

‘NON SATIS SCIRE’ (TO KNOW IS NOT ENOUGH)
THE IMPACT OF EUROPE’S BOLOGNA PROCESS ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING & ASSESSMENT
IN THE CONTEXT OF A HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTION IN IRELAND

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by

Justin Rami

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Supervisor: Dr Carmel Mulcahy

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD in Education is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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ABSTRACT

'Education must become the agent rather than the object of change', (Ball & Tyson, 2011, p.1). This study seeks to explore the impact of aspects of the European Bologna Process and its action lines relating to learning outcomes and student centred learning. Chris Rust (2002) suggests that there has been a paradigm shift in the espoused rhetoric of higher education, from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. However he also warns, that in relation to Europe, *'there does appear to be a significant lag in the connection between changes in teaching methods and changes in assessment'* (p.2). The study uses a mixed model approach to examining the research question. The research uses within-stage embedded case studies, extant data and interviews to examine the impact of a move towards a learning outcomes approach with a focus on the teacher-student relationship towards assessment in Dublin City University. The findings suggest that at the macro level the Bologna Process has impacted on universities by creating national and institutional structures allowing for the development of quality assurance and curriculum reform processes to drive teaching and learning. The study also questions the philosophical foundations of the Bologna Process as a change agent in European higher education and suggests that it may be pushing universities towards a vocational model of a university. At a micro level a dominant focus on the assessment of learning outcomes can detach assessment from the learning process resulting in students only achieving the minimum requirements placed within the learning outcomes. The study's findings state that a revised approach to assessment (based upon the principles of reflection and constructivism) and by involving the learners as co-equal partners in the learning and assessment process, through an alignment of teaching, curriculum and assessment, can result in students moving beyond the assessment from surface to deep learning.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EQEHEA	ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATION
AERA	AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
DCU	DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY
THE	TIME HIGHER EDUCATION (SUPPLEMENT)
AFI	ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATION
NFQ	NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS
EHEA	EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA
VET	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING
FE	FURTHER EDUCATION
HEI	HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION
EU	EUROPEAN UNION
SIF	STRATEGIC INNOVATION FUND
NQAI	NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY OF IRELAND
ECTS	EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM
RGAM	RECURRENT GRANT ALLOCATION MODEL
BFUG	BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP
EQF	EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
DIT	DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
EQEHEA	FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA
EQF-LLL	EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING
EC	EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DLO	DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES
AR	ACTION RESEARCH
MCU	MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATUM
EUA	EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION
EURODICE	EC EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND POLICIES. ANALYSIS UNIT
CE	COUNCIL OF EUROPE
ECC	EUROPEAN CULTURAL CONVENTION
ESU	EUROPEAN STUDENT UNION
IUA	IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION
UNESCO	UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION
SIG	SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
OMC	OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION
ENQA	EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
ESIB	EUROPEAN STUDENTS INFORMATION BUREAU
EURASHE	ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION
ENIC-NARIC	EUROPEAN NETWORK OF INFORMATION CENTRES (RELATED TO QUALIFICATIONS)
UNESCO-CEPES	EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONS
ESG	EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA)
CEDEFOP	EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING
CG	COIMBRA GROUP
UCD	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
HEA	IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

IUQB	IRISH UNIVERSITIES QUALITY BOARD
TCD	TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
NIHE	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION NOW KNOWN AS DCU
EGFSN	EXPERT GROUP ON FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS
ERDF	EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
ESF	EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS
CAP	COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY
OECD	ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
CSO	CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE
ASTI	ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IRELAND
HETAC	HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL
CHIU	CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES (NOW IUA)
FETAC	FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL
FIN	FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK
NAIRTL	THE NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH, TEACHING AND LEARNING
NUIM	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH
ITT	INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY TALLAGHT
IADT	DUN LAOGHAIRE INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY
ITB	INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BLANCHARDSTOWN
DRHEA	DUBLIN REGION HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE
DCAD	DUBLIN CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT
CS1	CASE STUDY ONE

CS2	CASE STUDY TWO
BET (1,2,3)	B.SC. EDUCATION AND TRAINING COHORTS
GDED (2,3)	GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION COHORTS
SE/PE	SCIENCE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION COHORTS

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

‘Education must become the agent rather than the object of change as we expand our vigilance to ensure that our research is central to the enterprise of educating human beings in all circumstances, in all countries, and in all human conditions ‘ (Ball & Tyson, 2011, p.1). This quote taken from a background paper prepared for the 2012 AERA (American Educational Researchers Association) conference was entitled ‘Non Satis Scire’, which translates from the Latin as ‘To know is not enough’. This title seemed to sum up the approach I have taken for this study and the approach I hope my students will adopt in their own learning. The reference to ‘knowledge’ is relevant as this study examines the ‘knowledge’ question through an investigation into the approaches to assessment with the acquisition of ‘knowledge’ being central to that concept. In order to examine any aspect of my own teaching, learning or assessment practices, it is important to situate these in a contextual and theoretical framework.

The research question is: *What is the impact of Europe’s Bologna Process on the development of learning & assessment in the context of a higher education Institution in Ireland.*

At the heart of this research is the question of learning, curriculum and the university. The Bologna Process initiated in 1999 has been a key catalyst in shaping the Educational landscape not only on a European basis but also within Ireland, and in Dublin City University (DCU). Through the research, questions regarding the policy development are examined through extant data and processes and practices are investigated through Case Studies. The literature draws resonance from the data and the data provides clarity for the development of the literature. This cyclical process associated with the literature review is not a conventional approach. The development and review of literature, relating to the subject, stems from the qualitative approach I decided to take which approaches the literature from a type of grounded approach (Glaser, 1967). Experts in the field are interviewed and their roles, views and beliefs are expressed again through the findings.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

In the Times Higher Education Supplement (THE) in May 2003 Stephen Swartz, (the then Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University), wrote, 'The outsiders want the students trained for their first job out of university, and the academics inside the system want the student educated for 50 years of self-fulfillment. The dilemma here is that citizens want and need both' (THE, 2003). The tension between each student's short-term and long-term goals, between 'training' and 'education', between 'vocational' and 'general', between honing the mind and nourishing the soul, divides educators in Irish universities, and divides the outside critics and supporters, as well as dividing student opinion. There is no consensus on the purpose of higher education. This should not be surprising. After all, the "collision" of values is "ancient" indeed. Swartz also cited the English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who insisted that knowledge should be practical and, 'not be a courtesan, for pleasure'. The idea of the university was perhaps never so well expressed than by Cardinal Newman when engaged in founding the University of Dublin over a century ago. His views reflected the Oxford of his day. Newman wrote, '

A University is the high protecting power of all knowledge and science, of fact and principle, of inquiry and discovery, of experiment and speculation: it maps out the territory of the intellect, and sees that... there is neither encroachment of surrender on any side.

(Newman in Kerr, 1963, p.2)

In his 1963 book, *The Uses of the University*, Clarke Kerr quoted Newman as saying that 'useful knowledge was a 'deal of trash'. Newman's words seem charged with the ghost of Bacon some 250 years before. Consensus on the purposes of higher education remains a long way off. Has the function and purpose of the European University shifted from the ideals grounded in Sorbonne and the original Bologna University? With 47 countries now signed up to the Bologna Process it is no coincidence that it was the countries with the longest and deepest academic traditions that initiated the whole process. In May 1988 the Ministers of Education, Claude Allègre, France, Luigi Berlinguer, Italy, Tessa Blackstone, United Kingdom and Jürgen Rüttgers, Germany through the Sorbonne Declaration jointly stated that:

Universities were born in Europe, some three-quarters of a millennium ago. Our four countries boast some of the oldest, who are celebrating important anniversaries around now, as the University of Paris is doing today. In those times, students and academics would freely circulate and rapidly disseminate knowledge throughout the continent. Nowadays, too many of our students still graduate without having had the benefit of a study period outside of national boundaries.

(Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, p.1)

1.3 CONTEXTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

I am employed as a lecturer within the School of Education at Dublin's City University. I am also Chairperson of the BSc in Education & Training degree within the School. The B.Sc in Education and Training is a three-year programme of study that provides students with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to work in the Education field in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes of learning in many educational contexts including, Youthreach Centres, Traveller Education, Stay In School Retention Programmes, FÁS, Human Resources, and VTOS Centres among others. Many graduates from this course will go on to engage in post-graduate studies in primary or secondary education, guidance and counselling and e-learning. A learner-centred approach is central to the philosophy of the programme and draws on literature from adult learning and andragogy (Knowles, 1968; Rogers, 1969). One of my main responsibilities as a lecturer is to plan, design and assess student achievement through a modular system within a semesterised structure within the aforementioned Programme as well as other courses and modules. A secondary role as Chair of the Programme is also to adhere to the University's directives in relation to teaching and learning through structured processes. One of these processes, relevant to this study, was the Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI), which was a university-wide curriculum reform project, which commenced in 2008 in DCU. As an educationalist with an interest in curriculum and curriculum development this process became the stimulus of this research and where the origins of the research question emerged. Before discussing the research question it may be helpful at this point to ask why this was the stimulus. The AFI process began in 2008 and was mooted previously through various DCU Strategic Plans. The stated purpose of the Process was equally about European and National compliance as well as enhancing the learning experience of the student. AFI stated that 'The DCU portfolio of programme and awards will be compliant with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (DCU, 2007, p.3). The principle underlying the rationale for the 3.1 Precept was; 'to meet Bologna requirements and secondly, 'to facilitate compliance with national/EU standards and quality enhancement of students' learning experience and outcomes' (ibid.p.5). The proposal went on to suggest additional benefits and outcomes, one of these being, 'Alignment with Formal European and national Quality assurance procedures', (ibid). The underlying principles supporting these precepts were, 'To guarantee fair and equitable assessment for all students (full or part-time, etc.), and to properly/fully implement a Learning Outcomes model' (ibid, p.8).

As programme Chair, one of my roles was to revise all the programme and modular material

and re-write these in a learning outcomes format. My interest in this process was two-fold. Firstly, from a pedagogical perspective how would an approach to measuring students achievement through the exclusive use of learning outcomes impact on the teaching and learning processes associated with programme delivery? My specific interest was in the alignment process (Biggs, 1999), and how learning outcomes relate to assessment. The second aspect of my interest in this question related to the AFI process and its origins in the context of the development of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in Ireland. As an educational researcher I have conducted extensive research within the vocational education and training realm, mainly through European partnership projects such as Leonardo da Vinci¹ and Grundtvig² etc. Much of this research has helped inform me about qualifications systems, assessment and vocational outcomes approach mainly within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Further Education (FE) sectors. One of my concerns about the AFI process being implemented was the link between AFI, the NFQ, and a concurrent process beginning to gain momentum in Europe; the Bologna Process. My concerns were mainly to do with the overwhelming pressure within DCU (and other Irish HEIs) to adopt all action lines within this process without considering the purpose and what affect this may have on the learning process and the DCU graduate.

Finally, another aspect of the research question relates to the adoption of a learning outcomes approach, and how this has been mapped to graduate attributes, which imply a vocationality to student learning within the University. The Bologna Process highlighted this question, which was the catalyst for the pan-European move to reform university curriculum and to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Tracing the origins, and examining the extant data related to this development also brings the reader back to the early notion of the European University and where Ireland featured within this process. Examining this perspective asks questions about universities and their purpose, the Bologna process and its purpose, and the function of learning, and within my own practice, for my students and myself. The concern in relation to student learning is particularly significant as it brings into play questions about the very nature of learning, knowledge and the purpose of higher education and the function of the University as a life long learning facilitator. The theoretical framework for the research question rests within the vocational aspect of the university. Has

¹ The Leonardo da Vinci Programme is Part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme and funds practical projects in the field of vocational education and training.

² Grundtvig is the European Commission's Socrates funded Programme which seeks to improve the quality and European dimension of adult education in the broadest sense, and to help make lifelong learning opportunities more widely available to Europe's citizens.

learning and the concept of practical knowledge been sacrificed in order to comply with a framework derived from economic and quality assurance agendas? Is the university becoming a marketplace rather than a monastery, (Pring, 1994; Hyland, 2000; Oakeshott, 1985; Canor & Schomberg, 2003)? The main drive behind the expansion of education and efforts to 'improve standards' can be seen to stem from 'a concern about economic competition from abroad' (Pring, 1994).

The introduction of the Bologna Declaration (1999) set this process in motion. The systemic communiqués devised by the ministerial national representatives developed and informed national policy through several Bologna Action Lines. The aim of the Process was to develop a EHEA by 2010 and harmonise higher education throughout the Bologna membership. Some of these action lines are examined within the research and how they translate into educational practices. The overarching aim, supposedly, has the 'student' at the centre of the process in the context of life long learning. Though Terry Hyland, (2000) suggests that, 'Contemporary lifelong learning policy, which is dominated almost entirely by economic talk about employability skills, continues this simplistic utilitarianism into the new century' (p.677). Pring argues that if the economic motive is paramount, it should not be at the expense of educational vision. The 2007 London Communiqué as part of the Bologna Process stated:

Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA (European Higher Education Area) based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness

(London Communiqué, May 2007).

