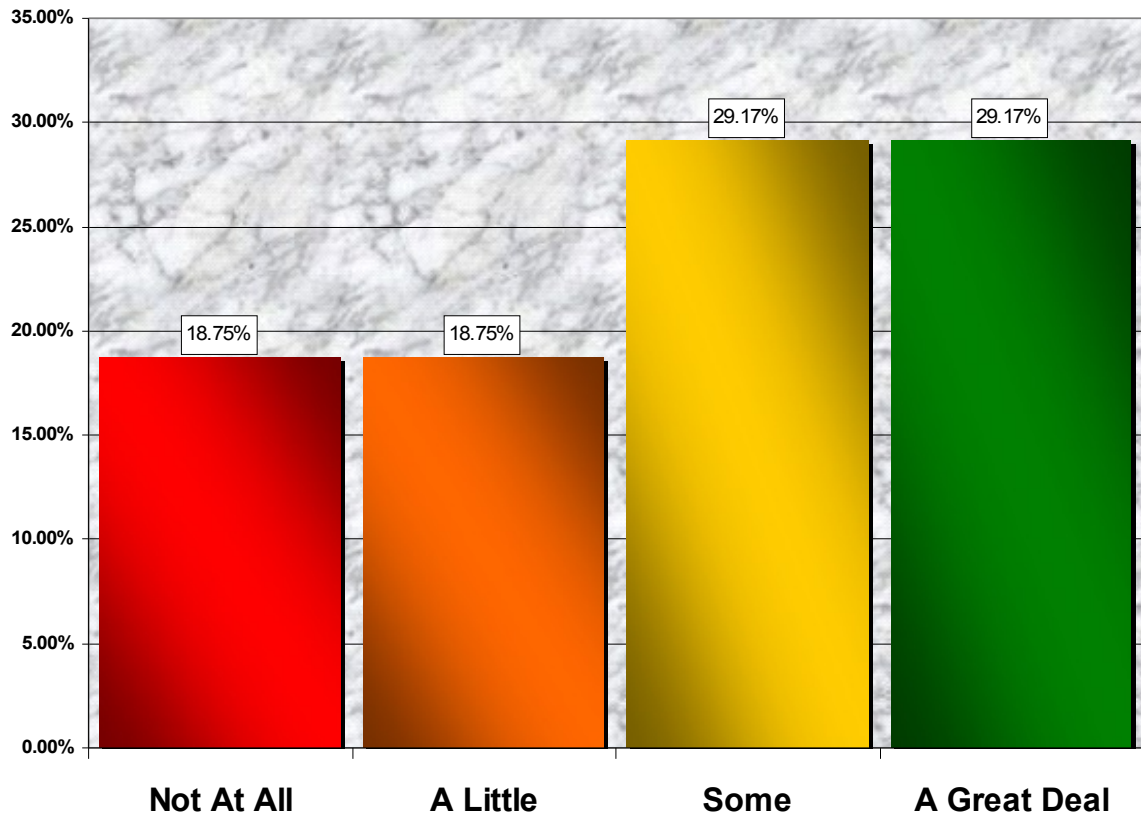
'I'm less comfortable about the prospect of teaching M level than I am about teaching what I've been doing for the last 15 years.'  
Teacher educator 1

'I'm uncomfortable that I'm training them to get something with Masters and I haven't got it. I question the credibility of it.'  
Teacher educator 6



2.5.4 To what extent do you feel that the HEI has supported you during the teaching of Masters level before the start of the course?

- 1 = 18.75%
- 2 = 18.75%
- 3 = 29.17%
- 4 = 29.17%

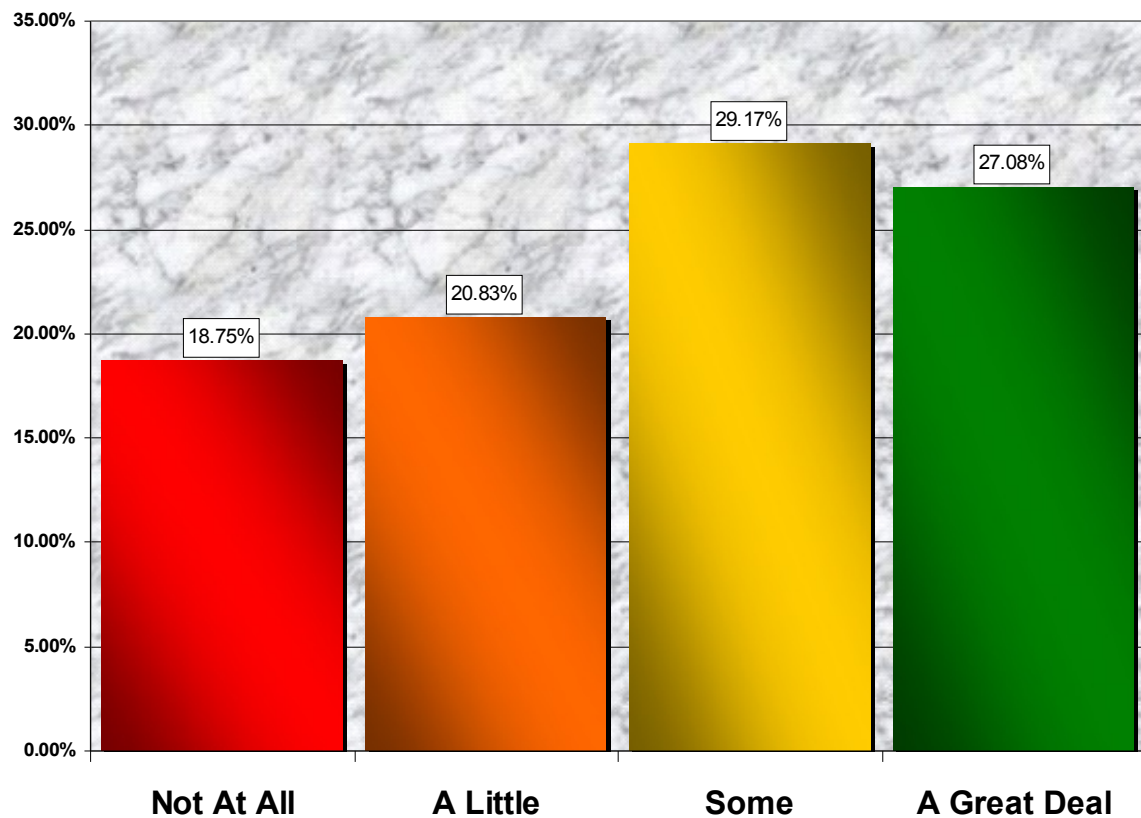


In the interviews there was a mixed response. Generally there had not been much in the way of in depth preparation. One teacher educator noted that people were approachable if there were questions to be asked, but found it difficult to know what to ask. (Teacher educator 1) There was some training but it was not always seen as beneficial, particularly in terms of how to approach the teaching of Masters:

'I think the preparation, if you can call it that, discussions about the Masters level criteria that we were going to use. I don't really recall any discussion in terms of how we teach so it's more to do with assessment.'  
Teacher educator 3

