University of Worcester

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

**ESCALATE SMALL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROJECT**

**Encouraging the use of evidence to inform practice among**

**teachers early in their careers**

**Final Report March 2006**

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1. The Brief.

Newly Qualified Teachers are confident in academic study but are still building their confidence in classroom skills. They are therefore open to the idea of continuing with their Masters, and have professional needs which a Masters programme should be able to support by encouraging evaluation of evidence (from record keeping and observation) to inform their professional practice, and reflection. They can lay a foundation for action research in their early years of teaching. This project explored how to support teachers early in their careers, and how M level study can be professionally relevant. It is anticipated that it could build up a pool of teachers engaged in MAs early in their career, and that there may be some impact on teacher retention. The methodology involved survey, and evaluation of M level provision across three HEIs.

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**2. Stage 1. Survey of NQTs 2003-04**.

In partnership with the LEA, all the NQTs in that LEA were surveyed by questionnaire in 2004 about school and support within their Induction Year. Their Induction Tutors were similarly surveyed. The NQTs reported that their schools and LEA had been generally supportive and the Induction Year had been a substantial learning experience. The survey explored evidence of professional impact of the range of support mechanisms and experiences that are available to NQTs – including their ITE experience, their induction, LEA county support, and support in their school. The evaluation focused on support for developing positive behaviour management strategies; and on supporting NQTs in collecting evidence in support of their progress against the standards. Data collection was through questionnaires to all NQTs and Induction Tutors in the authority. 25 Induction Tutors responded, and 30 NQTs.

**The Induction Tutor Survey.**

Half of the sample reported that time had been the greatest inhibiter. About a third of the sample reported that the LEA Manual had been invaluable; the same proportion reported advice from experienced Induction Tutors had been greatly supportive. Asked what strengths the NQT brought to the job, the vast majority covered personal qualities such as relationships, hard work, freshness, enthusiasm, and planning, with particular curriculum expertise noted more occasionally. Asked about the NQT’s further development needs also produced a helpful list in which special needs, behaviour management, child protection, dealing with parents, and managing Teaching Assistants stand out. Some comments reflected the personalities of particular NQTs, e.g. Independence – standing on their own feet; and not being defensive. Asked how well has the NQT succeeded in developing positive behaviour management strategies, (Very well 14, Well 8, Not well enough 2): comments show that some are naturals, most developed gradually over the year, sometimes with a shaky start, but that overall they coped very well indeed with managing behaviour. There is a contrast between this and their ability **on entry**. Asked how well prepared the NQT was at the start to use positive behaviour management strategies, they replied Very well prepared 5, Well prepared 11, Not well prepared enough 8. In a sense two thirds were well prepared, a third not; and this reflects the range of development within ITT, the bottom third of student teachers also struggling in their NQT year. However these weaker NQTs made up ground as they gained confidence. Asked if they had had the chance to discuss behaviour management issues with their NQT, all reported that they often spoke with the NQT on behaviour management issues, coming out of observations, feedback and review meetings. NQTs are also encouraged to discuss matters with other staff (e.g. by observing other staff, or talking with the SENCO). Many opportunities were said to be informal, but frequent. Where behaviour management was not a problem, it came up less, but NQTs were reported to have good ideas. All described themselves as very well prepared to support their NQT with positive behaviour management strategies, using words such as “very well prepared”, and “confident”. Asked how might the NQT have been better supported by school, most stated firmly that the NQT had been well supported. However, the comments made positive suggestions:

* More opportunities for observing experienced colleagues
* More team teaching with experienced teachers
* More time to work alongside the NQT to give her more opportunities to work with colleagues both in this school and others
* It would be better to have a mentor who is not the Headteacher
* More regular release time would assist discussion.

Asked how the NQT might have been better supported by LEA, the Induction Tutors were very forthcoming: guaranteed release time; more formal NQT regional in-service meetings; more contact with ITE institutions; external support for the NQT.

The Induction Tutors were asked how well they thought their NQT has coped with evidencing NQT standards. Only two said “not well enough” with the others split between “well” and “very well”. Their comments showed a mix of examples of well organised NQTs, those needing reminders and those struggling. It was generally an area of concern, even though NQTs in the end achieved it well. Asked how well prepared the NQT was on entry in the use of the Career Entry and Development Profile and how effective were they in using it to collect evidence of QTS standards, 20% felt that their NQTs were not properly prepared for the Portfolio (the other 80% said either well or very well prepared). So for most NQTs this evidencing process does not appear to have been a problem. The Induction Tutors felt also that the guidance given was generally helpful, some feeling that it was very helpful.

The Induction Tutors were asked how effective they thought they had been in helping the NQT to build their induction portfolio: only 30% felt they had been effective with two thirds feeling there were things that could have been done better. The comments point to lack of time and lack of information about the Portfolio. It was a higher priority for some than for others, an recognised as time-consuming and in need of non-contact time to support the process. Specific points showed that it was important for the NQT to be proactive and draw on a range of support.