Therefore the theoretical drive of the research question explores this impact through macro (contextual/broad) meso (middle/intermediate) and micro (local/immediate) vignettes. The micro aspect of these implications furthers the theoretical framework. Using Case Studies to examine issues regarding learning, knowledge and assessment, the study aims to see how the Bologna Process impacts on the learner, and the teacher on the approach to student learning, specifically student assessment.

1.4 RATIONALE AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The theoretical and conceptual framework as described above drove the necessity for the research. Within an Irish context little research has been conducted on the use of learning outcomes within the higher education sector. The introduction of the National Framework of

Qualifications played a significant role in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) adopting this approach. In Ireland this development was as much driven by the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) revised funding mechanisms as well as a desire for curriculum reform also driven by the European Quality Assurance agenda aligned with those of the Bologna Process. The literature regarding the use of learning outcomes has not held a prominent place within this development particularly in relation to student learning. Assessment as part of the curriculum process has often been sidelined within the pedagogic debate. As educational researchers in Ireland seek to address wider issues regarding student engagement, instrumentalism and vocational outcomes, there is a greater need within the State to conduct research that can offer some solutions to questions about learning outcomes and particularly assessment. A shift to a learner-centred model should in theory aid the student through their studies. Though as this research suggests economic priorities of both Europe and Ireland alter and change, aspects of the Bologna 'ideals' have been reduced to tokenism. The AFI process in DCU proposed a constructive alignment model Biggs (1999) for curriculum development. But how is this actually realised on the ground through teaching processes? Ramsden in 1992 discussed how he saw the 'disconnect' between assessment and learning.

The assessment of students is often a serious and tragic enterprise. Less pomposity and defensiveness (sic) and more levity about the whole business would be an excellent starting point for improving the process of evaluating and judging our students' learning.

(Ramsden, 1992, p.181)

This 'disconnect' is something that not only concerns me as a higher education lecturer and teacher trainer, but should also concern all of those working within the higher education arena. These concerns are especially relevant for those who are teacher educators within Colleges or Schools of Education in universities or higher education institutions.

Improving the students' learning experience is closely connected with the promotion and implementation of an assessment strategy. Boud (2000) suggests that, 'learning should continue beyond assessment and it should meet the needs of the present while preparing students to meet their own future learning needs', (p.151). In essence, 'learning can be defined as changes in knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, brought about by experience and reflection upon that experience' (Brown, Bull & Pendelbury, 1996, p.21). This research highlights how feedback from learners, peers, and tutors, augments the experience and reflection (a form of internal feedback) and accelerates learning (Schmidt et al., 1990).

Assessment is at the heart of an aligned theory of teaching. It should be a continuous process, which involves teachers and students making judgments about progress on an on-going basis

(Freeman and Lewis, 1998).

Assessment is the most powerful lever teachers have to influence the way students respond to courses and behave as learners

(Gibbs, 1999, p.41)

This research aims to fill these research deficits and propose models, methods and frameworks that may be applicable in a range of higher education contexts.

1.5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY

The research question informed the rationale for the decision to construct the research methodology outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. Much has been written about methodological approaches within the qualitative and quantitative domains, and many models, and formulae have been developed. It is important therefore to understand the basis of these models and viewpoints before making decisions about a research method. In this case the cue was taken from the question. In order to simultaneously frame a question within the macro, meso, and micro levels of the study, a suitable model would have to be developed. In order to investigate the micro levels within a teaching and learning context the Case Study approach emerged as an ideal approach to contextualising the relevant 'micro' issues. Choosing an approach would need to satisfy these views but also allow for concrete and reliable truths to emerge. In this research study it was important that I develop a deep understanding of the pros and cons of using a singular approach. Robert Stake (1995) suggests that case studies allow for a mixed model approach either within them (embedded) or as components of a larger study. He called these mini-cases, and suggested that they can offer viewpoints, from broad to narrow. This mixed model design also allows for the case studies to be interpreted as 'within-stage' cases, which in turn can be triangulated through a concurrent triangulation model (Creswell, 2003). In order not to disassociate the 'me' from the research I wanted to encourage the research to have an immediate use. This was possible through the use of the Case Studies (mini-cases). This pragmatic approach lent itself for 'me' to be part of the research design. The pragmatic paradigm has what Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Creswell (2003) see as intuitive appeal, permission to study areas that are of interest, embracing methods that are appropriate and using findings in a positive manner in harmony with the value system held by the researcher (ibid). For these reasons it can be argued that the pragmatic paradigm can be adopted for the purpose of this study and endeavours to be congruent with the mixed quantitative and qualitative approach taken within the predisposition of 'practitioner-based' research. To utilise this pragmatic approach and to use case studies a mixed model design was chosen. Therefore,

'Mixed method research often (but not always) involves the use of both qualitative and/or quantitative methods' (ibid). The data relating to the quantitative aspects of the surveys (within the case studies) acted as a forecaster or a tool to identify trends for further qualitative inquiry. The qualitative approaches looked for indicators of success or improvement through the experiences and stories of the learners (Merriam, 1988; Glesne, 1999). Qualitative research looks at the participant in natural settings and asks these individuals to participate in the data collection. Qualitative methods also allow for my own views and voice to be heard and acknowledge my own experiences and values. Qualitative methods allow for the researchers to bring their personal-self into the research along with their researcher-self. Values, biases, and interests are acknowledged and included in the reporting (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988). The research design approach was further developed by defining itself as mixed model research which is similar to mixed method but has other models embedded within the design. Mixed model research generally refers to research in which the researcher mixes both qualitative and quantitative research approaches within a stage of the study or across two of the stages of the research process. The relevance of using a mixed model method is demonstrated in looking at how the two cases studies within this research were conducted. The study used quantitative methods and instruments to gather data regarding the local research question, which helped identify trends. These were paralleled by deeper qualitative inquiry analysed through a framework analysis model and the data was extracted from this and coupled with the quantitative to show a truer picture of the situation. In the embedded design, one data set plays a supportive secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type. The premise of this research design is based on the idea that a single data set is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered, and that different types of questions require different types of data to answer them (Creswell and Plano-Clark in Punch, 2000: p.296). Therefore, I chose a mixed model approach comprising of multiple studies (case studies) each of which was embedded and within-stage in nature. Other methodologies were also incorporated into the mixed mode.

1.6 STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

1.6.1 CHAPTER 1 – CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers the reader an overview of the key issues that relate to the research questions. It frames the introduction with a background to the study. The Chapter goes on to present a contextual framework for the study and how this fits into my own views on educational research and where the theoretical drive for the research is situated. The final

part of this chapter outlines the rationale and need for the research, then the methodological approach is briefly described, and the Chapter finishes with a description of the structure of the thesis and how each Chapter relates to the overall study.

1.6.2 CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is presented as a stand-alone chapter in this thesis. The key themes within the literature review include, *Learning Outcomes, Constructivism, Assessment, The Reflective Practitioner, Feedback and Feed-Forward*. The literature itself could almost be considered as part of the extant data due to the theoretical formation driven by the literature review process itself; the extant literature is incorporated into the study as data (Glaser, 1998). Therefore, most of the relevant reviewed literature presented, finds its way into, and becomes *integrated* with, other data pillars; i.e., the Case Studies. This closely reflects the nature of the method and the role and place of the literature within it. This is an approach often described within the Grounded Research (Glaser, 1967) paradigm.

1.6.3 CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter outlines the rationale for the methodological approach. It discusses this through describing various research perspectives and pragmatic stances. The chapter highlights the discourse regarding the uses and utility of quantitative and qualitative approaches within educational research. It goes on to describe how and why a pragmatic approach to methodology was chosen. The chapter outlines the chosen mixed methods (model) approach and how this approach can incorporate other methods such as case study and extant data. The chapter further describes how these methods within-the-mix operate in the context of ontological and epistemological viewpoints. Case Study as a methodology within a methodology are described and their embedded nature allowed them to act as mini-cases within the overall methodology. The latter part of the chapter concludes with a description and rationale of the data collection tools such as extant data, surveys, case studies and interviews. The Chapter concludes with a look at the ethical issues involved in this study and leads the reader onto the next Chapter, which outlines how the methodology related to the analysis process.

1.6.4 CHAPTER 4 - HANDLING THE DATA & DATA ANALYSIS

This Chapter discusses the issues regarding data analysis within the mixed model domain. Questions such as validity and reliability are discussed. The process of analysis of the case study as an embedded study is described and the rationale for each stage is presented. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data is also highlighted and the Chapter describes how the case study findings converged through a concurrent triangulation approach. This chapter highlights the framework analysis model used to interpret the qualitative data from the case studies and the expert interviews and reflective diaries. The Chapter also describes the practical processes involved in each stage of the analysis, it lists how the cases, the interviews, reflective diaries and the surveys were analysed, and presents these findings through figures and diagrams.

1.6.5 CHAPTER 5 - EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Chapter 5 forms part of the extant data from a 'macro' perspective and also offers the reader an insight into the policy developments through historical perspectives as well as describing the key benchmarks that related to the research themes; i.e., learning outcomes and assessment. The chapter describes how the Bologna Process was developed through inter-governmental processes and disseminated through the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) and the European ministerial communiqués. This is not a straightforward process since it cannot simply be referenced through official documentation without some interpretation, as Bologna involves a complex set of objectives and actions which are inter-related to one another and which have grown and developed over time. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of how the Bologna Process fits into the Irish context and what the implications are, particularly for teaching and learning in Irish universities. Although this chapter is presented as a data pillar it does not require the same type of analysis as the other data pillars.

1.6.6 CHAPTER 6 - HIGHER EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN IRELAND

Chapter 6 furthers the discussion in a similar vein to the previous chapter. This time this chapter examines how the university as an entity has changed over time and relates this to the vocational aspects described in the opening section of this chapter. The Chapter is also led by policy and practice issues related to the introduction of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) within the State and how this impacted on the Irish universities. The chapter develops this discussion further by contextualising the policy developments that relate not only the

implementation of the Bologna Action Lines in Ireland but also how European policy also influenced the 'quality assurance agenda' which in turn relates to a shift to a learning outcomes approach to assessment. The chapter concludes by outlining the 'meso' (middle) aspect of the study and links the Bologna context into the teaching and learning context in DCU by describing the implementation of the AFI process in the university.

1.6.7 CHAPTER 7 - CASE STUDY 1 – THE TEACHER IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Chapters 7 & 8 offer the 'micro' (local) perspective of the relationship between the Bologna Process and the use of learning outcomes and assessment. The chapter again is presented as an embedded case study to contextualise the issues relating to assessment on a practical level. The study was carried out over four years and looks at how perceptions and practices relating to assessment and feedback have developed since the introduction of DCU's AFI process. Similar to chapter 7 the results and findings are presented within the chapter itself and the findings again help inform the literature through a cyclical process (described later as an iterative, grounded process). The chapter concludes with a closer examination of Assessment Feedback practice and how these may relate to the deeper concept of knowledge creation (echoing the Ball & Tyson's 'Non Satis Scire' title, 2011), the move from shallow to deep learning (Marton & Säljö, 1976).

1.6.8 CHAPTER 8 - CASE STUDY 2 – THE LEARNER IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Again the 'micro' perspective is presented within this chapter. The Chapter describes the primary empirical aspect of the study. Also conducted over four years this process is described within a case study context and looks at the processes involved in developing an assessment model that is fit-for-purpose and relates the learning through alignment approaches situated within a constructivist context as proposed by the literature. The process uses quantitative data to provide an overview of how students view assessment as a key feature of their own university experience and how this may relate to a broader approach to the developments of practical knowledge. Qualitative methods are used to gain a deeper insight in to the student's experiences, views, beliefs and opinions on the impact of assessment on their own personal and professional lives. The Chapter shows that there can be a balance struck between the marketplace and the monastery and it is important for learners to have their feet in both realms by embracing a holistic understanding of assessment and its multiple purposes.

1.6.9 CHAPTER 9 - INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines the findings for the expert interviews. A range of key stakeholders was selected for interview. A senior official with the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) partly responsible for the implementation of the Irish National Qualifications Framework (NFQ), and three senior staff within DCU with a responsibility for the implementation of AFI in the University. They all provided in-depth interviews relating to the implementation of Bologna the NFQ and AFI in DCU. A framework analysis approach was used adopting Miles and Huberman (1984) and Creswell's (2003) approach to data analysis and data flow. The interviews are presented through interpretation and quotations. Full details of the analysis processes are also included in this chapter. Full transcripts and 1st and 2nd stage analysis material has been removed from the Appendix section follow Viva Voce recommendations. However example of the 3rd stage of the interview analysis is available in Appendix E (2nd Volume).