### 2.5.5 To what extent do you feel that the HEI has supported you during the teaching of Masters level?

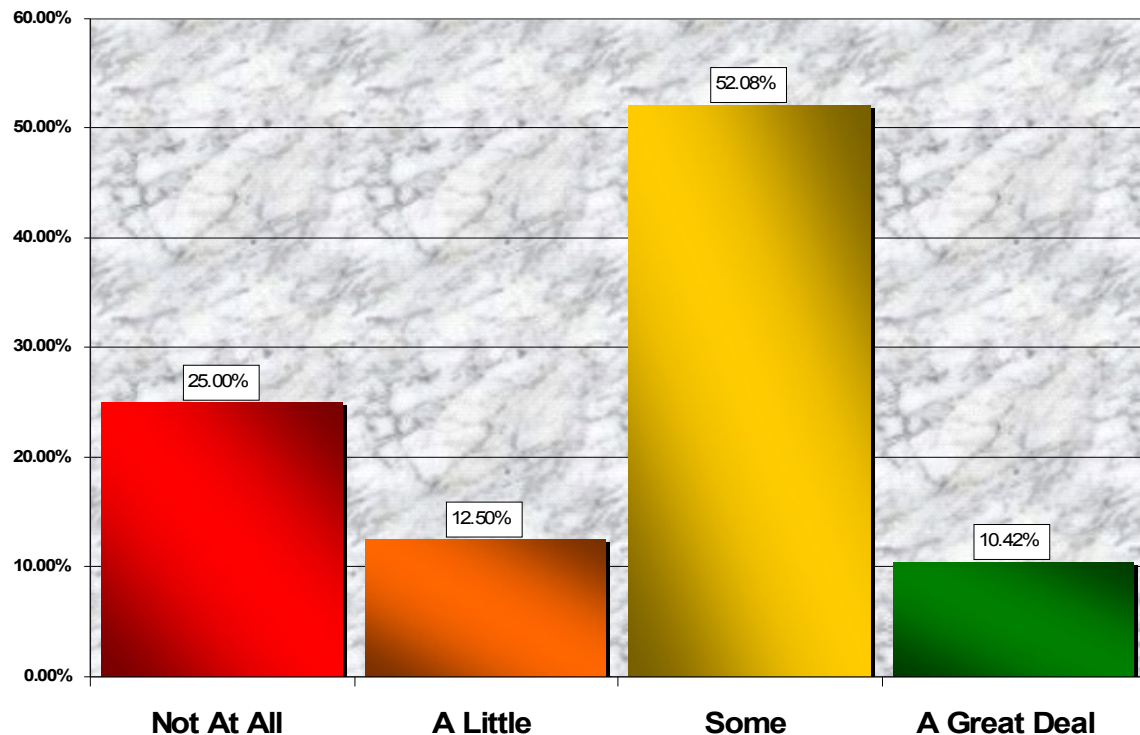
- 1 = 18.75%
- 2 = 20.83%
- 3 = 29.17%
- 4 = 27.08%



In the interviews it was clear that, very much, people were 'left to their own devices' (teacher educator 4) but there was agreement that discussions would be ongoing and that they felt the situation would improve over time; this would be down to the tutors rather than an overall plan.

## 2.5.6 To what extent have you changed what you do in order to teach at Masters level?

1 = 25%  
2 = 12.5%  
3 = 52.08%  
4 = 10.42%



In the interviews there was a recognition that people were feeling their way and that gradually some 'Mness' was creeping in:

'Not yet but probably will but I seem to be using the words critical reflection a lot.'

Teacher educator 1

Apart from the increase in the use of the term 'critical reflection' other things that teacher educators cited as being M level and therefore changes in their practice were:

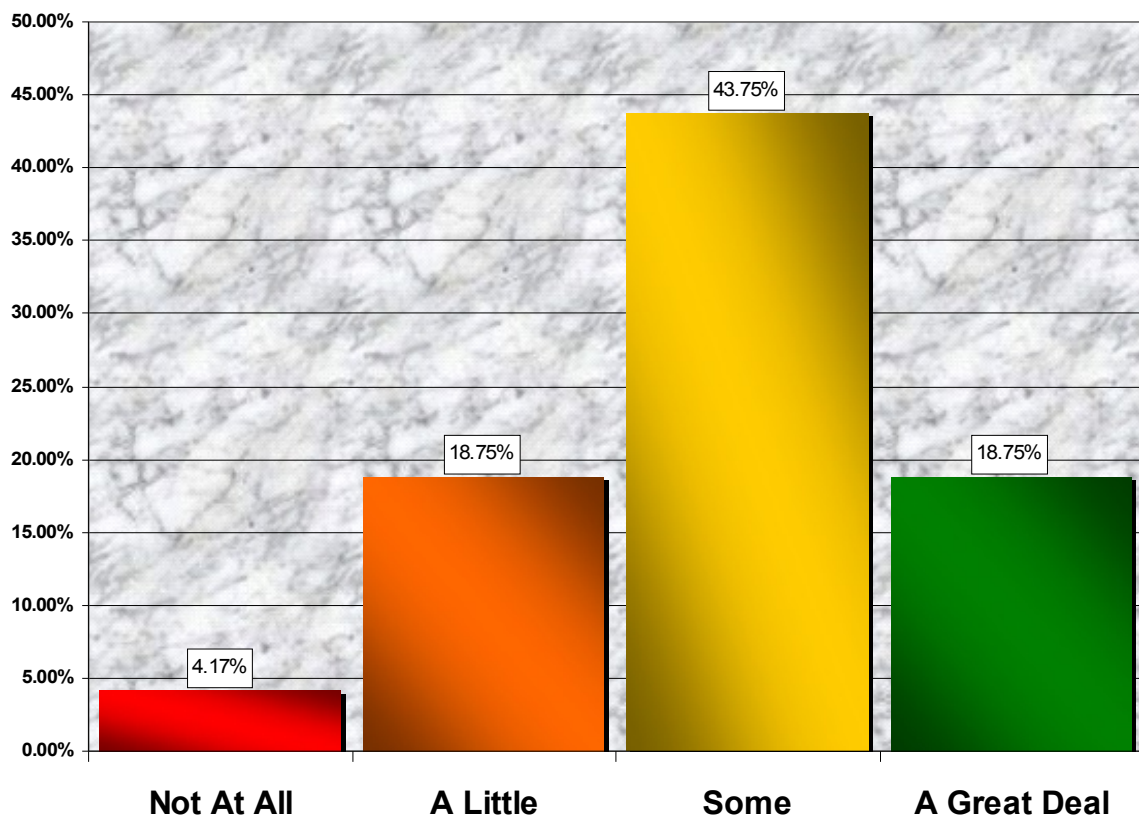
- tasks being more student centred; tutors engaging in much wider reading;
- expectations of the way that they have a higher level of independent or intra-independent;
- more evaluative work;
- doing a lot more of facilitating their learning rather than the tutor doing direct teaching;

- an expectation shift because the PGCE has been very much problem based, so there's a lot less of an expectation of people being 'spoon-fed', given lots of things;
- a culture of enquiry as opposed to a culture of give us what we need to learn;
- more research based projects giving them opportunity to work with the theory and the practical experiences – the theory and the practice together simultaneously

One teacher educator noted that 'the priority for me on the PGCE course is still to prepare students to be good teachers' (teacher educator 5) and separated Masters from this.

### 2.5.7 To what extent do you consider that your students have engaged with educational theory?

- 1 = 4.17%
- 2 = 18.75%
- 3 = 43.75%
- 4 = 18.75%



In the interviews, one teacher educator felt negatively about the students' willingness to engage with theory, but was not despondent about the final outcome:

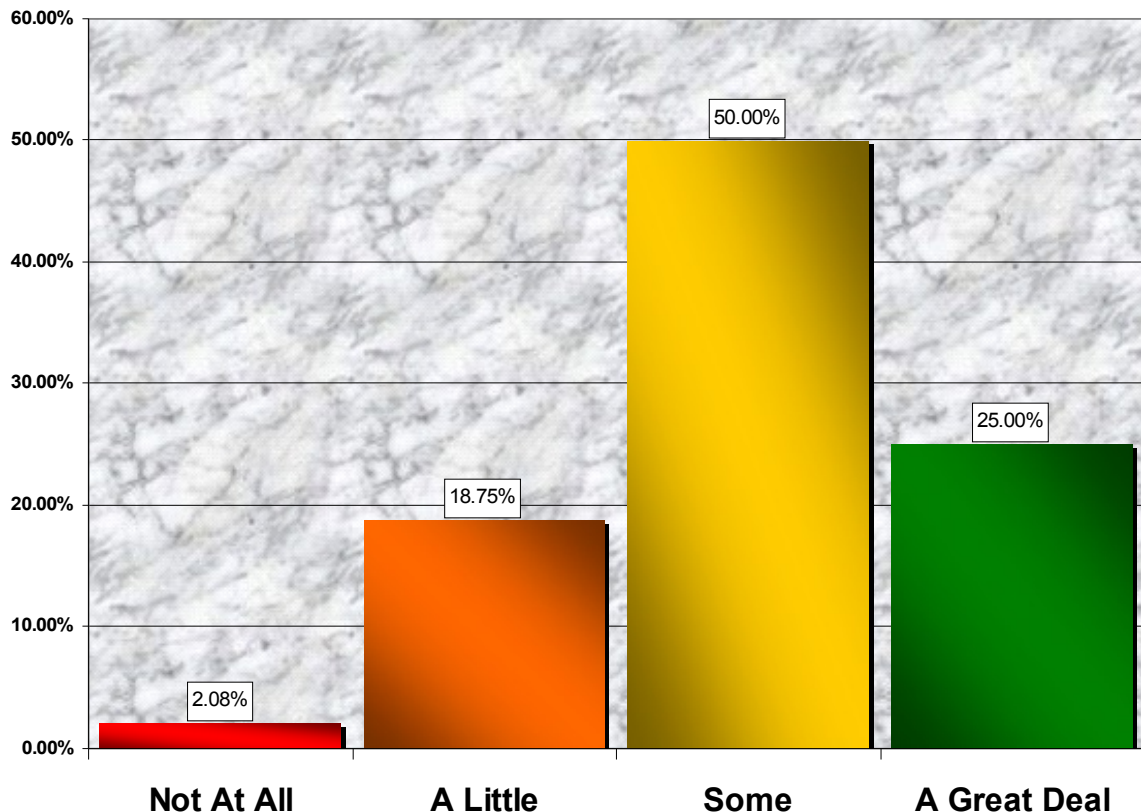
'They have to read and want it on a plate. It's going to be an uphill struggle but I am confident we will be successful.' Teacher educator 7

All the other teacher educators felt reasonably optimistic about theory and practice but it was not necessarily anything to do with Masters study. Teacher educator 4 suggested 'they always did' (engage with theory) and there was a feeling that PGCE students, bringing extra maturity to their teacher training course were naturally 'ready to discuss and share experiences'. (Teacher educator 9) There was a strong feeling that, as it always had been, it always would depend on the student; some would, some would not:

'I don't think you can generalise if I think back but I think you'll always have the individuals who do engage with educational theory at the highest level because they are really keen and they want to inform themselves and we do provide them with a lot in the way of reading lists so the ones who are enquiring and determined and keen have always done that and I can see the pattern again – people will follow it as far as they want to go really so even this year we've got people already, there's quite a big scale of differentiation between the ones who do really engage.'  
Teacher educator 2

### 2.5.8 To what extent do you consider that your students are positive towards Masters level on the whole?

- 1 = 2.08%
- 2 = 18.75%
- 3 = 50%
- 4 = 25%



As with the previous question, there was a feeling that the extent to which students had engaged with Masters level varied according to the student. However, generally there was a positive feeling that students were engaging with the course although Masters and teaching tended to be considered as separate:

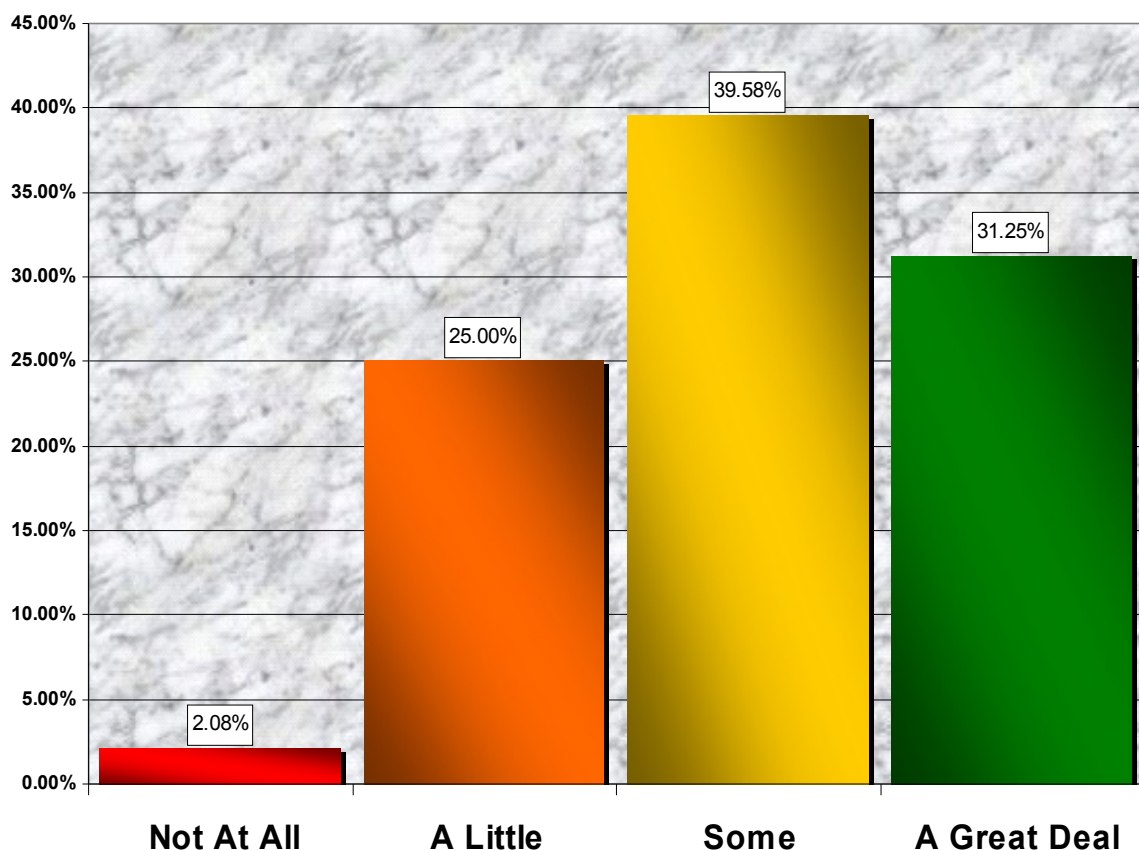
'I don't necessarily feel that they chose to do our course because it was at Masters level, I think they chose it for a whole range of reasons and they see it as an extra bow and an extra challenge, they are very enthusiastic as you would expect because they're starting a new course and they want to be teachers. I think primarily they want to be teachers but the aspect - they can see the importance of studying at Masters as an addition and an extra challenge.' Teacher educator 9

Another teacher educator suggested that Masters was not the students' priority:

'At the moment they're overwhelmed and I don't think they see the relevance of it yet. I think it will only be perhaps after the event that they'll see the relevance, certainly the students I interviewed saw it as something very separate.' Teacher educator 8

### 2.5.9 To what extent do you consider that Masters level is adding value to the preparation of teachers?

- 1 = 2.08%
- 2 = 39.58%
- 3 = 39.58%
- 4 = 31.25%



In the interviews all teacher educators thought it early days and were not sure what the future may bring. Teacher educator 2 thought that Masters alone might not add value, it was just one of many things required:

‘There is a heck of a lot more needs to be done from the outside to make the status of the profession – better pay and a lot of things – treat it on a par with lawyers, doctors, whatever.’

Teacher educator 3 noted how difficult it would be to measure this and teacher educator 9 suggested that whatever Masters would bring it would be add value, but again, that value would be ‘felt’ rather than measured:

‘The Masters level brings that edge to the programme – that we’ve given them a deeper understanding and thought behind what they actually do.’

Teacher educator 8 sums up the perceptions of the value of Masters at this early stage:

‘It think it will enrich them (the student teachers) in that they will engage more with theory, so they will understand why they’re doing what they do and will make informed choices based on that as opposed to what I did in the classroom which was made my choices based on what I think what will work, more trial and error method. I do think there’ll be resistance from schools because I think there will be a lot of teachers out there were threatened by it, a lot of teachers out there who think, you don’t need a Masters degree to become a good teacher and in some ways I don’t think you do. I think you don’t necessarily have to have a Masters to be a good teacher but I think it will provide a stronger foundation across the profession because you’ll be getting teachers who can think beyond, let’s look on the internet for a plan and print it off and that’s how you plan, you’ll be getting teachers who can begin to understand why they do what they do, which I think is fundamental really.’

