

SUPPORTING SELF-EVALUATION IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

DOUGLAS BUCHANAN AND SYLVIA JACKSON

INTRODUCTION

In recent years many important developments in education have evolved from the notion that giving students more responsibility for their own learning can enhance the effectiveness of the process. This pervades all levels of education. For example, at the school level there has been an increased emphasis upon study skills, with less didactic teaching and moves towards more resource-based approaches. Metacognition, which stresses the importance of how we learn, is yet another way of encouraging learners to take more responsibility within the learning process (see Nisbet and Shucksmith, 1986; and Quicke and Winter, 1994). Within higher education, the importance of 'self-directed learning' is gradually becoming recognised. Wilcox (1996) explains that the term originates from adult education and is important because of its emphasis upon 'personal autonomy, personal responsibility, and personal growth'. Building upon the work of Boud (1988), she argues that adult and higher education have much in common, including the shared goal of 'developing student responsibility and autonomy in learning'.

This paper is concerned with one particular area of higher education, that of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Hagger *et al.* (1993) argue that ITE should produce 'professionals who will continue to think critically about their teaching and continue to develop and refine their teaching skills' (p.16). The staff development implications for Higher Education Institution (HEI) tutors and supervising teachers/mentors in promoting these types of processes are no less challenging and indeed there is now a sizeable literature about the role of mentors (rather less about the role of HEI tutors, but perhaps that is to be expected as recent UK initiatives, particularly in England and Wales have tended to promote more school-based approaches to ITE). In examining this area, our research has focused upon the process of self-evaluation. However, much of what is written in the literature centres around the idea of the 'reflective practitioner' and the relationship between these two terms is discussed later.

An important development within ITE has been the move to a competency-based structure. However, a number of writers (Carr, 1993; Hutchinson, 1994; and Whitty and Willmott, 1991) have highlighted the difficulty of adopting a reflective practitioner approach within such a structure. Carr (1993) argues that 'the pre-competence goal of the autonomous reflective practitioner and that of the post-competence trained executive of Guidelines and other instructions pull in quite contrary directions' (p.25). On the other hand, Hustler and McIntyre (1996) present a number of case studies from ITE which, they argue, take a 'proactive and constructive' stance towards the issue. Mahoney and Harris (1996) and Pendry and McIntyre (1996) describe how the construction of profile frameworks can clarify shared views about 'good practice', so allowing for development around a competency-based structure. For example, within the University of East Anglia (UEA) framework, one of the six core areas of responsibility is to 'reflect on one's own actions and pupils' responses in order to improve teaching'. However, Barton and Elliott (1996) concede that this area might not be viewed as a category of teaching competence. There is also the ongoing problem of using the same profile for both formal student teacher assessment and self-assessment, where, as Hegarty and Knight (1995) point out, profiles are important in developing 'self-esteem, empowerment and the self-management of learning... (supporting) a shift of focus from the course to the learner, encouraging

learner-centred approaches' (see Assiter and Shaw, 1993).

Our research has taken place within the Scottish context, and has its origins within the chemistry component of the PGCE (Secondary) course at Moray House Institute of Education (MHIE). The paper explores the use of a structured approach as a vehicle for supporting student teachers in the use of self-evaluation as part of their progress towards life-long professional development. We believe that providing appropriate support at the ITE stage can, in turn, help teachers to develop as critical thinkers and hence accept more responsibility for their own learning. Indeed, if teachers can be given a greater sense of ownership, with a say in determining *their* needs and the direction of *their* professional development, then recent initiatives, such as teacher appraisal and school review may not develop as top-down models, and, as a result, may be more effective vehicles for change in the classroom.

The structured approach to the provision of support has evolved over the last seven years, with session 1992-93 seen as representing an important period for the research and development process. It was also during that session, in January, that the Review of the Guidelines for Teacher Training Courses was issued by the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED, 1993(a)). These listed a number of competences under four section headings (subject and content of teaching; the classroom; the school; and professionalism), and, subsequently, led to modifications to the structure of our approach.

In what ways, then, is this paper different from the many other papers to be found in the literature relating to reflective practice within ITE courses? We would suggest, first, the distinctive nature of the Scottish context; second, the nature of the structured framework which encourages student teachers to use self-evaluation to become more autonomous learners; and, third, the way that the framework dovetails with the competency-based approach suggested by the SOED in the Guidelines.

THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

ITE in Scotland has a number of distinctive features compared with other parts of the UK. One of these has been the approach to the question of competences. The Scottish model has been much less restrictive (see Stronach *et al.*, 1996) and, in particular, has encouraged the adoption of a reflective approach (SOED, 1993(a)).

Another difference has been that, compared with England and Wales, there has been a much slower move in Scotland towards school-based ITE. It could be argued that this has allowed for more detailed debate around the issues. A recent milestone was the pilot mentoring programme, which was funded by the SOED. This took place in 1992-93 with an extension into 1993-94 and was based at MHIE. The SOED also funded an independent evaluation carried out by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE). This report showed that both student teachers and teachers benefit from mentoring; the former spoke of more teacher support (i.e. via mentors) in school, the latter indicated that the process helps to improve their professional practice (Powney *et al.*, 1993).

However, although in May 1994 the Minister for Education suggested that mentoring should be extended to all PGCE (Secondary) courses, with further details to be issued by December 1994, two later SOED communications (1995(a) and (b)) indicated, first, that there would be a delay in the start of a national mentoring scheme (from 1995-96 to a year later), and, second, that the introduction of the scheme was to be halted altogether, proposing instead that a working group be set up by the General Teaching Council (GTC) to 'submit recommendations... on the key elements of effective partnership and on the respective roles of the partners'. The findings of this group were published in 1997 and, given the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the pilot, it is not unexpected that they highlight the need for adequate resourcing to allow for effective liaison between partners, the importance of

training of key staff (e.g. student regents, and principal teachers/classroom teachers for their involvement in 'devising programmes of classroom experience for students') and time for teachers to work with student teachers. There is also mention within one section of the GTC report of how the competences might increasingly be used as 'an agreed statement of what is involved in the teaching and learning process' (p.10) (i.e. as the basis of a shared agenda).

Publications, particularly from the SOED (see, for example, SOED, 1988; and 1993(b)), but also from the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (see, for example, SCCC, 1996), have emphasised both the importance of reflective practice for on-going professional development and the role of self-evaluation. A typical quote is given below:

As the main purpose of self-evaluation is to bring about improvement in the quality of learning and teaching, perhaps the most important question to be asked in opening up debate is how individual teachers, or subject departments, or schools, know if they are effective in what they do. Self-evaluation should operate at these three different levels. (SOED, 1988, p.37)

The above appears to reflect the concern of the SOED to make education more accountable. Recently, the Audit Unit of the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID, 1996) published a set of thirty-three performance indicators to assist in self-evaluation. While the emphasis is clearly upon monitoring and evaluation as part of a departmental and whole school planning process, with specific guidance for specialists teachers, heads of department and senior managers, there are sections which provide support for the classroom teacher, an area which Brown *et al.* (1995) highlight as being of crucial importance in terms of school improvement.

SUPPORTING STUDENT TEACHERS : ONE APPROACH

Our work was based upon a support structure which had three main aspects. These still appear in the approach used today, but, as is reported later, subsequent modifications have since taken place. One aspect of the support structure was the 'framework'; a two-part profile which was made up of a number of sections concerned with the subject curriculum and classroom practice. Within the latter, the section headings were classroom climate; planning and preparation; implementation; and assessment. A number of key questions provided sub-headings for each section. The following three were examples from the section 'classroom climate'.

Are you able to develop good relationships with your pupils?

Are you able to motivate pupils within a climate of confidence and trust?

Are you able to provide a stimulating educational environment?

The framework provided support for 'broad tracking' (the monitoring of progress across all aspects of the profile). Student teachers were encouraged to file handouts and notes from lectures, tutorials, workshops, school placements and other activities under the appropriate sub-heading, producing a portfolio of professional development.

Associated with each of the questions within classroom practice (this became known as the 'learning and teaching' part of the profile) was a number of statements (referred to as 'criteria'). The latter were based upon commonly held views regarding 'best practice' in the area. Below are a selection of the criteria which were associated with the question 'Are you able to question pupils effectively and respond to and support their discussion?'

Your questioning style is encouraging and supportive and makes good use of praise.

Incorrect answers are dealt with sensitively.

You are in control of who responds, addressing questions to individual pupils by name if necessary.