1.6.10 CHAPTER 10 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The final chapter links the main findings of the study together through a narrative approach. It poses commentary on the current state of the Bologna reforms and how these have already impacted on the university experience both from the teaching and learning perspective. The chapter goes on to discuss the aims and purpose of Bologna on learning outcomes and assessment in higher education and what the educational commentators have to say about this. It poses questions regarding the balance between the university as a monastery versus the university as a marketplace and suggests that there is room for both. The chapter describes how the research has added to the body of knowledge and where future research could be targeted. The chapter concludes with a distillation of the findings and how these relate to the concept of *liberal* and *vocational* education within European universities. Finally the chapter discusses how a revised approach to implementation of assessment through the use of learning outcomes could possibly be adopted across DCU and possibly other HEIs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

if innovative assessment is to be used to good effect, we need to know how students respond to it. Can we really promote good learning by using a particular assessment approach, or is this just a case of pious hopes?

(McDowell, 2002, p.3)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Approaches to assessment in many Universities in Ireland are predominantly driven by the need to collate marks and grades in order to contribute to degree classifications and to calculate students' accumulation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). Assessment practices therefore are inevitably summative, and the majority of Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEI) do not necessarily promote formative methods of assessment. As DCU introduced its AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) through their 2008 document *'Proposals for the Incorporation of Performance into Institutional Funding'*, the HEA (Higher Education Authority) insisted that all Irish Universities would need to comply with the Bologna Declaration by 2010 in order to gain access to the newly structured RGAM (Recurrent Grant Allocation Model) funding mechanism (HEA, p.6). By default this led to the speedy introduction, through the Irish NQF (National Qualification Framework), of a drive towards a learning outcomes approach to assessment. This literature review explores the implications of this process. It examines and challenges related concepts such as Learning Outcomes, Constructivism, Curriculum, Reflection and Assessment. The study highlights this literature through, historical, contemporary and theoretical lenses.

Through the literature this Chapter tries to build an argument that leads to the purpose of the research, the selected literature and sourced texts aims to provide support for the assertions laid out in the research. Hart (1998) defines the literature review as:

The selection of available documents (published and unpublished) on the topic, containing information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed

(p.13)

This review constitutes only a small part of the wealth of related literature that is available on the related topics of assessment in higher education. The Chapter refers to numerous papers, books and journal articles, published mainly within a European context but also draws on literature relevant to the subject from publications from the USA and UK educationalists.

The literature discussions are linked by central ideas, which are embodied in the empirical data (Chapters 7-8) as well as the historical and policy overviews presented in greater detail in Chapters 5-6. This process also helped form part of the emergent research design (Denscombe, 1998, p.217). These central ideas serve further to emphasise the importance of addressing purpose and effect assessment within a higher education institution, namely DCU. A range of secondary data and literature sources served as the key bibliographic tools for identifying relevant work for review. This also relates to the two other secondary pillars of data (or literature), the policy developments; nationally, institutionally and on a European basis, which traced to the beginnings of the Bologna Process. This literature relating to Bologna and Ireland's development of the NFQ (Irish National Framework of Qualifications) are addressed separately in Chapters 5 & 6.

The research emergent themes were derived from the reconnaissance (Elliot, 1991) phase of the research and emerged through interviews and policy analysis. However, the literature was also revisited through the analysis process, which at times added to the literature but also removed issues that were no longer deemed relevant to the study. This emergent, convergent and divergent process was cyclical in nature and is highlighted in greater detail in the earlier Methodological Approach Chapter (Ch.2).

Over the last decade there has been an increasing interest in strategies that encourage students to take a more active role in the management of their own learning

(Juwah et al, 2004,p.6)

This review chapter concentrates on six key interrelated pedagogic topics as well as some sub-themes, which contribute at various levels to the development of an innovative assessment framework related to the learning outcomes approach as endorsed and encouraged by the Bologna Process. The literature review seeks to ask a range of questions relating to the above themes as identified in the following figure (Fig.2.1) overleaf:

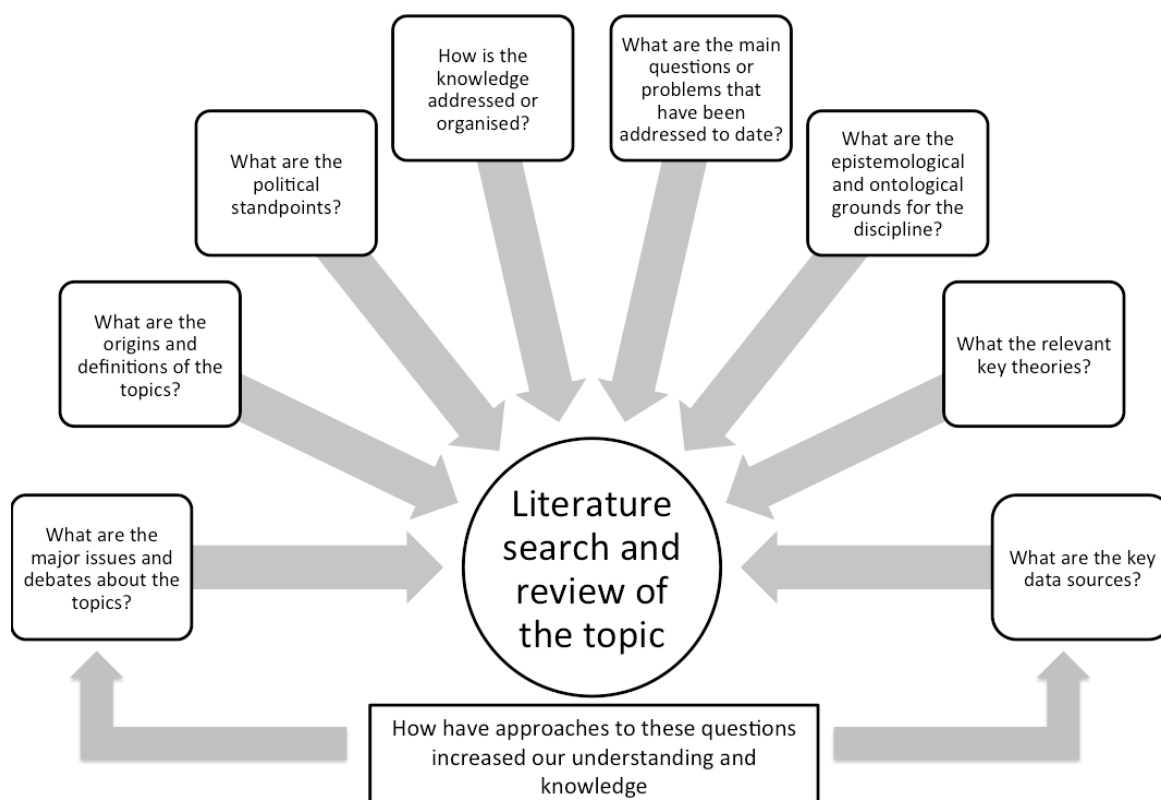


Figure 2.1: Questions the literature can answer

(Adapted from Hart, 1998, p.14)

Decisions about assessment procedures, particularly those concerning ‘high-stakes’ testing of various kinds, are as often based on perceived *political* appeal as they are on a systematic knowledge of the scientific evidence concerning fitness-for-purpose. Moreover, although it is possible to trace *policy* issues in assessment back to the earliest days in the context of this research, in recent years it is ultimately the EU (European Union) and the Bologna Process that has shaped and formed the teaching and learning processes related to assessment in tertiary education - Certainly this is the case in DCU. The analysis of the literature suggests that this may lead to a weakening of traditional university standards and a decline in the students’ critical capacities that encourage the use of deep-learning approaches (Marton & Säljö, 1976). This could result in the University having a strictly instrumentalist and utilitarian function. In terms of the move towards a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) achieved through the implementation of the Bologna Process, this development within the assessment domain contradicts the initial aims of the whole Bologna process through the life-long learning agenda and relevant action lines. This review of relevant and current literature aims to frame the assessment question in the context of learning and assessment within the university.

2.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 2004 Professor Stephen Adam described learning outcomes as:

the basic educational building blocks and as such they have direct and powerful links with a number of other educational tools. They make possible much more than the simple identification of learning achievements.

(Adam, p.5)

Learning outcomes form a critical part of the Bologna education reform. At an international level their intention is to contribute to the mobility of students by facilitating the recognition and improving the transparency of qualifications, thereby simplifying credit transfer. Their intention at a local level has led to curriculum reform by strengthening the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment.

2.2.1 POLITICAL STANDPOINT AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

In 2008 the HEA recommended that Irish Higher Education Institutions HEIs in furtherance of the implementation of the NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications), must establish a set of written learning outcomes not just at a generic level, but for all programmes, courses, modules and units. The publication stressed universities and other HEIs will need to demonstrate that they:

Have written overarching programme descriptors for named awards and aligned them with the award-type descriptors of the Framework – in framework terms, the programmes should lead to major, minor, special purpose or supplemental awards;

Have written module/course/unit descriptors in a manner consistent with the overarching descriptors;

Have allocated ECTS to programmes in a manner that conforms to the agreed principles and operational guidelines for a national approach to credit in higher education established by the national Qualifications Authority of Ireland

(HEA, 2008, p.6)

From the Prague Communiqué (2001) to the London Communiqué (2007) learning outcomes were not high on the agenda and were merely a tool to help define qualifications. After the London Communiqué they became part of a broader and more complex debate which, 'defines, on the one hand, entities as small as modules or units but, on the other, feeds into arguments which embrace curricular reform and innovation and seek to shape the recognition of prior learning in an overarching agenda predicated on the concept of lifelong learning' (Scattergood, 2008). In 2004, Professor Stephen Adam said that:

learning outcomes in themselves are limited, modest and prosaic devices for

describing achievement but they have attained importance because they are an essential part, one of the basic building blocks, of a larger movement from the traditional 'input-based' description of educational entities (which concentrates on access requirements, course length, aims and objectives, methods of instruction, curricula, methods of examination, etc.) to an 'output-based' system which concentrates on what the student has learned at the end of a period of instruction.

(Adam, 2004, p.5)

The original Bologna definition of learning outcomes was, 'Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning', (ECTS Users Guide, 2004, p.44).

However the emergence of a learning outcomes approach in curriculum reform in Irish HEIs hasn't been without their critics. Professor John Scattergood, during his role on the Bologna Desk in Trinity College Dublin, stated that the drawbacks to the use of applying a learning outcomes approach are both 'conceptual and pragmatic' (2008, p.4). The philosophical context of the history of learning outcomes has an important influence on their development on an institutional basis. However the HEAs dictate for Irish HEIs to comply with Bologna forced institutions to use the Bologna Declaration as the benchmark for learning outcomes.

At a conceptual level it is said that outcome-based systems inhibit and constrain the learning process and are antithetical to the traditional function of universities with their liberal and enabling approaches to learning..... At a practical level it is said that learning outcomes written at a threshold level (as most are) can limit learning, lower standards of teaching and learning and stifle creativity

(Scattergood, 2008, p.4)

As the Bologna Declaration was originally an idealistic framework to encourage harmonisation across the HEIs of Europe leading to the EHEA, the roots of the learning outcomes approach are very much drawn from central European Vocational Education, such as Germany & Austria's dual higher education system. On this basis learning outcomes seem more appropriate to vocational education, which is based on the acquisition of skills and competences, (Scattergood, 2008, p.4). Literature from the vocational sectors in Europe poses a huge diversity of possible uses and understandings of learning outcomes (CEDEFOP, 2009a). Learning outcomes are defined at different levels: at the systemic level (e.g. in qualification frameworks); at the level of qualifications; at the level of curriculum and learning programmes.

It is said that learning outcomes frequently over-describe or under-describe courses – that they are sometimes too specific or too general to be of much use. It is said that the move to learning outcomes, especially when it is linked to modular frameworks and the introduction of credits, can lead to an overloading of modules and units. And the experience of universities, which have moved in this direction, is that the amount of assessment can increase dramatically.

(Scattergood, 2008, p.4)

It is here where the greatest problem of the Bologna implementation lies - the link between assessment and learning outcomes. The concept of learning outcomes needs to be addressed within each of the levels discussed. The Bologna approach has been to try to dovetail learning outcomes into all the Action Lines (see Figure: 4.1). The shift from teaching to learning is considered as an essential element of learning outcomes approaches, and therefore the Bologna Process:

it refers to constructivistic (sic) theories that reject the behaviourist model of stimuli-response. Learning is considered to be a process of constructing knowledge and meanings on the basis of the student's own experience. Shared principles of different constructivist theories conclude that learning should be active, self- conducted, situated (in a context) and social

Psifidou (2009, p.3)

The argument posed within this study suggest that the *Learning Outcomes Approach* driven by the Bologna Process in Europe has forced universities to ignore the overarching learning function associated with the life long learning agenda and focuses all too often on the development of skills, through observable behavioural outcomes in a competencies framework.