## **2.6 Teacher educators – summer 2008 (appendix xiii)**

The survey was only completed by a very small number of teacher educators and no significant data is available.

2.6.1 Six interviews were held with teacher educators from one HEI in the summer of 2008, four from primary and two secondary.

2.6.2 There was little feeling that the role of teacher educator had significantly changed now that the PGCE was at Masters level.

2.6.3 There were mixed feelings regarding whether or not the students following the Masters course are ‘different’. As in the interviews with teacher educators carried out in the autumn term, there was a feeling that students were different, one from the other and that some engage well with Masters work and gain from it and some do not. Teacher educator 3 pointed out that:

'They (the students) do not have the experience to really see why it (Masters study) matters or how it matters and it's not till several years that it makes sense.'

Teacher educator 1 thought that students were more interested in the practicalities of teaching than an in depth discussion of it:

'Did I get to the end of my plan? Did the children learn anything? Were they well behaved? Did I lose my rag? You know those sorts of questions. Whereas I want them to think much more about the way in which they learned, could they have learned in a better/different way; could more of them have learned if I'd used this strategy?'

Teacher educator 5 was not sure about any differences and any increased engagement with teaching and learning might be guessed at, but not measured:

'It's difficult to gauge to what extent it has encouraged those who maybe wouldn't have to do that.'

However there are some interesting comments from teacher educators which suggest that Masters work had had some effect. Teacher educator 2 noted:

'I think what we've been able to do is heighten their skills of noticing and skills of spotting what's going on in the classroom, looking beyond themselves as teachers.'

Teacher educator 5 picked out the following example:

'I think the research module has because I think possibly not something general but in particular areas because the focus that they've chosen they've obviously looked at something specific and had to look at how children learn within that context.'

The ability to reflect on practice was seen as fundamental to the benefits of Masters level study; teacher educator 1 had stressed it more during the course and thought it still needed to be stressed more. Teacher educator 4 had also stressed it:

'I think I'm certainly getting much more reflection and a much broader range of reflection. I think they're finding it easier to see where they're going wrong and they're not just thinking in terms of what they're doing – they're thinking in terms of the children's learning much more.'

Teacher educator 5 agreed that this had been a noticeable difference with the M level PGCE cohort:

'I think they have had to be more reflective. I think the modules and the content of the course have required a lot more than in the past so yes they have had to be more reflective and it's been a key part of the course.'

Another noticeable difference was with the application of theory and practice:



'Yes I think that's been a huge difference – in terms of when the students have been out on placement – when they come back the kind of discussion – the professional discussion - that they have incorporates that feeling a lot more.' Teacher educator 5

2.6.4 These participants confirmed what had been said in the autumn term about support for preparation for Masters level students; the support was mainly concerned with how to assess at Masters rather than how to teach at Masters.

2.6.5 There was little problem in the teacher educators' minds about observing students teach for QTS competence and observing for evidence of the application of theory. Teacher educator 1 sums this up:

'I look for the evidence of QTS when I'm observing teaching. It's afterwards when I'm giving the feedback that I talk about the theory. But I don't find a tension between the two.'

2.6.6 With regard to whether Masters level is adding value for student teachers, teacher educator 3 thought it far too early to tell:

'I think you can only tell that by tracking the students over a time period and seeing where it leads them to and where they end up and then you may be able to have some input as to whether it's adding value.'

Teacher educator 1 did not see any evidence of value being added in the classroom but there were other positive perceptions like those of teacher educator 3. Teacher educator 4 was enthusiastic but warned that the idea of an all Masters profession was unlikely:

'I think I think the idea of an M-teach profession is a good one. I don't think all our teachers are going to be capable of it. I would like to think most of them would be and I think it would make us better teachers in that sense eventually. I think the idea of bringing out the idea of doing a bit of research about what's going on in your classroom and actually probing a bit deeper is good.'

Teacher educator 5 also looked forward to a positive future for M level and teaching:

'I think it has already had an impact and I also think it sows the seeds. I think the students who actually see the value of reflection and I talk to the students about how on a daily basis a reflective teacher will look at something and think: "now that's interesting you know why is that happening?"'

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 Student data - autumn 2007

3.1.1 The quantitative data collected in the student questionnaires from our sample suggests that, whilst the majority have not previously studied at Masters level, there is a positive response to studying at Masters level from students starting in September 2007 on their PGCE/M course. The qualitative interview data confirmed the trends that emerged from the initial student questionnaire data. The key perceptions from student teachers are:

1. Masters level is important in addition to QTS;
2. Masters will contribute to their teaching;
3. Theory will contribute positively to the practice of teaching;
4. Masters level credits will enhance their prospects of getting a job as a teacher.

3.1.2 These findings would seem to suggest that student teachers welcome government plans to make teaching a Masters profession as in the message of the Children's Plan (DfCSF, 2007:4.24). Student teachers seem to have high expectations and enthusiasm for Masters level study. This brings its own responsibilities for teacher educators who would hopefully feel charged with not letting this enthusiasm down. However, there was not 100% positive response and the negative perceptions need to be taken into account as well, as these offer significant insight into possibilities of why Masters level PGCE provision might not be as successful as hoped.

3.1.3 Teacher educators involved in the PAR discussions suggested a note of caution; when the questionnaires and interviews were done, the students were in the early days of their course and 'they did not know what they did not know'. For example, although 67% felt that Masters credits would be of value, it is difficult to know how students perceived value when 86% had no experience of Masters level study. This concern was raised by teacher educators in the PAR discussions who felt that students had an inconsistent and/or incomplete view of what value meant here. It remains clear, however, that the response was positive and not negative; there was no indication of any sense of total rejection of Masters level study which could have been a possible finding. This also suggests a high level of trust on behalf of the student teachers. The government has endorsed the move to a Masters profession, the HEIs have embraced this notion. One of the student participants in this research noted that the government knew best, 'I imagine that whatever comes out of the government has been decided by a body of people that includes teachers so it's a realistic thing you're aiming at'. The irony for Masters level study could be that the aim to create a critical thinking profession which questions the status quo might be founded upon a trusting uncritical acceptance of a new status quo which is embraced because government and tutors say it is the way forward. This raises questions for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers; if students are embarking on an M level PGCE course, should they not be more fully appraised of just what this means, both philosophically and practically?

3.1.4 Student perceptions in the Masters level pilot research project of what Masters level study might entail reflected uncertainty concerning what this would mean in relation to their teaching course. In fact there were several examples from the interviews and questionnaires which suggested that students found it hard to define Masters level study or equate Masters level study with teaching in the classroom. Findings from questionnaires indicated that students thought the link between theory and practice was important, but some interview responses indicated little understanding of what this really meant. Although this is perhaps hardly surprising seeing as 86% of the respondents had not encountered Masters level study before, it does raise the issue of whether they had thoroughly considered the Masters level study components of the course when applying and whether these had been adequately portrayed in the documentation. If Masters has the potential to become a more effective approach in relation to helping students to bridge the gap between theory and practice, it is essential that student teachers do not divorce the one from the other or see Masters as a somewhat irrelevant 'bolt-on'.

3.1.5 Although students thought Masters level credits would enhance their job prospects, some interview responses indicated that there was still a need for clarification about the link between studying at Masters level and becoming a good teacher. Views from teacher educators in the PAR discussions suggested that teacher educators needed to be more explicit about how Masters level study could enhance and deepen an understanding about learning and teaching and, as a result, enhance job prospects.