**The NQT Survey:**

The Primary NQTs were mostly female and worked in situations from Foundation Stage, KS1 and 2, and middle schools. Their specialisms covered a wide range of curriculum subjects, except for the humanities. All NQTs who attended found the NQT residential at least satisfactory and most found it helpful or very helpful, about half (13/27) describing it as ‘very helpful’. Asked to indicate what had caused them the most concern during their induction year, the dominant response involved the broad issue of time management and workload, which, as one said, induces a sense of failure since she could not satisfy all the demands of ‘government directives’, school and pupils. Part of this time pressure involved the paperwork involved with school and the standards-related entries to the Portfolio. Other concerns revolved around planning for teaching and managing the class.

The NQTs were asked what they regard as their greatest success. Their replies focused on confident pupils enjoying their work and making progress within a context of good relationships between teachers, pupils and parents. This included progress with disaffected pupils, given responsibilities, success in OFSTED, and independence within a collaborative team framework.

90.7% rated their training as preparing them well or very well for teaching, with one third of the whole opting for the higher rating. The range of training courses and schemes was broad, ranging from the 3 or 4 year BEd or equivalent, PGCE, PGCE by distance learning, SCITT, and GTP. Some comments reflected excellent quality provision - ‘a very high standard’, ‘excellent course’. The few constructively critical comments have to be seen against this background, reflecting anxieties about the brevity and intense nature of some routes. They were asked about the best aspects of training, which are set out in order of popularity (numbers of responses in brackets): Confidence (15), Experience (15), Planning (5) with the following also getting mentions: Learning & Teaching, Mentoring/tutoring, Curriculum, Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, ICT, Breadth of understanding of schools.

The NQTs were asked how their ITT training could have been improved. Planning and behaviour management were most frequently cited. However, no single issue received more than a few references. Also cited were: Parents, portfolio building, special needs, assessment, dealing with TAs. The NQTs were asked about how well prepared they were through their ITE for managing pupil behaviour positively. 5 out of 30 (17%) said not well enough with 83% saying well (57%) or very well (27%). It was generally recognised that the crucial time for learning behaviour management was in the school experience settings, but several emphasised that this needed to be supplemented by guidance in lectures. Some described how their progress in school had been hindered by their lack of coping strategies. The feedback described a balance between the discussion and guidance given by tutors and mentors, and the need to try things out themselves in school. They needed both to become confident. All except one NQT felt that the Induction process had helped them to develop their strategies for positive behaviour management, split evenly between ‘very well’ and ‘well’. Experience in school and advice from colleagues is the most common support cited by the majority.

All were satisfied with the support given to them in school to develop behaviour management strategies with two thirds opting for ‘very well’, one third for ‘well’. Comments made it clear that their schools have both policies and active strategies for managing behaviour positively, (as one said, “totally focused on it”) giving NQTs plenty of mentor support and indeed support from other staff members also. There were examples of NQTs having opportunities to observe more experienced staff. One indicated that “due to the amount of behaviour problem children that I have in my class I have several outside agencies guide me in different directions”. In general therefore the NQTs reported excellent support within school. Asked how much progress do they had made in positive behaviour management over the NQT year, all said they had made progress with two thirds saying “a great deal” of progress. Their comments made it clear however that they recognised that they still had a long way to go, showing this is a dynamic rather than static aspect of professional work. They recognised that positive discipline has to be internalised so it gradually becomes natural. Some talked about attention seekers, underachievers, ADHD and SEN.

Asked to what extent did their initial teacher training help them to collect evidence for standards, most (80.6%) felt that they had been reasonably prepared. This meant that they could continue the process of evidence collection started in their ITT with which they had become familiar. They saw it as two stages of a single process, which helped them to evaluate their professional practice. However, one in 5 found themselves feeling vulnerable in this area at the beginning of their NQT year as they had not made this connection. Asked whether the LEA NQT Induction Portfolio and TTA guidance helped to support them in developing their evidence collection for Induction Standards, all except one were satisfied that it had. Most however opted for ‘well’ rather than ‘very well’. In a situation where the standards require “a lot of paperwork”, the LEA material was seen as clarifying what is required. Asked about the efficiency of collecting evidence for the Portfolio, the general feeling is that the process was not efficient. Neither NQTs nor schools prioritised the activity. Schools can make a difference, with the induction tutor stressing its importance and reminding NQTs to keep the evidence collection on the front burner. Once the NQT establishes a routine, it becomes easy. Asked how effective their school had been in supporting their portfolio building, most (71.4%) were supportive of the school although most opted for ‘effective’ rather than ‘very effective’. According to comments, schools varied from being uninterested to very supportive. School support appears to be effective but not always proactive.