2.2.2 THEORETICAL & HISTORICAL VIEWPOINT

The origin of learning outcome approaches can be traced to early Behaviourists such as Pavlov (1849-1936), J.B. Watson (1858-1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990). Watson and Skinner developed the behaviourist approach that explained human behaviour in terms of responses to external stimuli. Their work helped inform research on the development of teaching, learning and training in the areas of business, commerce and the Dept. of Defense (sic) in the USA. Behaviourism emphasised the clear identification and measurement of learning and the need to produce observable and measurable outcomes. This is a basic problem with learning outcomes and assessment methods. The definition of assessment implies that results are treated in an evidential measurable way similar to that of behaviours and psychological viewpoints. This approach not only diminishes the student role in the learning process but also weakens the opportunities for learners to build upon constructivist ideals.

Three major theories inform andragogical and pedagogical learning and cannot be disassociated from this process of Learning Outcomes. These are behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism. Behaviourists assert that learning can only be assessed through direct observation and positive and negative reinforcement is necessary for learning (and unlearning). Behaviourism, then, is largely concerned with specific visible learning outcomes. Cognitivism on the other hand, concerns itself with how learners process, store, and retrieve information for later use. It builds its principles on creating associations and creating a knowledge set useful for living. The learner uses the information processing approach to transfer and assimilate new information. Cognitivism is principally concerned with how the brain processes information. Thirdly, constructivism is concerned with creating an environment where a learning process can proceed creatively and productively and therefore can support a deeper form of learning (Life Long Learning). In constructivism learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge, social interactions and motivation affect the construction of knowledge.

In the 21st century, learning outcomes are arguably best viewed as a fundamental building block of the Bologna educational reforms. This is because they are a practical device and represent a methodological approach that has been adopted to improve the competitiveness, transparency, recognition and mobility of European education

(Adam, 2006, p.2)

Kraiger, et. al. (1993) proposed that learning during education and training may be classified into one of three types of outcomes: cognitive, skill-based, and affective. Again the development of learning outcomes predominantly comes from educational psychology thus reducing outcomes to observable situations. There are many institutional, national and European models of learning outcomes' design and each institution is free to design their own approach. However in DCU, and many other Irish Universities all learning outcomes whether programmatic or modular are based on the Irish NFQ (described in detail in Chapter 8).

Kraigers model (1993) is by no mean exclusive. There are many more learning outcome models such as theories of educational taxonomy by Bloom (1956), and instructional design theory by Merrill (1994). Table 2.1 overleaf gives an historical overview of the literature reviewed within this study in relation to the development of taxonomies relating to learning outcomes.

Table 2.1: Synthesis of the development of Learning Outcomes Taxonomies

	COGNITIVE		AFFECTIVE	PSYCHOMOTOR	COMPETENCE
1950s	Bloom et al., (1956)			Bloom, (1956) Dave (1967) Harrow (1972)	
1960s		Krathwohl et al., (1964)	Dave (1970),		
1970s				Simpson, E.J. (1972)	
1980s	Biggs & Collis (1982)				
1990s				Seels & Glasgow (1990)	
					Boulton-Lewis (1994)
2000s	Anderson et al., (2001)				Neary (2000)
	Fink (2003)			Ferris and Aziz (2005)	

Throughout the development of the Bologna process learning outcomes repeatedly feature in Bologna-related documents and ministerial communiqués. Adams again in 2006 urges caution:

The problem is that their (learning outcomes) acknowledged importance stands in stark contrast to the poor level of understanding associated with them and their relatively rare practical implementation, at least in any explicit manner, across Europe. Detailed experience of learning outcomes is in fact limited to just a few countries at both the institutional and national levels.

(ibid, p.3)

In the 1980s the behaviourist concept emerged with the competence-based approach in vocational education systems in the United Kingdom and the USA. The aim was the identification and use of elements of competence to define occupations, work roles, training and qualifications according to labour market needs. In all these developments, the learning process was largely ignored and the focus set on the product of learning defined as competence (ETF, 2006, p.19). The arguments driven by the Bologna Process, for Universities to adopt a learning outcomes approach are clearly stated, and have been re-highlighted through the EU Ministerial Conferences and the BFUG (Bologna Follow Up Group) meetings. Learning outcomes are not a stand-alone feature of the Bologna process but are referenced throughout many of the original action lines. At the Bergen ministerial meeting in 2005 the

'Stocktaking Report' was discussed in detail. In relation to learning outcomes *the BFUG report paid particular attention to the 'Use of Learning Outcomes'* seminar hosted by the 'Scottish Ministry responsible for Higher Education together with national partners, who brought together some 160 participants from 28 countries and from partner organisations' (BFUG, 2005, p.13). At the centre of this meeting was a very comprehensive report from Professor Stephen Adam, which focused on the concept of learning outcomes both from a theoretical point of view and in relation to current practice. The BFUG report stated that 'Considerable activity was found to be taking place across Europe, but relatively few countries or higher education institutions had implemented learning outcomes in a systematic way' (BFUG, 2005, p.13). One conclusion in the report stated that:

Learning outcomes may enhance all the Bologna action lines. They were seen as part of a shift in emphasis from the teacher to the learner, and in this connection students pointed out that for learning to be genuinely student-centred, the students must also be included in the process of formulating the learning outcomes.

(ibid, 2005, p.13)

The BFUG said that there was *agreement on the usefulness of moving towards an outcomes-based approach in relation to*, study programmes and qualifications. They suggested that such an approach lies at the centre of the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. It was through the Bergen meeting and this report that the idea of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) began to gather momentum. The report stated:

Descriptions in terms of learning outcomes also facilitate comparison of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning with formal qualifications, and hence contribute to flexible learning paths in a lifelong learning perspective. In the same way they may facilitate mobility between vocational education and training and higher education.

(ibid , 2005: p.13)

At the Edinburgh seminar, and in a subsequent article for the Bologna Handbook, Professor Stephen Adam (2007, pp.17-20) further linked the role of learning outcomes in relation to a range of action lines such as; transparency, mobility, recognition and quality assurance. He underlined that learning outcomes are not the solution to all problems, but a useful tool at both the conceptual and practical levels. He went on to suggest that learning outcomes are relevant to all 10 of the Bologna Action Lines. Adam (2004) presents a thorough list of where he sees the link to learning outcomes within the 9 Actions of the Bologna Declaration devised up until the Berlin ministerial meeting. The table (Table: 2.2) overleaf outlines below summarises the views of Adam.

Table 2.2: Linking the Bologna Action Lines to the use of Learning Outcomes (adapted from Adam, 2008)

BOLOGNA ACTIONS AFTER THE BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ		ACTIONS LINE DESCRIPTIONS	ACTION LINES IN RELATION TO LEARNING OUTCOMES
Action Line 1	<i>Adoption of easily readable and comparable degrees</i>	This involves higher education institutions taking full advantage of 'existing tools' in order to facilitate the academic and professional recognition of their course units and degrees.	If qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes the process of evaluation and recognition is simplified and a more informed and fairer judgment can be made
Action Line 2	<i>Adoption of a system essentially based on two (now three) main cycles</i>	This action line emphasises the importance of cycles, levels and level descriptors for the correct location of qualifications in any framework.	The adoption of external reference points and the need for precision and clarity strengthens the case for the use of learning outcomes directly related to levels and level/cycle indicators that will characterize the new system. Finally, not only are learning outcomes a valuable way to express qualifications but they play a similar role with regard to programme specifications
Action Line 3	<i>Establishment of a system of credits</i>	Action line 3 implies the development of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) from a simple credit transfer tool into a more sophisticated and powerful credit accumulation and transfer system.	Credits expressed in terms of learning outcomes are a powerful way to recognize and quantify learning achievement from different contexts; they also provide an effective structure for relating qualifications. The addition of the learning outcomes dimension has the potential to improve dramatically the effectiveness of ECTS as a true pan-European system.
Action Line 4	<i>Promotion of mobility</i>	In relation to mobility, this is an obvious area in which more curriculum transparency would make student exchanges and the full recognition of their studies simpler and easier	The removal of obstacles to the free movement of students and teachers can only be helped if courses are expressed in a common way that makes their content - skills and competences gained - explicit. This makes the process of making judgments about them more precise and effective.
Action Line 5	<i>Promotion of cooperation in quality assurance</i>	Quality assurance plays a vital role increasing mutual trust and confidence between educational systems.	The use of learning outcomes and approaches associated with them (external reference points) can play an important part in encouraging common approaches and techniques that directly relate to the establishment of universal standards and assurance techniques.
Action Line 6	<i>Promotion of the European dimension in higher education</i>	This action line centres upon the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with a 'European' content and orientation.	These initiatives can be aided when the curriculum is expressed in a common and more precise manner by expressing module/course content in terms of learning outcomes.
Action Line 7	<i>Lifelong learning</i>	The steps to align national policies as an integrated part of higher education activities involve the promotion of 'flexible learning paths' and the use of ECTS..	The medium of credits based on learning outcomes has the potential to integrate in a single progressive structure: school, secondary, vocational training and higher education.
Action Line 8	<i>Higher education and students</i>	The employability agenda is strengthened by the adoption of learning outcomes that highlight the generic skills and competencies valued by employers.	Effective student participation can be enhanced when modules and courses are clearly expressed in terms of learning outcomes, which allow the learner to see the skills, and abilities they should acquire. This also helps them make more informed choices within and between different programmes of learning
Action Line 9	<i>Promote attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area</i>	This again an obvious goal and implies an effective, efficient, high-quality educational zone that will attract non-European students and help retain home students	The emphasis put by ministers on 'attractiveness and competitiveness' can be indirectly enhanced by the adoption of learning outcomes approaches and the associated development of student-centred, transparent curricula.

From the perspective of the Bologna Process, and the adoption of a Learning Outcomes approach to curriculum reform in DCU, the arguments supporting this approach seem clear based on Adam's interpretation of the Bologna Action Lines. However there is another school of thought that poses caution on relying on learning outcomes as a means to assess student progress and increase the student's knowledge and understanding. Some educationalists that have reservations about the exclusive use of a learning outcomes approach have expressed two major concerns: philosophical and technical.

2.2.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL ISSUES

From a philosophical perspective, the objections follow the view that learning in higher education cannot be constricted and/or reduced to a series of learning outcomes that inhibit and prescribe the learning process. Adam (2004) put his finger on the crux of the argument, suggesting that academic learning is by definition open-ended and, 'the detailed specification of outcomes is antithetical to the traditional university function' (p.7). Critics of this view often describe the distinction between higher and vocational education, the latter being more suited to a learning outcomes approach due to the skills and competence-based nature of such courses. The drive for this, emerging out the EUs strength in the VET (Vocational Education & Training) sector, was mainly in the Northern and Central European members states (particularly Germany) that have a long tradition of strong dual-higher education systems.

The shift from an input based to an outcome oriented education and training provision - in other words to a competence and career oriented education and training - defines new learning objectives that may be only met through new forms of learning

Psifidou (2009, p.6)

Academic learning, Adam (2004) suggests, 'is different in nature and cannot be limited to a skill/competence-based approach that creates a target-led culture focused on ticking boxes' (p.7). A quality learning experience in higher education should consider process issues as well as outcome issues. The relationship between student approaches to learning, and the quality of those learning outcomes, have long been debated by many educational researchers over the years (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1976.) There is general agreement that there are two fundamental approaches to learning: *deep and surface*. Students who assume a deep approach to their learning are intrinsically motivated and search for meaning by integrating new information with existing knowledge. Surface learners are extrinsically motivated (largely by grades) and have a reproductive conception of learning.

In order to foster lifelong-learning experiences (as espoused in the Bologna Declaration: Action Line 7 – See Chapter 5.), it is necessary to determine desired outcomes (the learning that is valued) and then create the conditions that will facilitate achievement of these outcomes (Marton, 1988.) That is, the educational process must be congruent with the intended aim, whether it is information acquisition or construction of knowledge. Students that adopt deep approaches to learning characteristically exhibit, an explicit intent to develop their own understanding of material (Entwistle, 1995), knowledge generally characterised by as ‘useful knowledge’ (Biggs & Collis, 1987; Boulton-Lewis, 1998); an ability to apply his or her own and other's views and ideas to new and future situations (Ramsden, 1992), and a highly developed integration of knowledge connects to application (Biggs, 1999). The notion and taxonomy of knowledge development is a theme that permeates all aspects of the literature on this subject.