## **3.2 Students - summer 2008**

3.2.1 In the quantitative data collected through the second survey in the summer term of 2008, over 80% of students equated Masters with such things as reading, conducting small scale research, linking theory to practice and critical reflection. Because these questions were closed, it can be argued that there was a suggestion to the respondents that these were indeed what Masters is all about. It is also very possible that students answered positively to these questions because they had been taught that these were what Masters is about and were therefore answering on behalf of others' perceptions. Two questions remain; are these actually what Masters is and are students allowed to work out for themselves or 'spoon fed' a response? The interviews suggest that student teachers' certainty about Masters is by no means secure at the end of their PGCE course. They mentioned essays and criticality without any convincing explanation which inspires one to suppose that they have no clear definition of what they mean by it. There was also a somewhat worrying supposition that Masters is just about marks – another tick box – and an even more worrying supposition that the marks received for Masters level credits in the PGCE are a watered down version of a mystical 'real' Masters.

3.2.2 The survey revealed that 55% of students had not continued with Masters study but did not delve into reasons for this. If teaching is to be a Masters profession, the likelihood that all entrants to the profession will

continue to Masters might seem questionable according to these findings. However, significantly approximately three quarters of respondents did think that Masters would be something they would consider pursuing in the future. This brings up the question of whether Masters in training is too early and needs greater experience and maturity in the profession before it can be tackled with confidence. The interviews seem to support this idea as there were strong hints that the pressures of the short PGCE course are so great that it would be later in the career that teachers would return to Masters. A significant point here, which, it will be noticed, recurs in further findings, is that a positive seed seemed to have been sown, even though it may lie dormant for some time.

3.2.3 An interesting finding in the survey data is that students, by the end of their course, seem to value Masters a little more than when they started; approximately 12% more student valued Masters more by the end of the course than at the beginning. This could be interpreted as a repetition of the idea of the gradual increase in positive perceptions of Masters level. This was further reinforced in the interviews where a high percentage of students (80%) were initially negative and only 46% approximately thought that it had benefited their teaching, but when asked to explore their perceptions more deeply, began to contradict themselves and point to aspects of the Masters work which had been enjoyable and valuable.

3.2.4 An interesting result in the quantitative data was that approximately 70% of students registered no apparent problem due to their subject specialism. As there were and still are fears that students who are not used to writing essays might struggle with this aspect of the Masters assessment, this suggests that this is not necessarily the case.

3.2.5 Linking of theory and practice was seen by students as they started the course as beneficial, with approximately 90% rating this as helpful to their teaching. By the time they reached the end of the course, this figure had dropped considerably to 57%, suggesting that the reality had not lived up to their expectations. However, yet again, when this question was probed more deeply in the interviews, the same contradictions started to arise as the students offered, of their own accord, occasions when the theory, however difficult or seemingly remote in the first place, had been valuable in the second place. The interviews seem to suggest a fashion of negativity at the end of a long and arduous course, which, over time, will begin to turn to a realisation of positive benefits.

3.2.6 In the early days of the course, 68% of students had been confident that Masters level study would be beneficial in the job market. The reality of the situation when they were out looking for those jobs at the end of the course did not live up to those expectations with now only 30% feeling that Masters was beneficial. Questions raised here would be whether or not the schools where they were applying were aware of or interested in the hoped for extra qualities which they brought to their first post. A comparison with the headteachers' responses will be of interest later in this discussion. Without a

link to the schools, it could be argued that HEIs and schools are walking in different directions, oblivious of each others' priorities.

### **3.3 Headteachers**

3.3.1 Following on from the final comment in the section above, the headteachers in this research did not seem to know much at all about Masters level PGCE. In both the survey and the interviews there was evidence of an at best hazy perception of what was happening. It is possible to ask here whether it is the 'duty' of the headteachers to become conversant with what is happening in training or whether it is the 'duty' of the trainers to induct the headteachers. In any case, if teaching is to become an all Masters profession it would seem appropriate that headteachers are not only aware of this but fully cognisant of what this means. As mentioned above, the research here is suggesting another place where schools and HEIs are not 'singing from the same hymn sheet'.

3.3.2 Headteachers were somewhat ambivalent about whether or not Masters would add value to the teaching profession in the survey and the interviews, with evidence of a lack of clarity in their perceptions. This would seem to be hardly surprising if they had not really engaged with Masters as suggested above. There were participants in the interviews who held to the view that a 'good' teacher did not need higher qualifications or that the whole Masters agenda jars against the perceived prescription of standards. As suggested in the summer student data, there were also feelings that Masters was something for later in the career and then not necessary or even desirable for all.

3.3.3 Headteachers were unsure about the effects of Masters training in the survey. They mostly hesitated around the mid point with regards to how much Masters would contribute to children's learning, the ability to link theory to practice and to engage with teaching and learning. Despite a slightly more positive perception about students' ability to reflect and know how children learn, there was no convincing suggestion that they thought that Masters was contributing a great deal to students' classroom practice or sense of teacher professionalism. However, just as the student interviews had shown glimmers of more positive perceptions about Masters in the interviews, the same was true about headteachers. Creativity, criticality, reflective practice and the broadening of the mind beyond a tick box culture were all teased out as the aspirations of headteachers for the new teacher professional and, when asked to think more deeply, these perceptions of the possible benefits of Masters were elicited. This could suggest again that over time there may be an unfolding of positive benefits from Masters study.

3.3.4 Students' perceptions of the advantages of Masters credits for the jobs' market changed between the beginning of the course and the end. By the end, when they had been for interviews themselves they were feeling negative and one could therefore expect that the headteachers might show that this negativity was mirrored in their perceptions. In the survey there was some correlation between the students' replies in the summer and the

headteachers' replies; approximately 39% of headteachers and 31% of students tended towards the positive and approximately 56% of headteacher and 60% of students tended towards a negative perception. The headteachers' interviews revealed negative perceptions suggesting again the need for more joined up thinking and working between HEIs and schools.

### **3.4 Teacher mentors**

3.4.1 Headteachers did not appear to have had much information or preparation for welcoming student teachers with Masters level credits. The same was generally true of teacher mentors although there were approximately 39% who had received some preparation from the HEI. Whether this level of preparation is adequate is questionable and even more worrying is the perception of just under half of the teacher mentors that they had not received adequate support. The training of teachers is a partnership between school and HEI and, as noted earlier, to embark upon as significant a route as Masters level work without full collaboration and thought would suggest a lack of cohesion and commitment. Should the teacher mentors' role have changed? It is arguable that it should have as there is little point in presenting Masters work without good reason. Students need to feel in school that what they learn in university is linked to practice. There is an important factor here; the one mentor who thought his/her role had changed had Masters experience. The fact that no one else thought it had could be assigned to the fact that they had no Masters experience and were therefore uncomfortable with this, had had little preparation from the HEI, and had therefore gone on as before.

3.4.2 In the surveys there was an alarming steep incline towards 'none at all' as far as the perception of the effect of Masters on children's learning and the rest of the sections concerning positive effects on reflective ability, engagement with teaching and learning and linking of theory with practice showed the same ambivalence as with the headteachers. If teacher mentors are diffident about Masters because of their lack of experience or preparation, it could be argued that they are ill-equipped to comment on these sections. However it could also be argued that these are fundamental to the teacher's trade and no definable difference is either not manifesting itself in the school practice or is not there, despite teacher educators' best efforts. In the interviews however, teacher mentors showed themselves to be well able to comment on these sections in an informed way and to have considered perceptions about how different students had always and would always bring different abilities and skills to the profession. The same suggestion as with the headteachers – that this does not mean that all teachers should have Masters qualifications – was made. The Masters was seen as an adjunct, 'another qualification'. There is now a pattern between students, headteachers and teacher mentors to be seen; not all teachers need this; there is a difference between the 'job' of teaching and this 'academic' qualification which is separate and somewhat irrelevant to everyday practice; a 'good' teacher is not someone with high qualifications.

3.4.3 Teacher mentors saw little value in Masters credits. Some thought that it was a foible of the university to gain prestige in some detached land of academe. For most it was a matter of 'wait and see'. The very real prospect of demoralisation amongst the profession of 'those who made the grade' and 'those who did not' hinted at the notion of a two tier profession where there may be an 'inferior race' of teachers who are not 'good enough' to make the grade. But it was heartening to note that there was some evidence, however slight, that the role of the HEI in preparing teachers who can think was most important.