The NQTs were asked as an overall grade, how they rated the support offered in their induction year. All recorded it as satisfactory or above, with all but one grading it good or very good. On how the induction year could have been improved, they gave the following list of frequent suggestions: less bureaucracy and paperwork; more funding to attend outside courses; reduce the feeling of isolation; provide more opportunity to talk with other NQTs; offer subject specific training.

**3. Stage 2. HEI provision.**

This project further examined and compared the work of three HEIs in providing CPD for Newly Qualified Teachers which provided progression from ITE to CPD for teachers. The provision consists of modules which can begin the accumulation of credit towards the MA degree. One institution provides a taught programme, another a distance learning package based on WebCT, and the third a partnership which various LEAs who provide in-service support whilst the HEI provides an accreditation package based on reflective self-evaluation. The team from the three institutions communicated together, exchanged information and met to discuss implications.

**3.1 University of Worcester (UoW):**

A module for NQTs was developed within the Postgraduate Education Programme (M level) in 2001 (named *Developing Teaching and Learning*) to run alongside the induction year portfolio managed by local LEAs with in-service and a residential components. UoW sought to add value to this programme by adding an accredited assessment programme, with tutor support, which emphasises reflection, evidence collection and interpretation, and gives the NQT a mentor outside school. This was intended to offer the NQT the beginnings of data collection, evidenced self-reflection, evaluation of in-service opportunities, and action research. The assessment package requires termly reflective commentaries to provide conceptually rigorous discussion to enrich the standards-based portfolio that they are required professionally to complete. Reflective questions are given to start their evaluative and analytical thinking, but the NQTs are also encouraged to discuss those issues which loomed large in their professional life during the term. Each termly report is marked diagnostically offering helpful comment: redrafting is encouraged up to final presentation of the portfolio at the end of term 3. Progression is to a small scale action research in their second year, followed in time by further study leading to the MA dissertation.

**3.2 Edgehill College, Ormskirk**:

Edgehill CHE encourage their ITE graduates to reflect on their induction year through a structured reflective portfolio of tasks supported by WebCT entitled ‘Beginning a Career in Teaching’. Groups of NQTs are tutored via WebCT at a distance. The module is substantially about action planning, starting with a baseline competence statement based on standards, setting achievable targets, evaluating challenges, refining targets and devising appropriate action plans. NQTs have to provide evidence for passing five components or learning outcomes, and complete a 2500 evaluation. The NQT module forms the first module of the Masters, with NQTs later choosing from the range of other modules available.

* 1. **Anglia Ruskin University.**

ARU have a taught module to a group of 20 NQTs that runs via 6 Saturdays across the year. Tutorials and school visits are included. Assessment is currently through a critical journal but this is in the process of being reshaped into a more standard piece of assessment writing. The journal headings are:

* personal professional profile (700 words),
* professional context and school culture (800 words),
* needs analysis (700 words)
* preliminary action planning (700 words)
* presentation and analysis of evidence of impact (2500 words)
* outcomes (400 words
* future needs (200 words).

The syllabus is focused both on the induction process and on an introduction to academic professional enquiry through the selection and reviewing of evidence. There is also a core of action planning running throughout. Progression from this module is to other modules in the Masters programme.

**4. Findings and Evaluation.**

**4.1 Logistics.**

The problem of NQT provision is geographical: the NQTs are mostly alumni of each university, with jobs in schools all over the country and so regular evening sessions are impossible except for those who are close. The NQT’s travel time during their busy week, even to outreach centres, would be unreasonable; some Saturday sessions have been tried. Some meetings organised to get them started were moderately attended but most support has to come from WebCT materials and email. For those who readily use this it is suitable: however NQTs have to be proactive in accessing support. At the beginning of this programme three years ago, it was difficult to persuade the NQTs to draw on wider reading during this year. We have tried to reach a balance, since essentially we don’t want them to spend their scarce time going to far off libraries. We provide material for them on the internet system WebCT (in accordance with normal copyright regulations), and encourage the use of professional journals held in school, and internet resources. We encourage them also to revisit (with more experienced eyes)the reading they did on their teacher preparation year. One LEA provided each NQT with a particular book on behaviour management. Have noted that assignments draw better on reading appropriately for their level. We also note the interest of NQTs in teacher expectation, emotional literacy, and thinking skills.

This provision relies of the NQT’s willingness and application to be proactive in independent study, supported by tutorials, seminars and email or telephone. This self-selects a particular kind of NQT. Cohorts recruited were large in some cases, which makes tracking difficult. Smaller self-contained cohorts with regular meetings helped with completions, but was geographically difficult.