However, our intention was not to produce a definitive list of criteria; rather, although the criteria were seen as useful as goals in themselves, their main purpose was to help student teachers to develop the skills necessary to track their progress using a self-evaluative approach. They also provided a 'shared agenda', for promoting dialogue between student teachers, teachers and tutors. Student teachers selected a maximum of six different areas as a focus for self-evaluation. Therefore, criteria drawn from up to six questions were being addressed at any one time. Student teachers were encouraged to re-visit areas, if, for example, a further placement threw up new aspects, and, select different areas as priorities changed in the light of professional progress. Some kind of 'daily diary' was originally recommended to keep a record of progress using the chosen criteria. It was suggested that this should be supplemented with notes of feedback from tutors and teachers. These formed the basis for the written assignment, which was a summary of professional development, submitted in term 3.

A second aspect of the support structure involved the grouping of student teachers in pairs for school placement, to encourage peer observation of lessons (or parts of lessons), with subsequent discussion to identify action points. Where it was not possible to pair from the same subject, student teachers were, and still are, encouraged to work in the same way with a student teacher from another subject area. A shared awareness of the way of working, with each viewing the other as a 'critical friend', was what was important.

The opportunity for on-going discussion between tutors and student teachers about their professional needs represented the third aspect of the support structure. For example, the aspect of 'broad tracking', referred to earlier, demanded that student teachers regularly reviewed their strengths and weaknesses, with time set aside to talk about these areas and help plan for future action. However, this did not preclude the discussion considering other essential areas which the tutor felt to be important. As with the placement visit, the Institute programme was based around a 'dual agenda'.

Before examining our approach in terms of the wider literature, a question which is important to consider concerns the relationship between 'self-evaluation' and 'reflection'.

SELF-EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

McIntyre gives a useful insight into this question. He defines reflection as 'a systematic enquiry into one's practice to improve that practice and to deepen one's understanding of it' (McIntyre, 1993, from Lucas, 1991). Drawing upon the work of several writers (Van Manen, 1977; Tom, 1985; and Zeichner and Liston, 1987), McIntyre suggests that there is now a growing consensus about the various forms or levels of reflection (the 'technical', 'practical', and 'critical' or 'emancipatory'). The latter is seen as particularly problematic, and it is suggested that looking at one's own practice is possibly not the best starting point for student teachers to give consideration to 'the structural or ideological context in which they are working'. The same author also argues that because student teachers have little experience of classroom teaching, reflection is difficult. It is possibly for these reasons that other material written by McIntyre and his co-workers, as part of the Oxford Internship Scheme, tends to use the term 'self-evaluation'. The latter is seen as an important

aspect of student teachers becoming 'self-developing' professionals:

That means helping them to develop the skills and habits necessary for relating their classroom practice to their educational aspirations: enabling them to become self-developing professionals through learning how to evaluate and to improve their own practice. (Hagger *et al.*, 1993, p.90)

McLaughlin (1991) provides the following definition of self-evaluation, linking it with reflection:

...an aspect of reflection that is concerned with defining one's concerns, establishing criteria for success, and determining the most appropriate methods to judge the effects of one's actions in the classroom. Self-evaluation involves carefully observing and analysing one's actions and interpreting the consequences of what one has done. (p. 142)

McLaughlin suggests that self-evaluation might be one level of self-reflection, associating with it certain key attitudes and skills. Recent research by LaBoskey (1993), following the ideas of Dewey (1933), tends to confirm the importance of attitudinal aspects. McLaughlin concludes that 'what enhances reflection also aids self-evaluation'.

This paper is consistent with the line taken by McIntyre, that self-evaluation is an important process at the ITE stage, helping student teachers to develop as reflective practitioners. We also see self-evaluation as having an important role in promoting learner autonomy.

SUPPORTING SELF-EVALUATION IN ITE : A VIEW FROM THE LITERATURE

This section begins by looking at the background literature in the area of mentoring, highlighting issues which concern the use of self-evaluation. Second, it addresses the role of the HEI tutor, including work in the area of 'democratic learning'; this examines the type of principles to be considered when handing over more responsibility to student teachers. The final part considers the importance of dialogue, with particular reference to working with peers.

There is now a considerable literature on the role of the school mentor (see Hagger *et al.*, 1993; Furlong and Maynard, 1995; McIntyre *et al.* (ed.), 1993; and Tomlinson, 1995). While the research reported in this paper does not focus specifically upon the school mentor, initial work within this area in Scotland (i.e. the pilot mentoring scheme), the proposed national partnership scheme, and the implications of the work on mentoring for the role of the HEI tutor (an aspect of the research), suggest it is sufficiently important to be included.