These processes manifest themselves in student performance as:

1. Enhanced understanding (Bodner, 1986), and comprehension (von Glasserfield, 1987;
2. Venturing their ideas more spontaneously (Chin and Brown, 2000); giving more elaborate explanations that describe mechanisms and cause-effect relationships (Entwistle, 1995) or refer to personal experiences (Brookfield, 1985); ask questions that focus on explanations and causes, predictions, or resolving discrepancies in knowledge; and engaged in theorising (Chin & Brown, 2000)
3. Constructing more elaborate, well-differentiated knowledge structures (Pearsall *et al.*, 1997)

(Meyers & Nulty, 2002, p.2)

This utilitarian application of learning outcomes may suggest that they could be viewed as an attack on the liberal conception of education, which in turn can reduce the teacher to facilitator and can hinder the life long learning aspect of university education by reducing it to an instrumentalist approach. From a technical viewpoint one of the problems with using learning outcomes is the resource implication associated with a full and robust process, which adheres to fully *constructive alignment* (Biggs, 1999). For any university it is a huge undertaking to develop all curricula to be expressed in terms of outcomes whilst training staff and marketing internally and externally the concept effectively. Adam (2004) also suggests that there can be a degree of staff resentment and disagreement concerning this process, which includes the consequential changes to teaching, learning and assessment. The DCU process imposed to realise the Bologna Action Lines was called the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation), and this is also discussed in context in Chapter 6. The primary issues with adopting a learning outcomes approach without considering all the implications to assessment and learning, is summed up again by Stephen Adam:

It is argued that learning outcomes written as threshold statements can limit learning and stifle creativity as well as dumb-down teaching. Learning outcomes can be over-described and under-described (too specific or too general)

(Adam, 2004, p.7)

The issue of what defines the achievement of a learning outcome is one that is still heavily debated. Very few learning outcomes are 'black and white'. The model of learning outcomes that has been proposed through the BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up Group) and the Bologna Process, map clearly to the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) for Life Long Learning (though the EQF came after the initial commencement of the Bologna process), and in Ireland the NFQ. This framework is based on learning outcomes, which are characterised by concepts such as knowledge, skills and competences. The use of the word competences implies a level of proficiency that is required for a particular work related task or operational procedure. All students demonstrate different degrees of competence with respect to any learning outcome, from those who just about gain minimal competence, to those who demonstrate mastery. In the learning outcomes context this becomes important when devising the learning outcomes in the first place. It is important that curriculum designers understand the appropriate level of achievement for particular outcomes. The two main approaches used to express expected levels of achievement are Threshold and Typical achievement.

Other ways of conceptualising learning outcomes have also been explored.....seeing them from the student perspective. For example, it has proved useful to think in terms of *troublesome knowledge* (Perkins, 1999). Some ideas, techniques and concepts seem to create blockages for students that inhibit academic progress

(Entwistle, 2004, p.5)

Meyer & Land, (2003) suggest threshold concepts can be considered as akin to a portal, 'opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something' (p.1). They say it represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress. In Ireland the FIN group (Framework Implementation Network), define threshold concepts in the use of learning outcomes as, 'written to reflect a threshold level of achievement.... describe the minimum competence necessary to demonstrate ability with respect to that outcome' (2009, p.91) They go on to say that anything below this level should be deemed to have failed to demonstrate a requisite level of achievement.

In regard to the 'Typical ' achievement of learning outcomes FIN stated;

Frequently (and this is the case of the Award Descriptors in the NFQ) learning outcomes are written to reflect a 'typical' degree of achievement. In this situation

there is room for students to demonstrate a lower achievement and still have demonstrated competence

This problem with *Threshold* and *Typical* achievement is something that is at the heart of the debate regarding the use of learning outcomes. One of the main problems with the development of a learning outcomes approach is that learning itself can get lost in the assessment process. In Ireland The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) produced a 'Guide to Writing Learning Outcomes' (Bowe & Fitzmaurice, 2004). In their document they suggested that;

Learning outcomes define the minimum requirements expected of a student to successfully pass the module. The actual level of attainment and achievement can only be determined by the assessment method and in particular the assessment criteria

(Bowe & Fitzmaurice, 2004, p.8)

In a chapter called '*Beyond Understanding*' in Land and Meyer's 2008 book, '*Threshold Concepts within the Discipline's*', David Perkins suggests that 'Knowledge is information, or at least that seems to be the tacit view behind a good deal of learning. According to this possessive conception, knowledge is money in the cognitive bank' (p.4). This issue of reducing attainment (often described in the literature as competences) to different levels such as *Threshold* and *Typical* is discussed in the next section under the context of competences. However it is worth mentioning that, 'minimum competency tests underline the fact that 'levels, 'standards', and definitions of competency are not fixed absolutes, to be handed down by objective experts' (Wolf, 1995, p.84).

2.2.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCES

The relationship between learning outcomes and competences is a complex area – the subject of some debate and considerable confusion (Adam, 2008). Within the umbrella of Learning Outcomes comes the issue of assessment, and aligned with this is the issue of measuring competences. In assessment terms the first question asked here should not be how do we ensure we measure these knowledge skills and competences but rather what are the essential qualities of a good teacher, and how do we ensure that they assess accurately as well as helping develop professional competence.

Around the middle of the 20th century, the 'performance-based' or 'competency-based' model in teacher education started to gain ground. The idea was that concrete, observable behavioural criteria would serve as a basis for the training of teachers.

For a number of years, so-called process-product studies were carried out, in an effort to identify the teaching behaviors that displayed the highest correlation with the learning results of children. This was then translated into the concrete competencies(sic) that should be acquired by teachers.

(Korthagen, 2004, p.79)

In a European context, the identification of common professional standards to facilitate work mobility has, to some extent, led to emphasising more objectively observable and quantifiable characteristics of the teaching profession. This model has been driven by concerns with employability of graduates and visibility of institutions (Lemaitre et al., 2006) and has emphasised the efficient delivery of comparable learning objectives as a means to increase accountability. On the strength of this market-driven orientation, since the late 1960s and 1970s a competency-based model of teacher training has increasingly gained currency (Van Huizen et al., 2005). The drive to adopt a learning outcomes approach through the Irish NFQ and the Bologna Process implies a strict use of competences (combined with knowledge and skills) as part of the approach to assessing learning outcomes. Many researchers and educationalists have criticised the competency-based model because; 'it is rigid and pedagogically wrong. In this light, it is noteworthy that in many places in the world we are yet seeing the revival of a view of teaching and teacher education focusing on competencies' (Korthagen, 2004, p.79).

The EQF-LLL (European Qualifications Framework for Life Long learning) is an overarching lifelong learning framework, incorporating vocational and other qualifications as well as more academic qualifications. In recent years it has risen to the surface in relation to the development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe. In reality the EQF has superseded the (FQ-EHEA, aka the Bologna Framework). Its origins are in the Copenhagen Declaration (2002), which has a primary focus on vocational education and training. The EQF-LLL covers all aspects of educations and is seen to be a European Qualification Framework for Lifelong learning. The EQF exists alongside the meta-framework for higher education, the Bologna Framework.

The EQF's four highest levels correspond to higher education levels as defined within the Bologna Framework (European Higher Education Area Framework. EQF level 5 corresponds to the descriptor developed for the higher education short cycle, EQF level 6 to the descriptor developed for the first cycle (Bachelor level), EQF level 7 to the descriptor developed for the second cycle (Masters level) and EQF level 8 to the descriptor developed for the third cycle (PhD level).

This emphasis on competences described through the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) as Knowledge, Skills and Competences (KSC) has led to an oversimplification of assessing learning within the KSC. On a modular basis learning outcomes tend to be written either as Knowledge, Skills or Competences. It is usually only *Programme Outcomes* that have the broad, national descriptions associated with them. For example in Ireland, the reference for this is the NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications), which is described in detail later in Chapter 6. The NFQ describes learning outcomes in terms of '*Breadth of Knowledge*', '*Kind of Knowledge, Range of Know-How & Skill*', '*Selectivity of Know-How & Skill*', '*The Context of Competence*', '*Role of Competence*', '*The Competence Learning to Learn*', and '*Insight (Competence)*'. Again in the European context this can get blurred through cultural nuances.

'Competence' and 'competences' are used in association with learning outcomes in different countries in a number of ways – hence the problem. 'Competence' can broadly refer to aptitude, proficiency, capability, skills and understanding, etc. A competent person is some-one with sufficient skills, knowledge and capabilities. Some take a narrow view and equate competence just with skills acquired by training. It should be recognised that there is no precise common understanding or use of the term

(Adam, 2008, p.7)

The EQF and EHEA Framework categorisation was inspired by and connected to other, very similar, differentiations in learning outcomes. In France, for example, one generally distinguishes between *savoir*, *savoir-faire* and *savoir-être*. In the German-speaking countries, common differentiation is between *Fachkompetenz*, *Methodenkompetenz*, *Personalkompetenz* and *Sozialkompetenz*; while in the English-speaking countries, the conventional categorisation is between 'cognitive competence', 'functional competence' and 'social competence'. The EQF's differentiation between knowledge, skills and competence can therefore be seen as a pragmatic agreement between the various widespread approaches and does not oblige countries to do the same. However the EQF (from which many EU National Qualifications Frameworks have been developed) clearly state that it is not a competency framework. The EQF is a meta-qualifications framework and not a competences framework, and it was not intended for use in the classification of individual competences. It is a learning-outcome orientated framework, in which the descriptors describe all forms of learning outcomes. (EC, 2008):

The misunderstanding of the EQF as a competences framework is due to the fact that learning outcomes are formulated as statements about what the learners can do and so provide a certain 'competence orientation'. The EQF is also, insofar, not a competences framework, as learning outcomes can, for example, also be knowledge without any corresponding competences or skills.

Learning outcomes are consequently always more comprehensive than competences and not the reverse. The EC (2008) suggest that, 'More correctly, the EQF should be called a 'qualifications framework based on learning outcomes' (p.6). This differentiation between learning outcomes and competences has led to a development in teacher education in which the emphasis is less on the transfer of scientific knowledge (or 'formal knowledge', as Fenstermacher, 1994, calls it), and more on becoming conscious of one's own 'personal practical knowledge' (Clandinin, 1986). In relation to the issue of Threshold and Typical student achievements through assessments, Alison Wolf in Raven & Stephenson (2001) said:

There are general theoretical reasons why attempts to specify outcomes so clearly that anyone can assess them reliably are doomed to failure. Suppose, for example, that one was interested in something highly specific and abstract-far less context-dependent than the average workplace competency, and so, presumably, easier to define. A very specific mathematics skill is a good example-say the ability to multiply whole numbers

(ibid, p.7)

This literature suggests that the drive towards competency-based approaches, through the use of learning outcomes, can have a direct impact on the learning (and teaching) process. Students often view the assessment as the end product of their learning experience. If we wish to ensure that our learners are encouraged to learn beyond the assessment then we need to examine again the concept of competence and competences. Under the competency approach teaching can become synonymous with getting large numbers of students through their exams. Wolf in Raven & Stephenson (2001) again warns that this may drive education towards methods reminiscent of operant conditioning. Learning may be reduced to small self-contained chunks (Lazarus, 1981), or capsule education (McArdle-Clinton, 2008).

The prominence of a move to a learning outcomes approach has its origins in the Bologna process (as discussed in Chapter 5) but the EQF has become a reference point to many National Qualification Frameworks across Europe. In principle the move to an easily describable and measurable set of outcomes seems on the surface quite reasonable. However the danger of simply adjusting our higher education curricula to this concept may indeed be a step backwards and leave us with no room to develop progressive pedagogies that enable transformative learning.

Skills or competences should be an essential component of teacher education but a more holistic approach should be taken to ensure that attitudinal and personal values are also

cultivated. The *phronesis* or *practical wisdom* in Aristotelian terms is what is called for. Carr (1993,) claims that *'teachers should be competent by virtue of their intelligent application of their knowledge and understanding in effective practice'* (p.254), and intelligent application encapsulates skills, reflection and commitment to the teaching role. Due to the fact that learning outcomes are loosely expressed in terms of competences or skills and competence in an almost interchangeable way, this does lead to confusion of the definition. Adam in the Bologna Handbook said:

The European Commission consultation event held in Budapest, February 2006, on their proposed European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong learning concluded that there needs to be a common understanding of learning outcomes and work is continuing to achieve this

(ibid, 2008, p.8)

Furthering the connection between the EQF and the Bologna Framework, in an interview with a senior official from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) stated: *"While we're absolutely, fully supportive of the Bologna process I would predict, I could be wrong, that EQF, ultimately, will take over"* (Respondent 'A' Interview, 2011,p.4/Ln.127-132). He said that the, *"that the EQF is politically driven, and it's arguable that it might be getting more traction. National frameworks, now, are being developed, lifelong learning frameworks across most of the member states"* (ibid, p.3, Ln.121-126)

"What the commission had been trying to push through EQF, greater permeability between systems, this is having a huge impact and debate in Europe: in countries like Germany, Austria, where they have the dual system, a VET and then a firm dividing line between higher ed "

(ibid, p.3, Ln.113-120)

2.3 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory, which can pose an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn (Cannella & Reiff, 1994: pp.27-38). It maintains that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through exploring what they already know and believe as well the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact (Richardson, 1997, pp.3-14). As an approach to teaching, constructivism may be examined as much for what it is not as for what it is. It challenges what Oldfather, Bonds, and Bray (1994, pp.5-13) characterise as the default mode in education 'an empiricist/reductionist approach to teaching and learning'. The roots of constructivism can be found in the literature regarding Discovery Learning, Knowledge

Creation, Experiential Learning and especially the work of people such as Jean Piaget (1972) and Paulo Freire (1970).