Given the varying ability of NQTs in coping with a full-time job at school, the NQTs tend to self-select with poorer NQTs pulling out in the early stages. Those that remain see the module as a support, an evaluation they find helpful and which can feed into their relationship with the Induction Tutor. The process requires however a great deal of email nurture.

Those NQTs without a regular post can undertake the module through supply teaching, and this can work well if they get regular work in a few schools. The email support has the potential to provide otherwise non-existent mentoring.

**4.2 Some Significant Themes**

The following were commonly raised in NQT evaluations.The process elicits from NQTs responses to a series of questions about practice, arrangement and pupil response. It has been set up in a non-threatening way so that honest reporting and reflection are encouraged. We recognise that the NQT’s interpretation of some details and events may be contestable by others in school, and recommend that dialogue takes place. We may therefore report NQT views which should not be interpreted that we necessarily accept their interpretations as correct. Our response is to encourage the NQT to consider wider perspectives in these cases.

**a) General confidence:**

For NQTs, teaching is not always enjoyable: the lesson that ‘if you enjoy it, the pupils are more likely to’, is an important one to learn. “These improvements have helped me to enjoy the lesson I am teaching and I have found that it is during these lessons that my class learn the most effectively”. This NQT created a rap about the process of science she was teaching “and the children used the rap as a resource in future lessons” – an up-to-date mnemonic. She also used drama and always emphasised “enjoyment, enthusiasm, confidence, fun, variety and context”. However there were lessons she enjoyed less and these were real problems at first until she learnt her own lesson: “Going in worrying about how I found this subject difficult to teach was not the right strategy. Had I continued with this attitude this term and OFSTED would probably have led me to wanting to leave the profession”. Even such a positive teacher could feel on a knife-edge.

It was normal for NQTs to gain in confidence slowly and in secondary schools find some classes/years more difficult than others. It was not unusual to find successes with some classes, and problems with others. Secondary schools especially were considered to be challenging work environments and it was not unusual for NQTs to reconsider whether teaching is the right career for them. A strong determinant in this was their positive feelings about teaching classes that worked well, and making a difference to children’s lives. A strong mentor who helped out with difficult classes without a sense of blame was considered helpful. As one said, the difficult class was only one of many classes taught, and the others showed increases in learning and motivation, giving difficult situations a sense of proportion.

A sense of failure caused by difficult classes can sap confidence and self esteem.

NQTs build into their writing information from LEA in-service courses such as on pupil behaviour. The discussion repeated the main points and ideally demonstrates something about putting it into practice.

On class management, one said: “I want to eliminate all of the low level [mis]behaviour in my classroom next year. Things such as chatting, calling out and wandering around the room do have a detrimental effect on learning. To counteract this, I intend to start the term my making my expectations explicit…and by making the consequences explicit too” .

**b) Differentiation.** Most NQTs varied their activities to make lessons more interesting. Some reported that they noticed that individual pupils were good at some things and not others and could built self-esteem through things they **can do.**

**c) Challenging pupils.** NQTs put a great deal of effort into resisting conflict in these cases and reflected that the only way forward is to build a relationship of trust, using praise and finding out what the pupil likes. Their assessed reflection required them to focus on individual pupils and consider issues of differentiation and conflict resolution. They became more aware of the tricks pupils play to gain attention and to gain the initiative – and how to defuse them. Also there is a realisation that challenging behaviour can mask some other needs that has to be identified in order to address it. The NQTs enjoyed small triumphs and were realistic not to expect perfection. There were good examples in primary schools of positive relationships with teaching assistants to support children with special educational needs.

**d) Pupil motivation.**

There are examples of pupils being involved in their own learning and that this helped them: “I was so impressed with their attitude [to the topic] that I asked a few of them after the topic why it had been so different and they agreed that it was a combination of the lessons being fun, having scientific boundaries, being interested in the subject and feeling they were able to ask questions.” On teaching and learning, one NQT made a point about prioritising: “I stopped trying to do everything all at once and set myself targets. This reduced the pressure I had put on myself, life became easier and I began to enjoy teaching again”.

**e)Assessment.** The assessment-for-learning agenda is having its effect and some NQTs are explicit about developing the relevance of their assessments for learning.

**f) Responsibilty**. A number of NQTs had been given various appropriate responsibilities during the year, and some, often older NQTs, had responsibility during their NQT year. One secondary NQT was even acting Head of Department for a while. Many moved to positions of responsibility in year 2.

**g) Professionalism.** The NQTs are developing their sense of professionalism and in particular that they as teachers have to be respected and not treated as a ‘buddy’. As one said, pupils have to “trust you as a professional” .

**h) Continuing CPD.** NQTs for the most part were going on in-service courses and finding them helpful. In their plans for the coming year, they were identifying areas for which they would value in-service. In addition they are aiming to progress through their MA with a realistic plan to complete it within their first four years of teaching.