Two recent pieces of research and development are particularly well documented; these are the work at Swansea by Furlong and Maynard, and the numerous papers and books reporting the Oxford Internship Scheme (for example, Hagger *et al.*, 1993). Both suggest that student teachers pass through different stages of development with associated mentor roles. For example, Hagger *et al.* outline how student teachers initially need to be supported to review practice in areas of basic competence. Later, students move on to devise their own criteria for use as a basis for self-evaluation. Furlong and Maynard (1995) provide more detail about the later stages, which involve a greater emphasis upon pupils' learning, and an examination of student teachers' own underlying beliefs. The mentor's role then moves from 'supporter' to 'challenger', an area discussed by a number of researchers (see Daloz, 1986; Cameron-Jones and O'Hara, 1997).

An aspect of the literature which relates both to the role of the mentor/supervisory teacher and the HEI tutor is the importance placed upon the three stage process (i.e. pre-lesson discussion (where the focus of the lesson is identified), observation

(where the observer collects data), and post-lesson debriefing (where the information collected is used, together with student teacher reflections, to discuss progress and consider new 'action points')). Many writers discuss the debriefing stage and the skills involved (see Knights, 1985; Lucas, 1988; Pearson and Smith, 1985; and Shaw, 1985). There is particular prominence given to climate setting and affective aspects (Boud *et al.*, 1985; and Leat, 1995).

Developing the work of Ruddock and Sigsworth (1983), who used the phrase 'partnership supervision', Mercer and Abbott (1989) comment on the role of the HEI tutor within a 'democratic learning' approach. This is defined as:

the course members... organise a learning cooperative that derives and directs its own programme of studies using the tutors as resources and as facilitators. (In Meighan and Harber, 1986, p.142)

Tutors are warned not to deviate from the main focus of the observation by raising other, more tutor-based issues, which might arise. Such deviation, it is said, would damage the 'would be' partnership, with the student teacher becoming too dependent upon the tutor. Thus, implicit in the democratic learning approach is a commitment to helping student teachers to take more responsibility for their own learning. Within this approach we recognise the tension that inevitably exists as a result of the dual role of the tutor, i.e. as 'critical friend' within the more democratic learning approach, and also as assessor.

Several writers (Boud *et al.*, 1985; and Day, 1993) stress the importance of social dialogue, and its role in accelerating the learning process. One way of promoting such dialogue, which can have a valuable role within the self-evaluation process is to encourage collaboration with peers, such as by peer tutoring. Quoting from Goodlad and Hirst (1989), Barron and Foot (1991) define peer tutoring as 'a system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn by teaching' (p.174). Also, McIntyre *et al.* (1977), as part of their research into microteaching, used peer groups for analysing teaching episodes. They concluded there were certain advantages 'including the greater informality and frankness of discussion, the variety of perspectives, the tendency to argue through a problem until it was better understood and the appreciation of each other's problems' (p.28).

For a study about supporting self-evaluation at the ITE stage, what then are the main points from the literature? There is some concern about attempting to promote reflection (McIntyre, 1993) with the term self-evaluation seen as possibly more appropriate in the context of student teachers engaged in monitoring and reviewing their practice. The more recent research into mentoring suggests that the role of the facilitator (be it the mentor/supervisory teacher or the HEI tutor) is likely to change as the student teacher develops. There is also an emphasis upon the need for student teachers to begin by acquiring areas of basic competence. Profiles, like those developed by Berrill (1992) and Barton and Elliott (1996), not only provide a useful framework for this initial stage of development but can also support student teachers in framing their own self-evaluations. At all stages the framework helps to provide student teachers, teachers and HEI tutors with a shared agenda. Our research explores the use of one such framework but also considers how support for student teachers in their use of self-evaluation can be provided through peer tutoring and a democratic approach to learning.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is based largely on a series of interviews with student teachers although relevant documentary information was also considered. The thirteen student teachers in the 1992-93 chemistry cohort were interviewed at the end of terms 2 and 3 to examine their perceptions about the various support mechanisms. In each term two

group interviews were arranged (with six and seven student teachers in each). This interview technique was thought to be most appropriate because of the exploratory nature of the study. We were influenced by Lewis (1992) who argues that group interviews offer an opportunity for greater depth and breadth in responses than is possible with the one-to-one approach.