### **3.5 Teacher educators, autumn 2007**

3.5.1 The general perception of teacher educators was that it was very important for them to have a Masters qualification or above of their own in order to feel comfortable and credible in the eyes of the students. In the PAR discussions it was suggested that teacher educators' confidence with Masters level seems to depend on length of time in the job and confidence with the whole process of Teacher Education.

3.5.2 The headteacher and teacher mentors did not seem well prepared by the HEIs for the advent of Masters, but unfortunately neither did the teacher educators. This is probably due the haste with which this initiative was brought in, but there was a strong impression that teacher educators, with their students' success paramount, would be working hard to ensure that courses were effective. Discussions in the PAR interviews suggested that the process/administration of Masters courses seemed to have taken priority over the provision of in-service training except for a minimal response: 'we had a couple of days where we all got together and talked about strategies'. There was evidence of focus on assessment rather than teaching and the impression that the change to Masters in the PGCE had not been at a high level within the HEIs represented. There were however some mixed messages as some HEIs had been helpful with paperwork and had given an idea of the expectation of the level required before the start of the course.

3.5.3 During the teaching of the course, the replies in both the survey and the interviews gave the impression that teacher educators would appreciate some support; their responses implied that they felt left to 'make it up as they went along'. There was a lack of evidence of any formal structures in place.

3.5.4 Teacher educators agreed with teacher mentors with regard to differences in students; things were not much different, some engaged with Masters and some did not. There was a feeling that teacher educators had always had students like this and that the best students had always been working reflectively and critically anyway. In the survey and the interviews there was a tendency towards a positive perception of student engagement with Masters in the early days of the autumn term. Whether or not Masters was adding or would add value in the future was again a matter of 'time will tell' as it had been for the headteachers and the teacher mentors.

3.5.5 In the PAR discussions it was noted that, regarding the question of value added, there was no concept of how to measure this from the teacher educators.

### **3.6 Teacher educators, summer 2008**

3.6.1 By the end of the course in summer 2008, teacher educators alluded to the fact that the practicalities of the teaching 'job' – learning the trade – was uppermost in students' minds during the training course. This is reminiscent of the headteachers and school mentors who made a division between the practical and the academic but the teacher mentors, although somewhat hesitant to some to rash conclusions, did feel that the students were beginning to think beyond the tick box mentality. As with the headteacher and teacher mentors, there was some evidence to suggest that teacher mentors were not convinced that Masters is for all. However, just as with the headteachers and the teacher mentors, and indeed with the students, there was the 'seed has been sown' idea. It might not be immediately apparent what benefit or value the Masters study has had but maybe in the future it will become clearer as all reflect on the experience. There will be an adjunct to this report which will be published later which will be the results of a survey of some of the students who have volunteered to give their opinions on Masters study now that they are Newly Qualified Teachers in post. Hopefully it will be possible to discover whether or not 'time has told'.

## **4. Recommendations**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The scale and scope of this study limited the extent of its findings and it was never intended to give definitive findings concerning the effectiveness of Masters level PGCE. The research has, however, been valuable in the following ways:

- The research has provoked debate amongst teacher educators
- The research has raised many questions (see appendix xiv as one example of the number of questions raised by the research). This has been its fundamental and most significant outcome; it has kept the debate on Masters vibrant;
- The research, although originally focussed on M level PGCE has given rise to questions, perceptions and thoughts on the whole idea of teaching as a Masters profession and what that means and, specifically, the value and definition of Masters for the teaching profession.
- The research can suggest some recommendations for debate amongst all the communities – students, headteachers, teacher mentors, teacher educators, policy makers, parties with an interest in teacher education. These are laid out below.



## 4.2 List of recommendations:

1. Prospective students of Masters level PGCE courses or other teacher education courses should be made more fully aware of what Masters study is and why it is presented to those intending to become teachers. This could be done through the prospectus and at base interview.
2. Attention should be paid at all levels to ensuring a link between Masters and classroom practice in order to dispel the perception that Masters is an unrelated adjunct.
3. In order for Masters to be meaningful in the job market, headteachers, school mentors and all teachers need to value it; this to be developed through closer working between trainers in schools and HEIs or other teacher education providers.
4. The initial enthusiasm of student teachers for Masters and their trust in its benefit should be encouraged by greater collaboration between training providers and policy makers.
5. Policy makers should re-visit, in collaboration with all providers of teacher training two fundamental aspects of 'Teaching – a Masters profession'; the best time for teachers to undertake Masters study, and its suitability for all.
6. Acceptance of the theory that 'time will tell' is wise, but it is imperative to act now for the present student teachers and children and young people in schools.
7. Realise that 'seed is sown which could bear fruit' and explore the meaning of this for the future of Masters study in teacher training.
8. Through the strength of the English partnership between schools and teacher training providers, develop greater 'joined-up thinking about Masters.
9. Be sure of why we are doing it and its value.
10. Measurement or evaluation of the success or otherwise of Masters, however difficult must be made at every level; be sure of what we are doing, why we are doing it and its value to the profession and children and young people.
11. Ask the Newly Qualified Teachers whether the 'seed that was sown' has borne fruit. (NB this research project does intend to send a survey to a volunteer selection of the cohort of the students in the research in summer 2009.)
12. Continue the debate on 'Teaching – a Masters profession'.

## 5. Conclusion

5.1 If the ideal of an all Masters profession, no matter where its roots may lie, is to be translated into a meaningful reality, it must evolve over the next few years and be at the forefront of teacher educational research and improvement and not be hidden within a tick box which assumes that it has been said that it will happen and therefore it will. Masters level PGCE with its extended demands for critical awareness has arguably the potential to enhance the capacity of a critically reflective teaching profession. It could be a factor in raising esteem internally amongst the profession and raising respect externally for the profession amongst the general public. It is important also to

ensure that all – teacher educators, student teachers, teacher mentors, headteachers and government agencies - have a collective and coherent understanding of what it means to study at Masters level and its potential to benefit not just the teaching profession, but ultimately the next generation of learners.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix i**

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## Appendix ii

### Questionnaire for students on the Masters level Postgraduate Certificate in Education course, September 2007

The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.

1. Gender male/female?
2. Which Masters level PGCE course are you following?  
Early Years                  Primary                  Secondary
3. Your age group  
20-30                          30-40                          Over 40
4. Have you studied at Masters level before?  
Yes/No
5. If yes, how much did your previous Masters course(s) involve extensive writing?  
Not at all                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          A great deal
6. How important to you is a Masters level qualification in addition to QTS (Qualified Teacher Status)?  
Not important                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          Very important
7. How far do you consider that studying at Masters level is likely to contribute to your teaching?  
Not at all                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          A great deal
8. How far do you consider that you have an understanding of what studying at Masters level involves?  
Not at all                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          A great deal
9. Do you consider that studying theory is likely to contribute positively to the practice of teaching?  
Not at all                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          A great deal
10. How far do you expect that Masters level credits will enhance your prospects of getting a job as a teacher?  
Not at all                  1. 2. 3. 4.                          A great deal

### **Appendix iii**

#### **Interview questions for students September 2007**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

The interview time allotted to the interview should not exceed 40 minutes. Please ask all the questions.

1. Interviewer please state whether the interviewee is male or female.
2. Is your Masters level PGCE course...

Early Years	Primary	Secondary
-------------	---------	-----------
3. Please ask the age range of the participant

20-30	30-40	Over 40
-------	-------	---------
4. Have you studied at Masters level before?
5. If yes, what was your course? Are you used to writing essays? If not, does this concern you?
6. Do you value the possibility of gaining Masters level credits on your course? Why or why not?
7. Do you feel that studying at Masters level will contribute to your teaching? Why or why not?
8. What is Masters level in your opinion?
9. In your opinion, in what ways do theory and practice link?
10. Is studying at Masters level a means to better job prospects? Why or why not?

## Appendix iv

### Questionnaire for students on the Masters level Postgraduate Certificate in Education course, June 2008

The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.