**i) Contribution to the school.** Extra curricular activities were discussed as helpful in being trusted and respected by children.

* Trip to France “The thing I am most proud of this year and also the thing that I feel has made a huge contribution to the whole school”.
* A trip to the pantomime.
* Sport including supporting other staff with valuable sporting expertise.
* Charity collections.
* Feeding back from in-service courses e.g. Talking Partners for EAL.
* Introducing a pen-pal scheme (MFL).
* Year 7 camp (outward bound).
* Leading staff development sessions in school on areas of expertise.

**4.3 Reflection on NQT evaluations.**

1. Personal philosophy: NQTs had developed an enthusiasm for teaching and a positive philosophy of education – that is to develop empowering working relationships with pupils with a disciplined and self-disciplined environment. This saw them through often difficult times when the ethos or practice of their particular school made this hard to achieve. Most were content that they had achieved it partially during the year, with more to work on during the following year.
2. In Teacher Training trainees learn to cope and become competent. The MA ought to stretch their thinking about education and benefit from new ideas and new thinking. Like in other academic subjects, progression to a Masters ought to be encouraged at an early stage. In teaching however, the Masters is unnecessarily viewed as daunting study.
3. Being the first piece of work since training, and having a practically based agenda rather than a theoretical one, there is a danger that policies and procedures are not problematised. The judgements that the NQTs make can be polarised to things that go well, and things that go badly. The detailed tasks asks them to discuss the motivation and learning of a range of pupils, including difficult ones, and this can be done extremely well.
4. One NQT, in a wide ranging account, reported problems arising from apparent lack of support from her HoD and SMT, focusing on a pupil who refused to come to a detention. Whilst the matter was not handled for several weeks, she felt that her authority and position were undermined and the job of teaching became very difficult. She recognised that she had learnt from this to nip problems in the bud so they do not escalate. Another NQT felt she had tried every strategy to deal with 6 pupils, she reluctantly asked for help and the headteacher sorted out the problem, resulting in long term improvement. Success can be described as a mix being the NQT sorting as much out as possible, with the pupils knowing that there is weighty support nearby.
5. There are examples of NQTs having great responsibility, such as covering for an absent HoD long term, preparing lessons for supply teachers covering other peoples classes. There are examples of NQTs underestimating their contribution, and overestimating it. Some NQTs met experiences they were not prepared for but showed the adaptability to tackle and solve issues. Examples are: a high intake of Romany families, English as an Additional Language. One secondary trained NQT moved to a second post in a Primary school.
6. Often, good relationships were promoted by using relevant materials – Bill Bryson’s Short History of Nearly Everything, Adrian Mole etc. One based a lesson on critical thinking about a text on the TV programme *Friends* to teach skills that could then be adapted to English set texts. When secondary pupils are bombarded by what they see as irrelevant materials, they tend not to make progress.
7. “Looking back to the start of the year, I can see where I have made great improvements in my teaching. These improvements have helped me to enjoy the lessons I am teaching and I have found that it is during these lessons that my class learn the most effectively.” This primary NQT, writing at the end of term 1, described how she used drama and role place to bring the Anglo Saxons to life. “From looking at these lessons I feel that there are some vital ingredients, enjoyment, enthusiasm, confidence, fun, variety and context. These are required in a lesson where effective pupil learning will occur. I have tried to implement these qualities in to all lessons to improve student learning”. In spite of excellent ideas, she felt on a knife edge and when things went wrong, seriously lost confidence.
8. By the end of the year, she was able to say: “I stopped trying to do everything all at once and set myself targets. This reduced the pressure I had put on myself, life became easier and I began to enjoy teaching again. Once I had made this step I noticed a change in my class’s behaviour, they began to respond and learning increased. The children understood my expectations and I started to understand their needs. With lessons closely linked to the children’s abilities they felt a great sense of achievement and their positive attitude grew further. Between us we developed an environment where there was a positive ‘Can do’ culture where everyone had the right to ask for help. When a pupil feels they can ask for help, I believe that they will strive to improve and are more aware of the progress they are making. “. This is one good teacher who considered leaving but worked through the problem.
9. A secondary science NQT used role play to demonstrate particle theory. Through this, “pupils are able to show how the particles are arranged and how they move. Since most pupils find this exercise fun they tend to retain their understanding of particle theory”. She described how later in the year, during revision, the class spontaneously acted out the movements. She described how multi-sensory learning improved motivation and retention and how important she had found games to be, especially those that required the pupils to think for themselves.
10. Behaviour management develops a great deal in the NQT year. As one NQT said, “To avoid confrontation I often ask pupils to stay back at the end of the lesson. We can then have a calm chat without an audience. I try to start by focusing on something positive…This strategy combines two techniques that Bill Rogers refers to in *Classroom Behaviour* – ‘prefacing’ and ‘follow up’. I have found through my own experiences that Bill Rogers is correct when he states that prefacing is most effective when you have established a positive working relationship with the pupil, otherwise how can you begin the conversation with a positive comment? Follow up allows the pupil to calm down, perhaps even become apprehensive…It also gives me time to think through how I will tackle the issue.”
11. Another secondary NQT, a Spanish native speaker, described how difficult it was to get pupils to understand some grammar rules. “It worked wonderfully, but unfortunately most of the children were in a geography trip that day. So I had to return to it once more incorporating a lot of differentiation to the lesson. I gave the seven pupils who had been present at the last lesson a sticker saying *capitaine* and they had to train their teams for another grammar game”.