The interviews, which were taped, used a semi-structured approach with a list of questions providing the framework for the discussion. A copy of the questions was distributed before the interview and most student teachers took the opportunity to attend a prior peer meeting to talk around the issues. This idea had been suggested by the student teachers themselves in an earlier discussion with the tutor. Each group interview lasted approximately one and a half hours. The following two sections provide a flavour of the feedback. Some points are examined in more depth, using the diary notes kept by the tutor for the Institute part of the chemistry component.

We were conscious of the claims that student teachers may have responded positively because tutors were involved in collecting the data, and therefore the second set of interviews in term 3 were undertaken by an independent evaluator (a previous External Examiner for the PGCE (Secondary)) course. In addition to using these second interviews as an opportunity to check the earlier information gathered by the tutors, the main aim was to examine the ways in which student teachers were continuing to progress using the structured support. As a result, the reflective assignments submitted in term 3 were also examined by the independent evaluator.

Thus the research described represents a relatively small-scale initiative, designed to open up discussion around a number of issues. It does not provide, or seek to provide, generalisable conclusions. However, we suggest that the area is one that is appropriate for such exploratory research.

DATA FROM TERM 2

(a) *The framework*

The interviews began by asking student teachers about their reactions to the framework (this had been distributed to them at the start of the course). The framework was described by some as initially 'daunting' and 'terrifying'. However, by the time of the interviews in term 2, views had changed:

I've really changed my opinions on it. I just didn't know what to do at the start but now I realise it sets out just about all we need to think about.

There was agreement that rather than try to change the nature of the framework, more support should be provided at the start of the course (e.g. by asking a graduate from a previous year to talk to the student teachers). It was suggested that the framework had allowed all material, not just from chemistry, to be filed into sections, providing a convenient way of keeping track of broad aspects of development. It also indicated areas still to be looked at. However, using it in this way meant a considerable amount of cross referencing and often produced a very bulky file which could not be carried around easily. In addition, some student teachers were a little uncomfortable with the structure of the framework as the basis for their filing system:

A filing system is a very personal thing and it is difficult to fit in with someone else's thinking.

It was also clear that the framework did not provide all the answers. Student teachers found some difficulty in identifying goals and the degree of expertise required:

I found it hard to decide what is a realistic goal—just how expert must I be before I can feel confident and move on.

It should be noted that at the time of these interviews this type of work was only taking place in chemistry and student teachers with two subjects spoke of the difficulty they experienced dealing with a more negotiated approach to learning and teaching in one subject and a more directive approach in another.

Although the potential of the framework in the identification of action points was recognised, by the middle of term 2, most action points were still arising from discussion with the teacher or tutor. However, student teachers did cross reference suggestions from school with entries within the framework. Future use within the term 3 was recognised :

In the third term I'll have covered a lot more—it should become more useful in prioritising as time goes on.

The student teachers were extremely positive about the criteria. The following quote was typical:

They are really helpful in tracking. Each part is broken down so you can identify clearly what you want to do.

The generic nature of the criteria was noted and it was suggested that the list should be made available to all student teachers on the PGCE (Secondary) course. There was some apprehension about showing the criteria to classroom teachers, in most cases because of a fear that they 'might be taken the wrong way' with teachers feeling threatened if they themselves were not teaching in that way. However a few student teachers did share the criteria and some teachers asked for a copy for staff development purposes.

While student teachers spoke of the helpful comments made by teachers, especially where joint planning had been possible, there was concern about the honesty of some of the feedback, particularly at the beginning:

Some of the teachers only say good things—there's not much constructive criticism.

In some of the pilot schools, the presence of a mentor was seen as particularly beneficial; more time had been available to support the student teacher.

In practice only a few student teachers selected their own areas for tracking at the start of the first placement and most relied on the teacher (and the tutor) for feedback. When student teachers did take the initiative, they often included a number of areas based on preconceptions about what was important in learning and teaching, as well as aspects from their own practice which required attention. Decisions about 'moving on' to identify different areas also proved difficult.

Time to sit down and think was reported as a real problem in tracking progress, particularly with some student teachers who had very full timetables. Some tried to write up at home on a daily basis; others tidied up rough notes at the end of the week. One particular approach, that of a proforma, which was completed at the end of every lesson, was later taken on board by most of the student teacher group.