1. Are you male/female?
2. Is your Masters level PGCE course...  
Early Years                      Primary                      Secondary
3. Your age group  
20-30                                      30-40                                      Over 40
4. To what extent do you feel that Masters level is involved with:  
Reading more widely  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal  
Conducting small scale research  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal  
Linking theory to practice  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal  
Being critical of other people's research  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal  
Critical reflection  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
5. Have you continued with Masters level?  
Yes/No
6. If no, please give the reason.  
I did not feel it to be useful  
I did not fulfil the requirements  
Other
7. Do you intend to continue with Masters level work in the future?  
Yes/No
8. To what extent did you value Masters level when you started the course?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
9. To what extent do you value Masters level now?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
10. To what extent do you feel that studying Masters level contributed to your teaching?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
11. To what extent has your subject specialism made the requirements of Masters level problematic?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
12. To what extent have you found the study of theory to be a help in practice?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal
13. To what extent have you found that Masters level has been of benefit to you in the job market?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                                      A great deal

## **Appendix v**

### **Interview questions for students on the Masters level Postgraduate Certificate in Education course, June 2008**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

The interview time allotted to the interview should not exceed 40 minutes. Please ask all the questions.

1. Interviewer, please state whether the interviewee is male or female.
2. Is your Masters level PGCE course...  
Early Years                  Primary                  Secondary
3. Please ask the age range of the student  
20-30                          30-40                          Over 40
4. What do you understand by Masters level study?
5. Have you continued or stopped Masters level? Why?
6. Have you changed your mind about Masters level since you started in September? Were you originally for or against it? What has made you change your mind/confirmed your initial opinion?
7. In your opinion what have been the more demanding elements of your course?
8. How has theory influenced you practice, can you give an example?
9. Do you feel that you will continue with Master study after leaving this course? Why or why not?
10. Do you feel that Masters level credits will be beneficial to you in finding a teaching job/do you feel that not having Masters level credits will be detrimental to you in the teaching job market? Why or why not?



## Appendix vi

### Questionnaire for teacher mentors in schools, spring 2008

The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.

1. Are you involved with:  
Early Years                      Primary                      Secondary
  
2. To what extent do you consider that the Higher Education Institution has supported you with preparation for Masters level students?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
3. Given your experience so far, have you noted any difference in the students who are now studying at Masters level in comparison to the students last year who were not studying at Masters level, in terms of:
  - a) The children's learning  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - b) The students' ability to reflect on practice  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - c) The students' knowledge of how children learn  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - d) The extent to which students apply theory into practice  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - e) The extent to which the students reflect on lessons and discuss teaching  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - f) The extent of student engagement with teaching and learning  
None at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
4. How far do you consider that you know what 'Masters level' is?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
5. In overall terms do you feel that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> for student teachers?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal

## Appendix vii

<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

### **Interview for teacher mentors in schools, spring 2008**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

1. Are you involved with Early Years, primary or secondary?
2. Do you feel that your role has changed since the introduction of Masters level PGCE? In what ways?
3. Do you feel that these students who are following a Masters course are different to those you had last year who were not studying at Masters level? Please discuss the answer in terms of:
  - a) The children's learning
  - b) The students' ability to reflect on practice
  - c) The students' knowledge of how children learn
  - d) The extent to which students apply theory into practice
  - e) The extent to which the students reflect on lessons and discuss teaching
  - f) The extent of student engagement with teaching and learning
5. In what ways did your HEI support you with preparation for Masters level students?
6. To what extent do you feel you know what 'Masters level' is?
7. To what extent do you feel that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> for student teachers?

### **Appendix viii**

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<sup>1</sup>Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>

In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching

## Questionnaire for headteachers spring 2008

The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.

1. Are you answering from the perspective of:  
Early Years                      Primary                      Secondary
2. To what extent do you feel that you understand what is meant by 'Masters level' in teacher training courses?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
3. To what extent do you feel that 'Masters level' is adding value<sup>1</sup> to the teaching profession?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
4. Are you likely to attach much significance to Masters level credits in making appointing to your school?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal deal
5. Please rate what you think NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their job in terms of:
  - a) The children's learning  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - b) The extent of student engagement with teaching and learning  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - c) The ability to reflect on practice  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - d) The knowledge of how children learn  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - e) The extent to which they apply theory into practice  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  - f) The extent to which they reflect on lessons and discuss teaching  
Nothing at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal

## Appendix ix Interview for headteachers November 2007

<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

The time allotted to the interview should not exceed 40 minutes. Please ask all the questions.

- a) Interviewer, please state whether the headteacher is answering from the perspective of Early Years, Primary, Secondary.
- b) Please would you explain what you think is meant by 'Masters level' in teacher training courses.
- c) Do you feel that 'Masters level' will add value<sup>1</sup> to the teaching profession? Please explain your answer.
- d) How significant will it be that NQT candidates for jobs at your school show evidence of Masters level credits? Why will it be significant/or why not?
- e) What do you feel that NQTs with Masters level credits will bring to their role in terms of:
  - a) Children's learning
  - b) The extent of the NQTs' engagement with learning and teaching.
  - c) Their ability to reflect on practice
  - d) Their knowledge of how children learn
  - e) The extent to which they apply theory to practice
  - f) The extent to which they reflect on lessons and discuss teaching
  - g) The extent of their engagement with learning and teaching.

## **Appendix x**

### **Questionnaire for teacher educators teaching Masters level PGCE late September 2007**

<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

1. Which area of education are you involved with:  
Early years                      Primary                      Secondary
2. Have you a Masters degree or above?  
Yes/No
3. Please indicate on the following scale to what extent you have felt comfortable teaching at Masters level?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
4. To what extent do you feel that the HEI has supported you with preparation for Masters level students before the start of the course?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
5. To what extent do you feel that the HEI has supported you during the teaching of Masters level?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
6. To what extent have you changed what you do in order to teach at Masters level?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
7. To what extent do you consider that your students have engaged with educational theory?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
8. To what extent do you consider that your students are positive towards Masters level on the whole?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
9. To what extent do you consider that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> to the preparation of teachers?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal

## **Appendix xi**

### **Interview for teacher educators teaching Masters level PGCE .... 2007**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover**

<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

**the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

The time allotted to the interview should not exceed 40 minutes. Please ask all the questions.

1. Are you involved with Early years, Primary or Secondary trainees?
2. Have you a Masters degree or above?
3. Have you felt comfortable teaching at Masters level? Please expand on your answer.
4. Did your HEI support you with preparation for Masters level students before the start of the course? If so, in what way, if any?
5. Has your HEI supported you during the teaching of Masters level? If so, in what way, if any?
6. Have you changed what you do in order to teach at Masters level? If so, in what way?
7. Do you consider that your students have engaged with educational theory as an aid to practice? Please expand on your answer. Have there been any tensions associated with this?
8. Have your students been responsive to the demands of Masters level? If so, in what way?
9. Do you consider that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> to the preparation of teachers?  
Please expand on your answer.

**Appendix xii NB This questionnaire did not generate enough responses to feature in the report.**

**Questionnaire for teacher educators observing Masters level PGCE students on teaching practice at end block placement**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover the attitudes and**

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<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

**perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

1. Are you involved with:  
Early Years                      Primary                      Secondary
  
2. To what extent do you consider that your role has changed since the introduction of Masters level PGCE?  
Not at all 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10 A great deal
  
3. Please rate the extent of the *difference* you have seen in your students who are now studying at Masters level in comparison to your students last year who were not studying at Masters level, in terms of:
  - a. The children's learning  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  - b. The students' ability to reflect on practice  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  - c. The students' knowledge of how children learn  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  - d. The extent to which students apply theory into practice  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  - e. The extent to which the students reflect on lessons and discuss teaching  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  - f. The extent of student engagement with teaching and learning  
None at all      1. 2. 3. 4.      A great deal
  
4. To what extent has the HEI supported you with preparation for Masters level students before the start of the course?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
5. To what extent has the HEI supported you during this year with the observation of Masters level students?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
6. To what extent do you consider you know what 'Masters level' is?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
7. To what extent have you felt a tension between observing for QTS competence and observing for evidence of the application of theory in the students' teaching?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal
  
8. To what extent do you feel that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> for student teachers?  
Not at all                      1. 2. 3. 4.                      A great deal

**Appendix xii**

**Interview for teacher educators observing Masters level PGCE students on teaching practice at end block placement**

**The aim of the research is to track the progress and effect of Masters level PGCE provision in England from September 2007 and to discover**

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<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.