Devising assessment frameworks that are built within a constructivist-learning environment allow the lecturer to become a facilitator of learning as well as a leader in the process, and this can encourage reflection and deep-learning (Boulton-Lewis and Säljö, 1976). Additionally this dynamic also allows other learning theories to come in and out of play, such as experiential learning, (Kolb, 1984, Rogers, 1964), freedom to learn (Rogers, 1964; 1994), assessment through cooperation, (Vygotsky, 1978), deconstruction of learning (Piaget, 1972) self directed learning and andragogy (Knowles, 1973, pp.350–352, 386) etc.

The constructivist-learning environment presents the learner with opportunities to help them build on prior knowledge and understand how to construct new knowledge from authentic experience. For John Dewey (1916; 1938) knowledge emerges only from situations in which learners have to draw them out of meaningful experiences. Furthermore, these situations have to be embedded in a social context, such as a classroom, where students can take part in manipulating materials and, thus, forming a community of learners who construct their knowledge together. The obvious implication of Dewey's theory is that students must be engaged in meaningful activities that encourage them to apply the concepts they are trying to learn.

Several authors cite the importance of teacher educators' modelling constructivist approaches that engage students in interdisciplinary exploration, collaborative activity, and field-based opportunities for experiential learning, reflection, and self-examination (Kaufman, 1996; pp.40-49; Kroll pp.63-72; LaBosky, 1996). The concept of theory into practice was the 'hinge' in which the idea of visiting concepts such as discovery learning (Bruner, 1961) and problem-based learning (Boud & Feletti, 1997; Duch et al., 2001; Amador et al., 2006) emerged within the overarching constructivist framework Bruner (1961) argues that, 'Practice in discovering for oneself, teaches one to acquire information in a way that makes that information more readily viable in problem solving' (p.26).

One feature of the Bologna Process action line relating to the description of learning outcomes is that this reductionist approach neglects the context and content of the learning experience for the student. The constructivist theory of learning does not accept the premise that different types of learning can be identified independent of context and content of learning.

The constructivist perspective argues that it is neither possible to isolate units of information nor to take a priori assumptions of the how information will be used. Facts are not simple facts to be remembered in isolation and units of information cannot be remembered as independent, abstract entities

As outlined in the next section, the fundamental principle of constructive alignment is that a good teaching system aligns teaching method and assessment to the learning activities stated in the objectives so that all aspects of this system are in accord in supporting appropriate student learning (Biggs, 1999, p.11). In the context of constructivism and constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999) the assessment should be at the centre of the experience. The work of John Biggs, helped inform the development of the assessment framework emerging from the research outlined in Case Study 2 in Chapter 8.

2.3.1 CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT

A further issue with an over reliance on an outcomes based approach is the positioning of learning outcomes from the student versus teacher perspectives. The research presented through the Case Studies 1 & 2 (Chapter 7 & 8) challenges the development of promoting learning outcomes as evidence of achievement through assessment. This in turn can create an over reliance again on assessment. This means students may view the assessment as the end result of learning rather than the process of achieving these learning outcomes. Through this approach the students ability to view their own learning path may get lost and the approach driven by focusing only on the learning outcomes can create a mechanistic model of achievement and the learners ability to apply, analyse and critically reflect may not be encouraged.

'Constructive alignment' combines two theories into one concept. The 'constructive' aspect refers to the idea that students *construct meaning* through relevant learning activities based on the principals of constructivist learning.

So often the rhetoric in courses and programmes is all that it should be, stating for example that student will graduate with a deep understanding of the discipline and the ability to solve problems creatively. Then they are told about creative problem solving in packed lecture halls and tested with multiple-choice tests. It's all out of kilter, but such a situation is not, I strongly suspect, all that uncommon.

(Biggs, 2003, p.2)

The second aspect is how the teaching, intended learning outcomes and the assessment relate and align to each other. This is a crucial aspect of this study, which highlights the adoption of a learning outcomes approach by DCU without the full alignment process being adhered to.

If students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner, then the teacher's fundamental task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are

likely to result in their achieving those outcomes ...It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does.

(Shuell, 1986, p.429)

Biggs (2003) suggested that most importantly, we should choose assessment tasks that will tell us how well individual students have attained these outcomes in terms of graded, criteria-referenced levels. These levels are the grades we award.

There are thus four major steps.

1. Defining the desired learning outcomes (DLOs)
2. Choosing teaching/learning activities likely to lead to the DLOs
3. Assessing students' actual learning outcomes to see how well they match what was intended
4. Arriving at a final grade

(Biggs, 2003, p.2)

Faulty assumptions and practices about assessment do more damage by misaligning teaching than any other single factor (Biggs, 2003, p.2). Ramsden (1992) quoted in Biggs (2003) writes, 'the assessment is the curriculum, as far as the students are concerned. They will learn what they think they will be assessed on, not what is in the curriculum, or even on what has been 'covered' in class' (Ramsden in Biggs, 2003, p.2). Viewing assessment as a parallel process not an end point is a difficult concept for many lectures in higher education (see Chapter 8: Assessment & the Teacher). However if curricula are aligned as Biggs suggest we can avoid many of the problems we have with student learning in Universities. The Bologna process does not recognise this as a core aspect of curriculum reform across Europe and a move towards a learning outcomes approach may diminish the capacities of our new European citizens as lifelong learners and reduce them to mere 'workers'. To the teacher, assessment is at the end of the teaching-learning sequence of events, but to the student it is at the beginning. If the curriculum is reflected in the assessment, (as indicated by the downward arrow in Figure 2.2 below), then the teaching activities of the teacher and the learner activities of the learner are both directed towards the same desired aim. In preparing for the assessments, students will be learning the curriculum (Biggs, 2003).

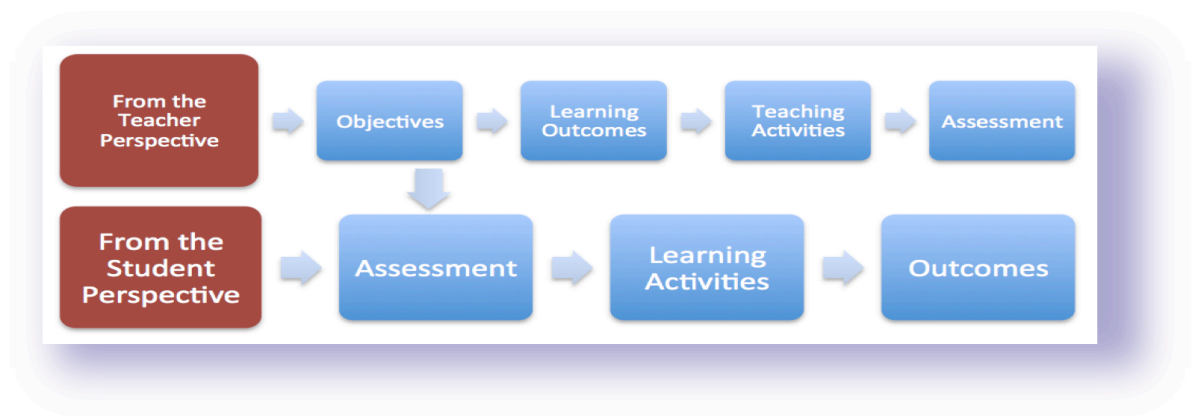


Figure 2.2: Model of constructive alignment from a dual perspective. Adapted from Biggs, (2003)

In a modular context, a learning outcomes approach separates learning outcomes into modular outcomes (subject-specific) and programme outcomes. Some modules are theoretical courses that introduce students to the basic concepts and theories of a domain, and then there are practical courses, which involve students practicing the special skills needed in a discipline or a profession. Often in higher education course designers are forced to offer courses on study skills in order to teach deep learning strategies and to enhance metacognitive or self-reflective (practical) knowledge. On the basis of what has been described in this chapter about the transfer of knowledge and the contextual nature of learning, Päivi Tynjälä suggests,

we can conclude that separating theory, practice, and self-regulation in this way does not greatly enhance the process of integrating the main components of expert knowledge in students

(Tynjälä, 1999, p.427)

Through this concept of constructive alignment, one of the most important challenges to university pedagogy is developing curricula and teaching methods that can integrate theoretical, formal, informal, and practical knowledge as well as meta-cognitive and self-regulative knowledge (ibid). Constructive alignment should begin with having a clear idea of what we want our students to learn. Specifically, on a subject-by-subject basis, we should be able to agree how well each subject needs to be understood. Biggs (2003) suggests that in order to do this we first must distinguish between '*declarative* knowledge and *functioning knowledge*' (p.2).

Declarative knowledge is knowledge that can be 'declared', that is to say one that we can say or write or explain verbally. Predominantly declarative knowledge is usually second-hand knowledge; it is about what has been discovered. Knowledge of academic disciplines is declarative, and our students need to understand it selectively (ibid). Therefore the acquisition of knowledge should not just be about 'telling' others about it, it should also be about putting

that knowledge to work, so it has a meaning beyond itself.

Understanding makes you see the world differently, and behave differently towards that part of the world. We want lawyers to make good legal decisions, doctors to make accurate diagnoses, physicists to think and behave like physicists. After graduation, all our students, whatever their degree programmes, should see a section of their world differently, and to behave differently towards it, expertly and wisely

(Biggs, 2003, p2)

Therefore, if we just tell our students about the world, and get them to read about it, it is not likely to achieve desired outcomes (greater than the specified learning outcomes). The best students will turn declarative knowledge into functioning knowledge in time, but most will not if they are not required to. If the assessment relates simply to a measurable set of learning outcomes, which can be achieved by '*threshold*' means then students will view the assessment as the whole learning event. For that reason, we have to state our aims in terms that require students to demonstrate their understanding, not just simply tell us about it in exams. Through providing clear goals, students can construct their hierarchy of knowledge (Bloom, 1956; Marsh, 1987; Ramsden, 1992). Though Meyers and Nulty (2002) suggest that, of itself, this approach is not sufficient. They go on to say that:

If we align the assignments' learning outcomes with the learning objectives, the students will strategically work towards *exactly* the learning and knowledge outcomes we have designed into the curriculum. In providing students with the assignment tasks in the first lecture, we ensure that students focus their study on accumulating appropriate resources and knowledge. Moreover, students begin thinking about how each fact/idea relates to their ability to complete the assignment. This creates an environment in which students try to relate the teaching and learning to the assignment tasks

(Meyers & Nulty, 2002, p.1)

Meyers and Nulty's (2002) suggestion of prioritising the assessment within the early stages of the learning experience is a form of constructive alignment.

2.4 REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Biggs (1999) suggests that most of the knowledge acquisition in universities tends to be declarative knowledge, 'that refers to knowing about things or knowing-what' whereas it should produce a functional shift, by enabling learners 'how' to use and interact with the acquired knowledge' (pp.40-41). This implies that this knowledge needs to have a practical application in order to help students develop understanding and make sense of this knowledge. The importance given to meaning making in education influences the level of

reflection and active involvement that is required of students. An education that requires only a surface approach is not concerned with meaning making. Conversely education that fosters meaning making processes requires active engagement with the learning content and greater control and ownership over the learning outcomes. Portfolio assessment is comprised of three processes:

- Setting the criteria for assessing the work
- Selecting the evidence that would be relevant to judge against those criteria
- Making a judgment about the extent to which the criteria have been met

(Biggs, 1999: p.157)

In educational settings reflective practice can be an aid to critical thinking and the development of existing knowledge as well as a tool to promote autonomous deep learning (Biggs 1999) through experiential inquiry. By including reflection as a key component of assessment learners pass beyond the passive assimilation of mediated knowledge (Hinett 2002) into the more complex and problematic areas of learning where context plays a major role. The issues of complexity and complex contexts cannot be overstated. It is within these complex contexts, what Schön called the 'swampy lowlands' (1983) that reflection serves the learner best. Dewey (1933) defined reflection as, the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tend (p.7). Schön (1983; 1987) argued that reflection should be more tied to action (see figure: 4.4), and went beyond Dewey's, theory by suggesting that reflective practitioners as being able to think while acting, reflection-in-action, and also subsequently after an action, to consider what has been done, reflection-on-action (Tang, 2007, p.2).