(b) Peer tutoring

In term 2, a time was arranged for the student teachers to meet on their own to discuss professional progress. There was some debate as to whether the tutor should provide an agenda for this meeting; some student teachers were insecure about being completely left on their own. It was finally agreed that the student teachers would draw up their own agenda. The meeting was reported to have been enormously successful, as the following quote shows:

I went wondering about the worth of such a meeting but the comments from others were really useful. I found out how others had chosen their targets and how they were tracking experience.

It was agreed that it would have been useful to arrange a peer meeting in term 1, before the placement, and it was also suggested that a peer meeting should be held to consider an appropriate programme for the third term of the session. Where it had been possible to arrange peer tutoring on school placement, it was seen to be of great value:

We talked over what we're working on and then when we shared a class we would watch each other and take specific notes.

Again, the benefits of complete honesty were acknowledged :

We were commenting only in a complementary way. Perhaps we felt it a bit cheeky to be critical of each other but we've really got to get over this if we're to be of most help.

It was suggested that the other student teacher need not be from the same subject area:

This term I've a music student coming in with me—if he can understand then anyone can.

As with peer tutoring, which enabled valuable information relating to professional practice to be gathered from peers, so some student teachers recognised the potential of pupil questionnaires as a further source of classroom evidence:

I was really apprehensive about what they (the pupils) would say but I was pleasantly surprised how helpful they were. Some pupils pointed out things that hadn't been mentioned by teachers.

(c) *Democratic learning*

It had been hoped that a democratic approach would give students the opportunity to have more control over their own learning. However, it appeared from the discussions with student teachers that they did not look for equality in the decision-making. They were generally unsure about their needs and priorities, preferring to leave much of the planning to the tutor. At this stage, the issues covered were generally found to be appropriate for all of the class. However, the student teachers reported that by the start of term 2, they felt more able to negotiate the programme of work with the tutor. The use of group discussions as an effective way of learning was thought to be important:

The way we discuss in chemistry means that we are all free to contribute and talk about what we need to know.

Thus, in the second term, it was suggested that the discussion should be led by one of the student teachers on a rotation-basis but that the tutor should be present. In practice when subsequently this was tried although the student teachers appeared to respond extremely positively, there was a tension on the tutor's part between resisting the temptation to break the flow of discussion and using the opportunity to clarify or elaborate an important point. It was decided during these sessions that the tutor would take notes to be shared with the student teachers towards the end of a meeting.

DATA FROM TERM 3

In the group interviews conducted by the independent evaluator, the student teachers re-iterated their initial views about the framework; more time was needed at the

beginning of the course to explain key aspects. However, by June, in term 3, there was unanimous agreement that this support had become invaluable, largely as a result of the on-going practice in its use. Student teachers reported that they were able to use the framework as a filing system for most of their learning, in chemistry and in professional studies but as indicated earlier, filing methods depended upon individual preference. The section on 'learning and teaching' was seen as the most valuable, with the 'curriculum' section less relevant to their immediate needs.

Student teachers reported that a few teachers had used the criteria as the basis for a shared agenda, so supporting discussion. In addition, it was felt that stronger efforts should now be made to acquaint teachers more fully with the approach. The criteria were seen as useful as a focus for self-analysis, and also, helpful for the development of linguistic skills, aiding professional discourse at various levels.

The independent evaluator also read the student teachers' assignments (these summarised professional development in selected areas). The following general remarks are further evidence of the importance of the framework and, in particular, the criteria in supporting student teachers' reflections:

Reading through these essays one felt that one was sharing the introspections of highly intelligent, serious-minded young teachers thoroughly absorbed in their work. In the course of their in-college training, they had developed strategies for self-assessment, diagnostic judgement and systematic record-making... there can be little doubt that much of the high quality of these reports was due to their habitual reference to the framework. (Evaluation Report, Autumn 1993)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research was an exploratory study, concerned with using a structured approach to self-evaluation with an emphasis upon student teachers developing as autonomous learners; this is seen as an important preparation for on-going professional development. Arising out of this study, there are at least three issues worthy of further discussion. First, the way in which self-evaluation, as exemplified in our approach, fits into the wider theoretical framework associated with reflection more generally. In this context it is useful to consider the research findings; they suggest that an approach which highlights the 'process' of self-evaluation needs careful support, particularly in the initial stages. The second issue relates to the implications for the role of the HEI tutor and supervising teacher/mentor. The third issue concerns the way in which the recent introduction of a competency-based approach to ITE and future plans for a national partnership scheme are likely to affect such an approach.