**4.4 NQT summative feedback.**

This student feedback from the NQTs about this module generally managed by WebCT and email-supported independent study. In general they found the pacing over the year helpful, the finish point at the end of August useful, and the process professionally helpful as it encouraged reflection. In addition to these positive points I would add that this feedback comes from those who managed to organise themselves to finish. Many others failed to do so and our target is to get a higher completion rate with a larger number of starters.

1. “Thank you for your help this year.  I found your support excellent and very efficient in speed of replying to queries.  The workload was manageable and I like the due dates that meant that I was helped in spreading the time working on the module.

The tasks were helpful in reminding me of strategies and styles and so helped reinforce teaching practices I was trying.” (Secondary NQT)

1. “This NQT module was very useful and helped me to carry on evaluating my own teaching. The workload was difficult to manage at some points, but all in all it's a matter of getting well organised. It is useful that the last submission isn't needed before the end of August. It's good to be able to leave it for summer holidays, when the workload is obviously much more reduced. The communication with you was good and I think that email communication has been very effective indeed.” (Secondary Languages teacher).
2. “I found the course to be just the right amount of work and the introductory session very informative. I am transferring to a course run in my school this year, but only for convenience of travel. (Primary NQT)
3. “This module was well organised in terms of how I received the information required to undertake the module. The module brief and the recommended reading list were both send out promptly at the beginning of the academic year. I also found that each of the three submission point was well timed, in terms of being set after periods of holiday during the academic year.

As for the assignment description and the logistics of the assignment such as the length of time I had to complete the module and the word count I knew that there was sufficient scope to personalise the module. I was assigned a tutor who always gave prompt and specific feedback on how the assignment was coming along. Therefore I would rate the communication with UW as excellent even though I am a long distance student.

The module gave me as an NQT the opportunity to reflect upon how each of my first three terms was progressing. This has been incredibly important in terms of allowing me to adapt and alter how I have tackled this following year. The review aspect of the module is most important as it reminds you about the teaching pedagogy in which is fundamental every time you step into the classroom. Even as a male PE teacher who does not teach more than 3 classroom based lessons per week, the module gave me the option to select the aspect of teaching and learning I was most concerned with and encouraged me to experiment with teaching styles and assessment for learning strategies, in which normally I may of have had the confidence to trial.

Overall the module is a great opportunity to begin the process of reflection even as an NQT. The module was particularly useful in preparation for teaching in year two. The best advise I can provide someone with who is considering the module is to give it a go and you will be amazed how much intrinsic feedback it provides you with. (Secondary PE NQT).

1. It allowed me to stay a student. Having started my education later than most, I am still enjoying the sense of achievement that I feel. The self esteem factor is probably the most important aspect of study. I was over anxious when doing my first degree and it became all consuming. I have calmed down a bit now and although I still want to achieve at a high level I have got things in slightly more perspective.

The module kept me in touch with people. It meant I could continue to have a connection with the university. This is also linked to the love of study - I feel lost without connection to an 'institution'.

I could access other teachers at the same stage of their career as myself. The other NQTs in my school had very different needs and aspirations to me. The NQT module was very useful in that I could meet with colleagues from different schools teaching different year groups, across phases, and compare experiences.

I experienced the module as a form of support. I desperately want to keep the momentum going. The INSET training received from the LEA is hit and miss. Very rarely can you find out much detail beforehand which means you may find it's something you've covered before or is at an unsuitable level. Doing the NQT module allowed me to be in control of my own focus.

Had become concerned about how little I had learned on my PGCE. It can't totally prepare you. You're taking baby steps on the PGCE. There's so much to learn still about the craft of teaching and subject knowledge. I made a commitment to take 'time out' by joining the NQT module because that is what I wanted. There's no guilt because you are with others doing the same thing.