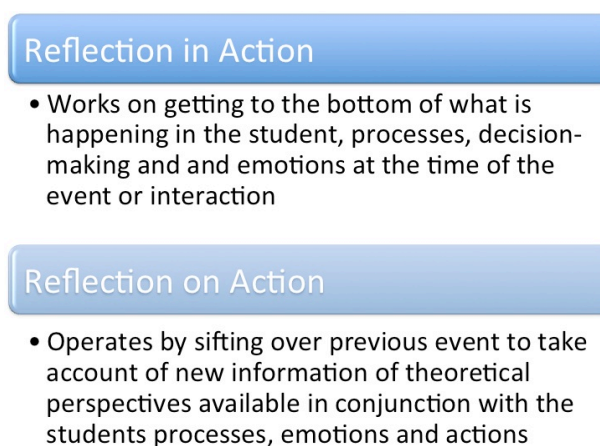


Figure 2.3: Schön's reflection in and on action model.

As Schön (1983) points out, reflection involves tacit, intuitive thinking: 'we exhibit it by competent behaviour we carry out, but we are often unable to describe what it is we do'. This is not because learners do not have the appropriate vocabulary to articulate this but because the discourse of intuition and 'gut feeling' (Schön, 1983) has more to do with emotion and feeling than cognition. Through reflecting on-action, learners in these settings need to move beyond the cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning into the area of professional competence. It is within this affective domain (Bloom, et al., 1956) that deep learning often takes place (Biggs, 1999) and where learners make the required schematic connections. Reflection in formal education is not new. Kolb (1984) identified reflection as playing a key role in experiential learning. It is hoped that the student will bring these skills into the future workplace and continually apply their reflective behaviours to changing (and complex) contexts. The constant reiteration of the philosophy and practice of continuous reflection ensures that the student is engaged in a detailed, continuous examination of their own practice. The student is encouraged to find and develop the links between practice and theory through this cyclical process (Rami, Lalor & McNamara (2007) in O'Neill et al.,). This mechanism allows the student to firmly focus on the relationships that exist between all elements of the teaching and learning process. Within the experiential learning model according to Brown and Knight (1995) feedback as part of the reflection process can also be an excellent motivator to promote students engagement with a task or assignment. Clearly the experience of reflection assessment is beneficial to students. They not only learn about the complexities of action, reflection and improving their own practice but they begin to comprehend the balance of understanding theory into practice and, according to Boud et al., (1985) the nuances of their own real life experiences guided by feelings and emotions.

The assessment should be to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes progressively and reflectively at the same time (Regehr & Norman, 1996). If the assessment can be thought of as an 'embedded assessment'; that is, the assessment tasks are a part of instruction, this method allows greater individual learning flexibility but also requires greater management of the process by the assessor/lecturer. Embedded in the constructivist tradition, the assessment should also encourage the learner to review, revise and re-do. This process is similar to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model (Figure: 2.4), adapted from Lewin's (1942) Action Research model.

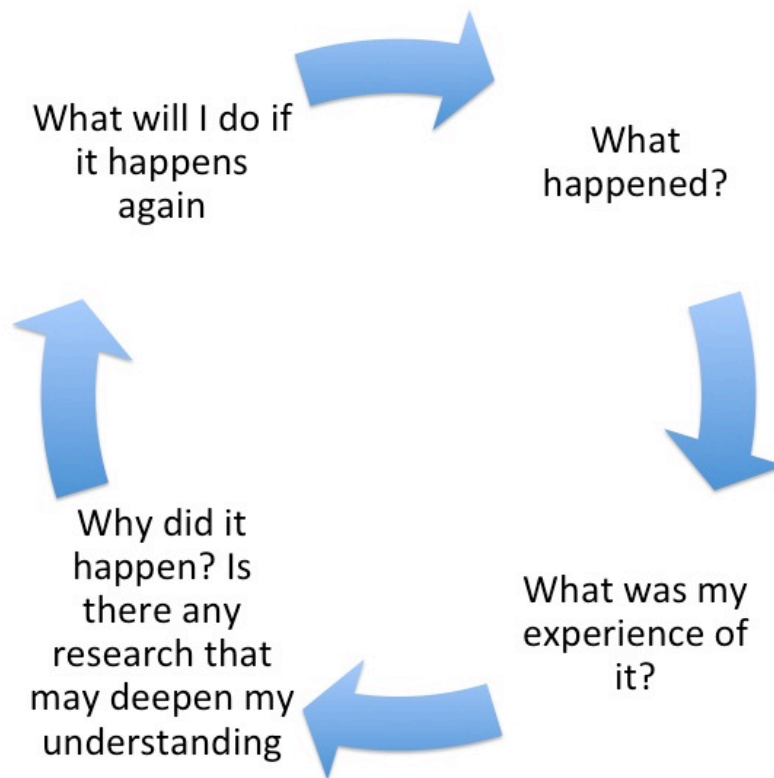


Figure 2.4: Kolb's experiential learning cycle adapted from Lewin's AR theory

The assessment should have a parallel function of assessing the learning outcomes as well as diagnosing curriculum issues that require change. Wiggins (1990) suggests that work being assessed should be authentic or based on the real world. Pellegrino, Chudonsky, and Glaser (2001) suggest that formative assessments should focus less on student responses and more on performance. For these parallel processes to work effectively a reflective element must be included in the assessment, though this could also involve more than Schöns (1983) reflection-in and on-action (see figure 2.3). A constructivist assessment mode should go beyond the single-loop learning process.

Argyris and Schön (1978) differentiate between "single-loop" and "double-loop" learning, drawing on a distinction made by Ashby (1960). Single-loop learning is a simple version of the Lewin/Kolb cycle (Figure 2.4), in which performance is evaluated through reflection and then corrected or improved. In double-loop learning, the whole activity is part of a larger cycle, in which the reflection takes place on the fact of engaging in the activity and the assumptions implicit in it. The reflective model associated with portfolio design within a constructivist context should draw on Kolb and Lewin's ideas as well as Schön (1983) and Argyris & Schön's (1978) theories. Graham Gibbs (1988) reflective model often used within the health care sector combines the aspects of constructivist ideals as well as the practical application of action. This fits well into the assessment and again puts the learner at centre of the process.



Figure 2.5: Graham Gibbs Reflective cycle

Reflection in education is important in the development of existing knowledge and as an aid to critical thinking. As Schön (1983) suggests reflection is key in order to facilitate the improvement of practitioners' professional judgments and their understanding of new situations.

Reflective (or reflection) diaries are ideally suited to this. Their dual function of assessing student learning and providing feedback to the assessor on curriculum issues make them reliable sources of information. The literature indicates that reflective journal writing enhances reflection, critical thinking, integration of theory with practice, and promotes professional and educational growth (Brown & Sorrell, 1993; Kea & Backon, 1999; O'Rourke, 1998; Patton, Sinclair & Woodward, 1997). As an assessment method, reflective journals do not only provide evidence of understanding of content knowledge, reflection, professional judgment and application, but also enhance critical self-reflection and self-awareness (Biggs, 1999; O'Rourke, 1998), and improve student performance (Conner-Greene, 2000).

The latter part of this Chapter explores issues around assessment and feedback. Feedback should be seen as 'part' of assessment not simply an end point. For students this is a starting point for learning (eg: how the teacher views assessment and how the students view assessment), for feedback to work it must connect with students (Higgins, Hartley & Skeleton, 2002; Hyatt, 2005), and should promote reflection. Students should be enabled to understand and interact with feedback as 'it cannot simply be assumed that when students are 'given feedback' they will know what to do with it (Sadler, 1998, p.2).

2.5 ASSESSMENT

The assessment of students is often a serious and tragic enterprise. Less pomposity and defensiveness (sic) and more levity about the whole business would be an excellent starting point for improving the process of evaluating and judging our students' learning.

(Ramsden, 1992, p.181)

Assessment is at the heart of an aligned theory of teaching. It should be a continuous process, which involves teachers and students making judgments about progress on an on-going basis (Freeman & Lewis, 1998).

Assessment is the most powerful lever teachers have to influence the way students respond to courses and behave as learners

(Gibbs, 1999, p.41)

The widespread use of formal assessment can be traced back to the work of Alfred Binet (1851-1911) and his colleague relating to their work on intelligence testing. Binet was asked by city educational leaders to assist in determining which students would succeed, and which would fail in elementary school (Binet & Simon, 1905; Block & Dworkin, 1976). The work of the Binet' team lead to the development of the first IQ (Intelligence Quotient) test. So great was the impact of this test, large scale testing procedures with large groups have become commonplace in selection, categories and predicting student success. The future implication of this cannot be overstated. There is still within the University teaching community considerable belief in 'raw' potential. For tests that purport to measure raw ability or potential, it is important that performance cannot be readily improved by instruction, otherwise by default the test would not be a valid indicator of ability. One problem with this approach again is the lack of focus on the student themselves and too much on the actual content of the learning outcomes and ultimately the assessment.

Adherents of testing also tend to embrace a view of human development which assumes that a young organism contain less knowledge and exhibits less skill than an

mature organism, but no qualitative changes occur over time in human mind or behaviour.

(Bijou & Baer, 1965 in Murphy, 1999, p.92)

Good assessment needs to balance the demands of different groups and individuals as well as engage students in deep learning strategies that are appropriate to the learning content Entwistle, Entwistle & Tait (1992). Ramsden (1988) states, 'the most significant single influence on students' learning is their perception of assessment' (p.24). The literature supporting this suggests that it is the assessments that determine how students approach learning. For example, exams that focus on recall may cause students to take a surface approach regardless of intended outcomes of either student or lecturer. Another danger is related to an exclusive focus on content described through learning outcomes alone, which can often create an excessive workload and over-assessing of the students. 'The result is that without time for reflecting upon and processing content in a deep, meaningful manner, students will have little choice but to take a surface approach' (Garrison, et al., 1995, p.2).

The combination of recall exams and excessive workload simply ensures a surface approach to learning. Thus, 'it is in our assessment practices and the amount of content we cover that we demonstrate to undergraduate students what competence in a subject really means' (Ramsden, 1992, p.72). The connection between learning, understanding, and knowledge is often underplayed. As discussed previously, in assessment it is often knowledge, skills and competences that are assessed, though this research suggests that it is *critical understanding* that the teachers place a higher value upon. This understanding could be viewed as deep-learning (Boulton-Lewis & Säljö, 1976), or tacit knowledge (Eraut, 1995). In one of his earlier works Ramsden (1984) criticises the assessment systems that target mainly the lower cognitive levels of knowledge.

I hate to say it, but what you have got to do is to have a list of 'facts'; you write down ten important points and memorize those, then you'll do all right in the test ... If you can give a bit of factual information – so and so did that, and concluded that – for two sides of writing, then you'll get a good mark.

(ibid, p.144)

Rowntree (1977) suggested that assessment is simply about getting to know our students and the quality of their learning. One of the issues with the Bologna approach, and its use of learning outcomes as the defining notion of what has been learned, is that it does not take into consideration the student-teacher relationship and how this relates to progress. Good assessment concerns the quality of the teaching as much as the quality of the learning. 'It

involves us learning from our students' experiences, and is about changing ourselves as well as our students' (Ramsden, 1992, p.182).

Andrew Davis, who has written extensively on external validity with assessments and the sociological aspects of assessment systems, stated:

reliability and validity can only be purchased in criterion-referenced assessment systems at the very heavy cost of distorting proper educational objectives for knowledge and understanding. The reasons for this distortion are analytic and conceptual . . . a criterion-referenced approach in which statements about pupil attainment aspire to public and national currency is fundamentally flawed. The meaning of statements about pupil knowledge and understanding within such systems will necessarily be distorted . . .

(Davis, 1996, pp.389-90)

In Kevin Williams intriguing article '*Assessment and the Challenge of Scepticism*' in David Carr's book, (1998) '*Education, Knowledge and Truth: Beyond the Post-Modern Impasse*', Williams suggests that leading scholars such as Caroline Gipps (1994) and Wynne Harlen (1994) 'who are most concerned with assessment are careful to eschew extravagant positivistic claims to objectivity' (Williams in Carr, 1998, p.232). Gipps herself writes of the 'spurious' claim to represent assessment 'as a scientific, objective . . . activity' (1994, p.167) and of the need to abandon 'the notion of assessment as an . . . exact science' (ibid, 175).