In order to examine the first of these issues, and in particular the link between our approach to self-evaluation and reflection, it is necessary to consider further the three forms or levels of reflection referred to earlier in the paper. McIntyre (1993) describes the 'technical' level as concerned with 'the effective attainment of given goals' and the 'practical' level with 'the assumptions, predispositions, values and consequences with which actions are linked'. We would argue that at the ITE stage the process of self-evaluation is useful at both these levels. In particular, the criteria provide detailed suggestions about practice, dealing with specific skills (supporting reflection at the first level) and broader aspects, such as differentiation, where different approaches to classroom practice have to be considered (supporting reflection at the second level). While we accept the need for teachers to recognise the importance of reflection at the third, the 'critical' or 'emancipatory' level, our approach does not directly support work in this area. However, this is not to say that discussion around aspects which deal with the 'practical' level, do not impinge upon institutional and structural concerns (i.e. the basis of reflection at this third level).

Turning to look more specifically at self-evaluation, we would suggest that it serves two purposes. One relates to the process itself (i.e. a method of analysing practice which allows student teachers to take more responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about professional progress). Another purpose concerns the achievement of outcomes arising out of the process (i.e. the acquisition of teaching skills, including the important aspect of pedagogical content knowledge, and the ability to make decisions which lead to the use of different teaching strategies). However, our research was essentially about the former. Feedback from the student teachers showed that they took some time to become acquainted with, and accept the value of, the framework as a means of 'broad tracking' of their professional development. Initially, within the Institute-based part of the course, student teachers generally felt uneasy about acting as partners in negotiations about the programme. Also, in a similar way, during the early stages, student teachers seldom engaged in self-selection of criteria; rather, precedence was given to suggestions coming from the teacher or tutor. However, with the constant use of the framework the views of the student teachers changed over the session. In terms of the development of competence and confidence in the process of self-evaluation it was almost as if a 'take-off point' had been reached.

It would also appear from the student teachers' feedback that they appreciated the benefits of peer tutoring. We feel that this aspect of support could be developed further within placement to provide student teachers with a valuable external reference point for their own self-evaluations. However, student teachers, for obvious reasons, are keen to maximise opportunities to 'practice' their skills in the classroom and there is a danger that peer tutoring could be reduced to little more than cooperative teaching. A recognition of the value of observation and discussion in terms of the development of both parties is essential. In addition, the student teachers in our research spoke of the value of peer group meetings in the Institute and such meetings have been formalised into the subject programme.

The second issue relates to the implications of such an approach for the support provided by HEI tutors and supervisory teachers/mentors. This research has been more concerned with the role of the former, and has identified a number of important aspects which need to be addressed. The need to make student teachers aware of the expected way of learning is important. In previous years, some student teachers had come to the Institute with the apparent anticipation of more teacher-centred approaches to learning and teaching and so for more recent cohorts there has been full discussions about the way of working at the selection interviews. Our experience suggests that the clear and early setting of appropriate expectations is of great importance if student teachers are going to accept a high degree of responsibility for their own learning. Also, the particular way of working (along the lines of Mercer and Abbott (1989)) means that the tutor needs to adapt to a role more in keeping with a facilitator of learning, leaving time for the discussion of student teacher needs. Of course, such considerations raise further issues including the need for effective staff development for the tutors concerned, time for introducing more democratic learning and teaching approaches and a more student-centred approach which aims to meet individual needs has clear implications for resources, in terms of self-study materials. Returning to the issue of peer tutoring, we would argue that it should be built into the structure of support offered by schools with appropriate inputs to be made by the tutor in terms of pre-planning.