The NQT module is so much more use than the LEA/school induction programme. (Secondary NQT)

1. I had enjoyed my PGCE and the contact it gave me with the university. Those who had done a four year ITT programme had acquired more of a theoretical base. I wanted to carry on with my own CPD by accelerating my own learning and professional development and going on to a senior management position. (Primary NQT)
2. After my GTP I felt I didn't know a lot of theory. I wanted a career and I wanted to achieve a senior position in a school. Thought the NQT module would help. If I had done the PGCE I would have found it difficult to study for an MA in my first year but having done the GTP I felt more comfy with day to day things and could think about whole school aspects on the module. If I had done the PGCE I would have wanted to concentrate during the induction year on my own teaching and consolidate. (Secondary NQT)
3. Keep up with what is going on in education. I like studying. Nice to have conversations and discussions with people other than children. Time out to talk about education to people who have similar experiences and who are similarly interested. Difficult to do that at school. (Primary NQT)

**4.5 Impact of studying the NQT module**

1. It allowed me to learn more about teaching than I feel I would have done on the job alone. It's all very well working on your own to improve the way you teach but having an assignment that combines refection tasks and direct intervention strategies focuses one on action. It forces you to read, reflect on your own practice and to try out different things.

It allowed me to have access to professionals with lots of experience of whom I could ask questions and learn much. With the best will in the world contact with experienced colleagues in school is minimal. My induction tutor was Ok but I felt we were going through the routine because we had to. It was essentially a tick box exercise. Sure, it gave me a chance to chat things through once every half term but nothing was really followed through. In the last term we didn't even have a meeting. He even offloaded my lesson observations onto another HOD. My own HOD is fantastic and very supportive but he is bogged down with his own job. It's difficult to get objective support within the working environment. Everyone in school is busy and you need to find some space somewhere - I found my space on the NQT module.

As teachers we need to be reminded of what it feels like to be learners. Carrying on with one's own learning on a formal basis helps creates empathy with pupils. It can also create infuriation with pupils who don't give a damn about learning but on the whole I think it is a positive move. Like therapists having to in therapy themselves. I would hate to be the kind of teacher that thinks that once you've qualified you know it all. (Secondary NQT)

1. Importance of different school cultures, especially when I started at my new school at the beginning of my second year in teaching. I could see immediately the tensions between staff that had been there some time and who were older, on higher pay scales and perhaps had more 'traditional values' and the younger group of staff who were clearly doing more work and earning 10 - 15 K less. Was fascinated during the module to learn about and understand the different cultures that can also exist in secondary and primary schools.

The work I did on action planning and target setting on the NQT module has been used directly by me when designing the RE curriculum. I found it very comfortable to do because I was confident about writing an action plan and identifying clear success criteria.

The classroom interventions that I focused on during the NQT module has been enormously helpful. The behaviour management and VAK strategies I implemented have led to me now being told that I handle classes really well. I am much more open to inclusion than I had been in the past I have to confess. I can read situations much more easily and now have a range of strategies that I use with great confidence. Now within the first few weeks of any term I know that I can get a class settled. And VAK continues to provide me with ways to make learning work for different children. (Primary NQT)

1. The module forced me to think about things I'd never thought about like school culture. Made my much more aware of internal culture of the organisation. At the second school I went to in my NQT year I really found my feet and started using terms that we had been using on the module. The fact that I could look at the school at the classroom and at a whole school level helped towards promotion. I am now a Fast Track teacher. I have a wider school focus. The things I learned about questioning skills, and behavioural issues, positive pupil management as a result of the classroom interventions I undertook during the module have been extremely useful in my role as a Fast Track teacher. I am mentoring a GTP student and have found the MA module really helpful for this as well. I have been able to help someone else with their own learning. I am really trying to use some of the ideas learned on the MA generally, e.g. working with kids who have problems, observing bottom sets of pupils. (Secondary NQT)
2. Am dreading finishing the MA as I won't know what to do next! I may have to engage more with real life! I am still wanting to get a distinction. This is bound up with personal history, failure at school, only getting one O level. If I don't get distinction I shall have fallen short of the mark. The MA gives me a vehicle within which to achieve. It's pushing me to consider things which if I wasn't doing the MA, I wouldn't do. Lots of tensions in teaching. I seek to reconcile the rhetoric with the reality. (Secondary NQT) e even offloaded m d d