**the attitudes and perceptions of participants with regard to the inclusion of Masters level qualifications into the PGCE course.**

1. Are you involved with Early Years, Primary or Secondary?
2. Do you feel that your role has changed since the introduction of Masters level PGCE? In what ways?
3. DO you feel that these students who are following a Masters course are different to those you had last year who were not studying at Master level? Please discuss the answer in terms of:
  - a) The children's learning
  - b) The students' ability to reflect on practice
  - c) The students' knowledge of how children learn
  - d) The extent to which students apply theory into practice
  - e) The extent to which the students reflect on lessons and discuss teaching
  - f) The extent of student engagement with teaching and learning
4. In what ways did your HEI support you with preparation for Masters level students before the start of the course?
5. Has the HEI supported you during this year with the observation of Masters level students? In what way?
6. To what extent do you feel you know what 'Masters level' is?
7. Have you felt a tension between observing for QTS competence and observing for evidence of the application of theory in the students' teaching? Explain what/why has there not been a tension?
8. To what extent do you feel that Masters level is adding value<sup>1</sup> for student teachers?

**Appendix xiv**

**UCET 2008 – delegates' reactions to the research pilot and general reactions to Masters level**

**Delegates' questions for students inspired by the research**

<sup>1</sup> Value-added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills abilities and other attributes) as a result of their Higher Education experience. Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement. <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/valueadded.htm>  
In this context, value-added can be extended to embrace the perceived value added to the teaching profession of Masters level credits.



Why is Masters important to you?

As well as contributing to teaching what other positive contributions do you envisage?

How did the Masters contribute to your teaching?

If Masters level did not contribute to your teaching can you explain why?

If you could change the assessment approach expected which aspects would you change?

Why did they not think, at the end of their course that it impacted on their teaching?

What are the criteria for the tasks used by different institutions?

### **Delegates' thoughts inspired by the data**

It would be useful to have comparative data with H level.

The M level contribution to teaching was not so positive as before the course.

There was a lack of consistency in the view of the value of M level.

The fact that teaching and M level are separate in the minds of man is very disturbing.

The impact of theory on practice is not recognised easily.

Why do some see a disjunction between Masters study and teaching? Are those that have no idea what Masters means the older teachers?

It is encouraging that at the end of the course 90% feel that the study of theory has helped their practice to some degree.

Does Masters elevate/dignify/enhance reflective practice?

No mention of M level's status as a driver. Just wanting the award as an end in itself.

Was the quality of the Masters level teaching seen as a factor that might have influenced the more negative responses?

It will be interesting to see if the students' opinions change as the course progresses.

Do student trainee teachers really understand what the implications of an M level +QTS qualification may be? Do we even know the effect it will have yet?

We need models of good practice from HEIs about how best to prepare trainees for M level work (not just from Education).

Which 'theory'? Surely it depends upon how an M level course is taught and perhaps even who is teaching it as to whether they value 'theory' per se for practice.

What is the impact of M level qualifications? I hear this a lot – 'What difference will it make if I do/don't do this? And we're not quite sure what to say in terms of impact at job interviews etc. (i.e. with Head appointing)

### **Delegates' questions for headteachers and about headteachers, inspired by the data**

Do any of your staff have a Masters qualification?

Do you undertake any accredited CPD work with HEIs?

It would be interesting to know how many of the sample had Masters themselves? (and by extension how many Heads have Masters or above.)

There seems to be some confusion for Heads between QTS and M level. Is there some contamination going on – i.e. views of full traditional Masters seeping into the views of M level credits on an ITE programme? In my experience they are different because of the context and purpose – i.e. the question 'What is Masters?' is misleading.

What information is given to Headteachers about the student course/M level expectations?

How can we establish the value of Masters with Headteachers? Why don't they value it? How can we establish a dialogue?

The Headteachers view is very surprising in how negative, vague and unimpressed they are. This is a concern. Are we considering the qualification as a quantifiable or taught exercise separate to pedagogical understanding and development?

Why do Headteachers have such a limited, uninformed view of the value of critical reflection and reflective practice as a benefit?

Do Heads think that classroom-based research does not add value?

We need to explore what a Head means by 'the quality of teaching'.

There's a huge job we need to attend to in terms of partnership school dissemination at senior and middle management levels re What M level work is doing for those students opting to study at that level whilst training.

Many of the qualitative answers to the research are indicative of Heads who do not know what TS (let alone M level) 'study' requires – i.e. their 'value-added' is already integral to QTS standards e.g. self-critical evaluation, awareness of VAK etc.

### **Delegates' questions for school mentors and about school mentors, inspired by the data**

Are you aware of any aspects of the course that your students followed at Masters level?

How valuable do primary and Early Years teachers feel about Masters? Is it different to secondary teachers? If so, why?

In my experience, Early Years/primary teachers have lower expectations in terms of status in a comparative way to secondary

Why are mentors so anti? Because they haven't got one?

Why would they know about the impact of Masters at this stage?

What is the percentage response as percentage of population approached in selection/EY groups (rather than numbers) Are there any actual specific examples from anyone where the M level study caused a change in practice?

In the data the assumption seems to be that all mentors will be involved helping students with M level work and are adequately prepared, ready and willing to do so. We (Leeds Trinity) have actively chosen NOT to involve school staff (mentors/co-ordinators) in our M level module (1 and 2) during PGCE year. It's just one more (challenging) thing for them to fit in – we'd rather they worked one to one on QTS work with our trainees but we encourage them to join our MA Ed programme.

### **General questions**

Why did more secondary take part (in the pilot)?

How could students answer some of the questions about potential impact when they were only starting out on their course? What knowledge/assumptions were they drawing on?

It would be interesting to repeat this research asking the question 'To what extent do you think the MTL would impact on ...? Is there a different perception of MTL as opposed to Masters?

Interesting question – would you have done Masters if you had had the choice?

Timing – are PGCE students really ready to being a Masters course with a limited amount of teaching experience?

How do we measure the benefit to children?

Masters level teaching– a vision for the future or meaningless nonsense?

It is important that MTL needs to be separate from M level because MTL is prescriptive and contradicts what M level is about.

I work with PGCE M level students and we have a keen desire to support student teachers/NQTs in doing action research relevant to explaining issues particular to them and feel they deserve accreditation.

What does M level teaching actually look like?

Are there regional differences in perceptions of the job market?

The currency of the Masters will affect how it is seen as an 'employment enhancer'.

Should Masters level 'stuff' be included in an ITT qualification or should it come later once they have had some experience?

Comparisons between providers in terms of links to employability would be useful in relation to local markets.

Analyse the primary and secondary data separately.

Analyse the different institutions.

Tell the TDA and the unions what you are doing.

What is Masters all of the things you said but it is also in the synergy of the dimensions contribution to the developing professional teacher.

How does the split relate to the split in the sample population?

How does the job prospect response relate to geographical location and teacher shortages/vacancy stats?

What happens at institutions where there is a choice? What percentage choose/reject M level as an option? How do the views of the 2 groups of students compare?

What does the workload issue imply for the timing of MTL? Is anyone feeding this into MTL?

The Leeds universities/HEIs (LMU, Trinity, Leeds) are currently running 'What is Masterley?' courses for academic staff across disciplinary areas.

At Leeds trinity we send them literature on M level prior to September as soon as they are offered a place.

M level is not an add-on, it's a way of thinking.

Students are better at knowing what they don't know and where to go and look for it.

Old PGCEs were at Masters level now they have recognition – so it will be difficult to see what we have done 'better'.

The biggest difference is the expectation of reading.

The students 'fee' better about teaching.

There is an important question of equity for the profession – need parity between institutions.

MTL – do we know what we mean by Teaching and Learning at M level?