The literature highlights the changing nature of the mentor role from model and support to that of challenge, when partnership supervision and partnership teaching involve the mentor as 'co-enquirer' alongside the student teacher (Furlong and Maynard, 1995). There are obvious implications for the training of teachers involved in such a complex set of roles. It is suggested that teachers are more likely to provide

effective support if they can model the skills which they are trying to develop in the student teachers. Importantly for this discussion, an awareness by teachers of the way self-evaluation can be fostered is essential. As Frost (1993) concludes, teacher mentors must themselves be good reflective practitioners:

they need to be highly reflective practitioners themselves and they need also to be committed to the self-conscious development and enhancement of that reflective capacity. (p.2)

Much of the recent mentor training in Scotland has focussed on how to assess student teacher performance. We argue that it is equally important that mentors are encouraged to reflect upon their own practice, and as a first stage, becoming involved in the process of self-evaluation. Therefore, it is unlikely that one-off courses for mentor training will be effective. We suggest that what is needed is a sustained, on-going programme which includes a similar approach to the one we have used with student teachers. As Furlong (1994) remarks 'partnership schemes are good for teachers and schools just as they are good for students' (p.119).

The third issue relates to the influence of recent developments. The SOED 'Guidelines for Teacher Training Courses' introduced the new national profile which is based on four sets of competences). This has resulted in changes to the 'learning and teaching' part of the framework so that section headings correspond with the competences in the national profile. As the assessment of student teachers on the course is based upon these competences it is hoped that they will now find the framework less complex in the initial stages. However, it is important to restate two points. First, the Scottish Guidelines make more reference to the importance of reflective practice and, as Stronach *et al.* (1996) comment, they could be seen to represent 'a hopelessly over-extended view of professional achievement'. Second, the criteria which we have developed, and which now sit easily with the competences listed in the Guidelines, are seen as suggestions to guide practice, not definitive end-points which encourage a 'tick box' approach.

Barton and Elliott (1996), in their description of the UEA framework make similar points about the use of the framework for self monitoring. In their case the framework was initially derived as a shared agenda for student teacher assessment. While the main thrust of our work is to assist student teachers' professional development it is recognised that, in a similar way, the criteria can be used as a starting point for discussion when assessing performance in the classroom. Thus, they can be helpful in an attempt to achieve consistency in the assessment of the competences across subjects and across schools. This is particularly important, if, as part of the partnership arrangements, schools accept an increased responsibility for the assessment of student teachers. However, it is questionable whether the criteria can be ordered in a hierarchy to define different levels of performance. Indeed, it is suggested that the very use of a grading system can detract from student teachers' thinking in relation to their own progress, particularly when openness and honesty are seen as values to be stressed. In simple terms, even for mature learners, the grade can become an end in itself with the evidence and advice about future targets being very much of secondary importance. It could be argued that if we are working within a competency-based approach to teacher education then the need for grading should be re-examined and perhaps a pass/fail system may be more appropriate.

We now turn to the second of the recent developments in Scotland, the GTC report (1997), which makes recommendations for a national partnership scheme in Scotland. Possibly because of our experience with mentoring through the pilot project, it is difficult when reading this report not to think of mentoring as a significant part of any partnership scheme which may emerge. It is clear from the SCRE evaluation report that mentoring can produce a quality experience for student teachers. Some

of the student teachers in our research were supported by mentors and reinforced those views. Also, student teachers wanted tutors to liaise more with teachers in school, with teachers having a greater understanding of the self-evaluative approach they were using. Improved partnership should allow this to happen. Indeed, the GTC report mentions the importance of 'effective communication, commitment to joint planning and implementation, shared understanding of each other's key roles and responsibilities, (and) trust and openness' (p.7). The GTC report suggests the student folio could include 'all reports collaboratively arrived at by schools and tutors together with the student's own self-evaluations and agenda for action' (p.15). Shaped by a support structure like the framework, it could form another part of the 'shared agenda', to be used as the basis for 'focused' meetings between the teacher and student teacher. As a first step to creating a shared agenda within the Institute, the criteria are now written into the course documentation to be used across all subject areas within the PGCE (Secondary) course. Competences within the 'school' and 'professionalism' sections of the national profile have also been extended to produce suggestions about key aspects, hopefully to be useful in guiding student teachers when tracking progress in these areas.

Promoting self-evaluation with a view to preparing student teachers for ongoing learning is the focus for this paper. It is clear from the research that there are significant implications in terms of support and also the way that teachers and tutors engage with student teachers both within the HEI and during placement. Moves towards more school-based ITE, including the pilot mentoring scheme in Scotland, have opened up debate about the balance of time spent by student teachers between schools and HEIs. We suggest that this is not the main issue. What is required is increased partnership between staff in schools and HEIs to promote professional development as a life-long process. The GTC proposals offer a chance for this to happen. Let us hope that there is adequate funding and time for appropriate staff development to ensure that it does become a reality.

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