**5. Future Possibilities.**

1. Numbers could increase as this approach is considered to be a natural extension to ITE training. Since most NQTs will be at some distance from a University/HEI this will necessitate some form of distance or blended learning. This study has shown the value of combining face to face Saturday sessions with carefully supported distance learning using platforms such as WebCT and using email.
2. The main emphasis is to improve the email and web interface so that together these provide an additional resource for the NQTs. The termly evaluations are focused around a series of questions which require both breadth of understanding across the ability range, and depth of comment in learning processes. The NQT is expected to share all evaluations with their Induction Tutor in school so that the programme becomes known for enhancing the whole NQT induction process. Some of the LEAs involved recommend this programme both to NQTs and Induction tutors.
3. Working at Masters level could be an aspiration early in a teacher’s career which if professionally focused could become important to their career development and significant for teacher recruitment. Moves to offer M level credit for the PGCE is also a move in this direction that could easily be integrated with NQT self evaluation.
4. Challenges stem also from the difficulty of establishing a regular pattern of meetings with the NQTs, partly because of the distances involved, and partly about the use of their busy and stressed time. A significant other problem to resolve is how to get the NQTs learning from each other. There may be good practice of NQT meetings in larger schools but judging from their reflections, this is uncommon.
5. ITE students and NQTs need guidance in how to think critically on their professional work rather than describing incidents. They can be guided in this through their assignments. We have to recognise that the issues for individual NQTs will be different, and methods of reflecting should not be too straitjacketed. However, reflective questions can be helpful to focus thinking, particularly when these focus on the quality of learning; pupil motivation; and the promotion of positive relationships.
6. Reflection needs to encourage teachers to look ‘outside the box’ – not to be too easily satisfied by ‘establishment’ answers and work towards effective learning in spite of being hampered by National Curriculum requirements. They will understand that ideals come into conflict with requirements, and decide how to cope with this conflict so learners are least negatively affected. They will have thoughts about the **motivation and demotivation** of learners/pupils/students, and **empowerment and disempowerment.**
7. There can be value also in NQTs considering philosophical types of questions: for example

* What education is
* Why teaching is effective or ineffective
* Why and how learners learn, and in particular learn to think
* How to make most effective use of resources and time
* What might be meant by entitlement
* What should underlie curriculum choices

**6. Quality Issues.**

**a) Being taught or learning to reflect?**

The nature of the geographically widely strung cohort has meant that in order to open up the opportunity to as many as possible, a model of pedagogical teaching and receptive learning (NQTs ‘being taught’) is giving way to a supported independent study model where the HEI facilitates through workshops, tutorials and WebCT a learning experience managed by the NQT who has to take the initiative and personal ownership. In a stressful year, the process has to be affirming and stress free – seen as a help and not a further problem. We would argue that this for those who engage with it enables them to make rapid progress into their Masters level study. There is a concern, that the induction process will not critically challenge but encourage a recycling of practice which may never have been critically scrutinized: M level provision can remedy this.

**b) Use of literature.**

At a practical level this programme wishes to encourage relevant professional reading but given the preciousness of time and energy for NQTs, seeks to reduce the requirement of tracking down scarce library books. Schools and departments often have some relevant books and it is worth asking colleagues and mentors. Much interesting material can be obtained through Scholar Google (<http://scholar.google.com>) and other online resources via the H.E. student portal to the Web. There are books of readings, such as Pollard, *Readings for* *Reflective Teaching* (Continuum 2002) which are helpful; a compilation focused on NQT needs would be helpful.

**c) Evidence Based.**

This seeks to direct the NQTs’ emphasis on evidencing standards (found in ITE and Induction) to go further and to scrutinize that evidence in intellectually rigorous ways. It invites NQTs to collect a range of data, qualitative and quantitative, as a routine which will help them throughout their teaching and development without taking much extra time. We encourage them to keep a record on in-service events they attend, and keep reflective notes on the topic, creating an action plan to follow up some aspects of the courses. The emphasis should be on validating and interpreting evidence rather than simply collecting against a tick-list – using evidence rigorously to understand an issue and propose solutions. Our M level work therefore invited a critical reflective commentary on the evidence they have collected.

**d) Time demands on staff.**

Institutions involved should be clear that supporting NQTs at a distance through tutorial relationships is a time consuming process which cannot be successfully done at the margins to time within over busy timetables. There is a need to cost this model realistically or there is likely to be a low completion rate. The highest completion rate was in the cohort which was supported through two Saturday sessions per term. Saturday working requires also a degree of timetabling flexibility for it not to be an imposition on staff.

**e) Progression**

An issue is to avoid failure at this first professional hurdle, so NQTs will have had the opportunity to receive diagnostic feedback after each term (and by email guidance any time). If they make use of this they should have all the necessary information to pass. NQTs who make use of support normally achieve M level in the three institutions and achieve good and very good grades. A student from cohort 1 scored a bare pass as an NQT but continued to build up modules, and passed the M.A. Dissertation with Distinction at 80% to receive a Distinction overall after 3 ½ years of teaching. She also achieved rapid promotion both into a sought-after job, and with experience already of training other teachers in the LEA. We would like this early career profile to become normal rather than exceptional.

**f)** **Widening the Net**

The three institutions have found it very helpful to have funding to meet together on a common issue, and a little additional funding has been obtained from another source. We have all noted that it is a minority of NQTs who volunteer to undertake this study as an ‘extra’. We are looking for ways of using testimonies of successful experience to emphasis that this process of study can be seen to be helpful rather than an additional burden. We each hope to develop conference papers and publications out of this process.