Assessment in education, is inherently inexact and should be treated as such because human abilities cannot be measured with the kind of accuracy which applies to 'measurement in the physical world

(Harlen, 1994, p.12)

If assessment succeeds through student engagement and a clear set of desired learning outcomes related to the curriculum and the teaching methods then it becomes clear that the context and the environment have a relevant factor in increasing the learning experience through the assessment task. Kember in Dart et al., (1998) recommends the use of authentic examples and contextual learning to facilitate student engagement with this material. He suggests that this approach helps the students to build their learning on top of a scaffold of academic/real-world/life experience. The findings from the Case Study 2 (Chapter 8) show that these approaches facilitate high quality engagement with the learning task, since students find the material of greater interest, easier to understand, and associate their work with a sense of involvement, challenge, fulfillment, achievement, and satisfaction (Connell, 1967; Svenson, 1977; Brookfield, 1985; 1995).

The dearth of literature surrounding assessment and assessment methods does not help the teacher decide on what is so-called 'best practice'. All systems and frameworks have to be

contextual and have a purpose that serves the assessors desired purposes. Therefore to suggest that this assessment model derived from the research based upon the policy, pedagogic and empirical data is innovative does not suggest a claim to uniqueness. However it does claim to shift the emphasis back to learning which I believe the Bologna process is beginning to hinder. Liz McDowell (2001) suggests that an assessment is innovative for students and staff if it is new in their context.

Perhaps what makes assessment innovative is that the assessment is trying to do something new. There is a shift in purpose rather than using a new method but otherwise carrying on as before. The terms used to label new forms of assessment seem to suggest this.

(McDowell, 2001 p.2)

Liz McDowell also suggested that there were four elements in assessment design that deemed them innovative. These are presented in Table 2.3 below.

Table: 2.3: Innovative assessment

INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT
Innovative assessment
Alternative assessment
Performance assessment
Authentic assessment
Source: Adapted from (McDowell, 2002, p.2)

2.5.1 PEER ASSESSMENT

There is evidence within the literature that feedback enhances student learning (Falchikov, 2001). Engaging learners in thinking about the assessment and a learning process and giving marks or grades is only part of the process of peer assessment. Student peer-assessment can be used for almost any aspect of student performance. Peer-assessment can even be summative, and taken into account as a component of the overall assessment context. Peer assessment can excel when the real purpose is to allow students to gain feedback from each other, and any scoring or grading is just a means towards this feedback rationale (Race, 2001, p.4). Peer assessment has been shown to support not only students learning but also improve their understanding of the assessment processes themselves (Bloxham & West, 2004). Peer assessment is also required to assess individual contributions to group assignments (Johnston & Miles 2004). In their model of formative assessment and self-regulating ones own learning, Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick (2006) also stated that by commenting on the work of student

peers, individuals develop objectivity in relation to prescribed standards which can then be transferred to their own future work. Boud (1995) also emphasises the relationship of self and peer assessment as follows:

The defining feature of self-assessment is that the individual learner ultimately makes a judgment about what has been learned, not that others have no input to it

(ibid, p. 200)

Fellow students can provide rich information, which can then be transferred by individuals to make their own self-assessments (Boud, 1995) and follow up with actions to improve their assessments. In peer assessment students learn from each other by means of receiving and giving feedback. Toppings 1998 definition of peer assessment is:

Peer assessment is an arrangement in which individuals consider the amount, level, value, worth, quality or success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status

(ibid, p. 250)

However, several studies have shown that the effects of peer assessment are diverse: for example, peer assessment is said to be beneficial to the learning process (Davies, 2002), but may not significantly help students to develop specific skills in the areas of communication, self-evaluation and observation, (Dochy & McDowell, 1997). Though importantly peer and self-assessment practices contribute to the enhancement of student learning regarding the development of life-long skills, meta-cognitive competences or affective abilities (Brew, 1999; Topping, 2003). Liu and Carless (2006) make a distinction between the use of the terms peer feedback and peer assessment. By peer feedback, they say, 'we mean a communication process through which learners enter into dialogues related to performance and standards. Peer assessment is defined as students grading the work or performance of their peers using relevant criteria' (p.280). Liu and Carless (2006) suggest that the existing literature on peer assessment has been dominated by studies of peer tutor grade correlations. Many researchers have carried large-scale quantitative studies to find out if student peers grading correlates to tutor grading and marking. The focus of the research has been predominately on the *reliability issues associated with the marking*. Peer assessment and feedback should be seen as more than just these issues of reliability it should be seen as an embedded progressive pedagogy. Stefani (1998) in her critique of assessment practices reflects on the dominance of peer grading:

Many academics became tied to the quantitative analyses of innovative assessment procedures because of the extreme pressure to 'prove' that students could be as

reliable as 'assessors' as the tutors... what some staff seemed to be doing was reducing the concept of student learning and student empowerment, to a series of correlation coefficients

(Stefani, 1998, p. 343)

Boud (2000) argues that, 'many forms of peer assessment are ineffective. These are processes in which peers are used as surrogate assessors to generate grades' (p. 157). Brown et al., (1997) argues that resistance by students to informal peer feedback is rare; resistance to formal peer assessment for summative purposes is relatively more frequent. Falchikov seems to reach a similar conclusion as Brown and Boud as evidenced by the evolvement of her practice towards peer feedback (Falchikov, 2005) rather than peer assessment. Peer feedback thus carries potential for improved performance in high-stakes assessments, something obviously highly valued by student (Liu & Carless, 2006, p.281). Liu and Carless also suggest that whether grades are awarded or not, the emphasis should be placed on how peer interaction can lead to heightened understandings and improved learning.

2.5.2 FEEDBACK & FEEDFORWARD

Central to the development of the student centered assessment framework is the key function of feedback. Despite its central impact on learning, feedback is still relatively underexplored (Higgins *et al.*, 2002), and is a process, which faces challenges, such as time, miscommunication and emotional barriers. One definition by Jacobs (1974) on feedback has been defined as signifying:

verbal and non verbal responses from others to a unit of behaviour provided as close in time to the behaviour and capable of being perceived and utilised by the individual initiating the behaviour

(Jacobs, 1974, p.416)

While this definition appears to describe a mechanically modifiable process, it offers two valuable insights. Feedback should enable change and change is brought about only if the feedback information is understood and used. Current research on formative assessment has stressed that while feedback is essential in promoting learning, it is not formative *per se*. McDowell suggests that feedback is a significant attribute of formative assessment and yet academic staff and students' conceptualisations of it are under-researched (2010). Part of the research outlined in Chapter 8 outlines the views of students on giving and receiving feedback. Feedback is largely believed to be based on a marker's 'intuition' (Ecclestone, 2001) or 'tacit knowledge' (Eraut, 1995) of assessment standards, which can often be largely subjective (Bloxxham 2009). What students seek is a dialogue about their work rather than written

feedback. Using assessment criteria and clear goals as a teaching tool enhances student learning providing effective formative feedback is given (Orsmond et al., 2002, p.1).

Formative assessments allow students to receive meaningful feedback, which should make a difference to their learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998). However, Higgins et al., (2002) raise doubts as to what extent this is reality in the case of higher education today. Higgins *et al.* argue that students may recognise the central importance of formative feedback for their educational development, but *how* they actually do use feedback is not clear, and that the notion of *use* in this context is complex and needs to be understood as occurring in different ways. Current research on formative assessment (Sadler, 1989; Juwah, 2004; Swinthenby, 2005; Chanock, 2000) has stressed the importance of incorporating a feedback loop in assessment. If the loop is closed, assessment becomes formative when a circular process from assessment goals to learning goals is established and where feedback helps learners to move from assessment to learning through the feedback process. At the highest point education becomes an exchange. It allows learners to actively engage with their learning and with teachers. The students' voice is therefore essential. Such two-way exchange that enables progression in education necessitates that; 'each step forward makes possible a further step forward' (Lipman, 2003, p.149).

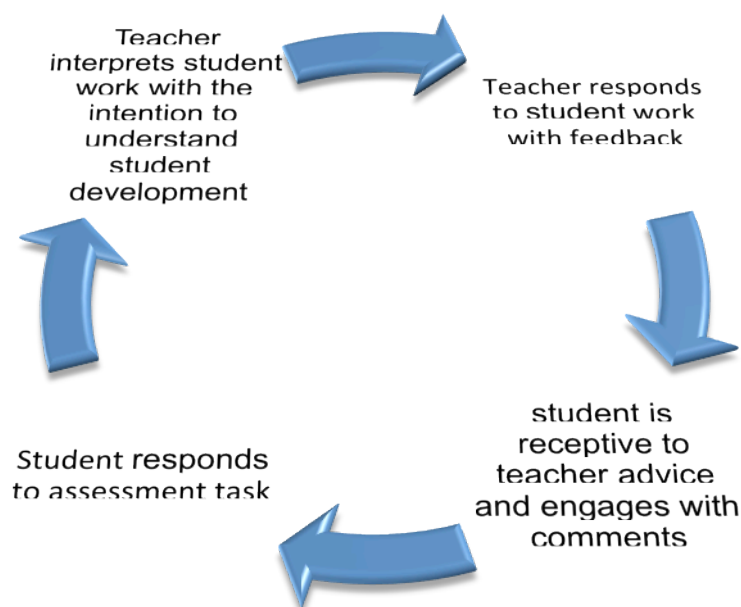


Figure 2.6. Dialogical feedback cycle

Medland (2010) argues that the opportunity for dialogue concerning the implicit values and beliefs informing personal (and professional) judgment could instead be viewed as a tool for clarifying why mismatches occur. A further complexity in providing feedback for students is the use of learning outcomes drawn on a modular basis. This modular system is commonplace in most Irish Universities, and again is a result of the development of the Irish NQF, which followed on from the initial Bologna Process developments. Lea and Street (2000) suggest that there is further difficulty related to the use of feedback that within full university modular systems students did not receive feedback on assessed written work until they had completed the module, which by their own admission is often too late to make and any correctional advice given is obsolete. Feedback should not be viewed as a result of assessment but rather as a parallel-embedded process within the assessment domain. Hersh (2004) advocated the position that assessment of student learning should be considered an integral part of the teaching and learning processes as well as part of the feedback loop that serves to enhance institutional as well as personal effectiveness.

This understanding of feedback as dialogue (see Figure 2.7) is fundamental to the research presented through case studies in Chapter 7 & 8 as part of this thesis. Sadler (1989) refers to this dialogical approach as ‘closing the loop’. This can be referred to as ‘dialogue as dia-logos’ espousing the concept of conversation and discourse.

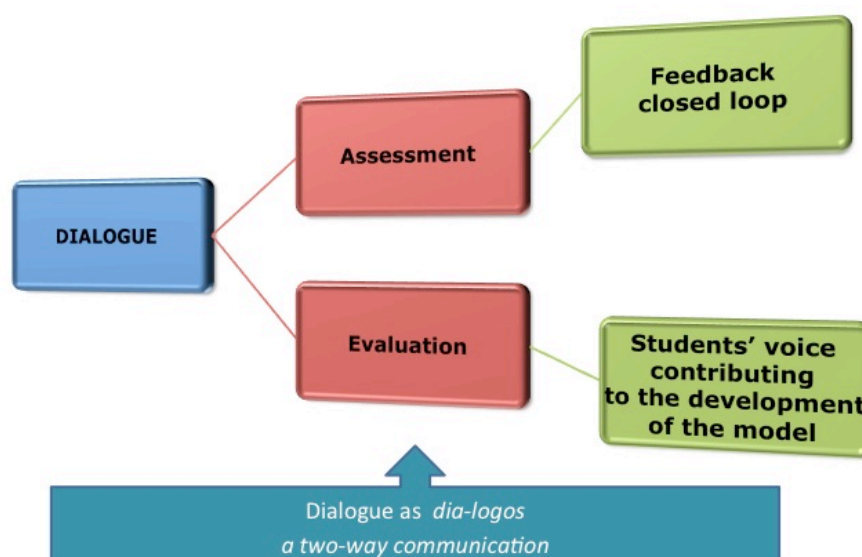


Figure 2.7: Dialogue as Dia-logos

Dialogue and two-way communication forms part of the mechanism by which the learner monitors, identifies and then is able to 'bridge' the gap (Hatzipanagos & Warburton, 2009). or close the loop, (Sadler, 1989) in the learning process. The view of feedback as 'sustainable' (Hounsell, 2007; Carless et al., 2011) process, contrasts with the notion of feedback as a transmissive process that involves 'telling' or passing on information (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). One of the problems of universities in regard to providing feedback is viewing feedback more as transmission of information rather than dialogue (Nicol & Milligan 2006). Dialogical feedback suggests an, 'interactive exchange in which interpretations are shared, meanings negotiated and expectations clarified' (Carless, 2011, p.2). This ownership is also a key aspect of the dialogical assessment process in relation to sustainable feedback.

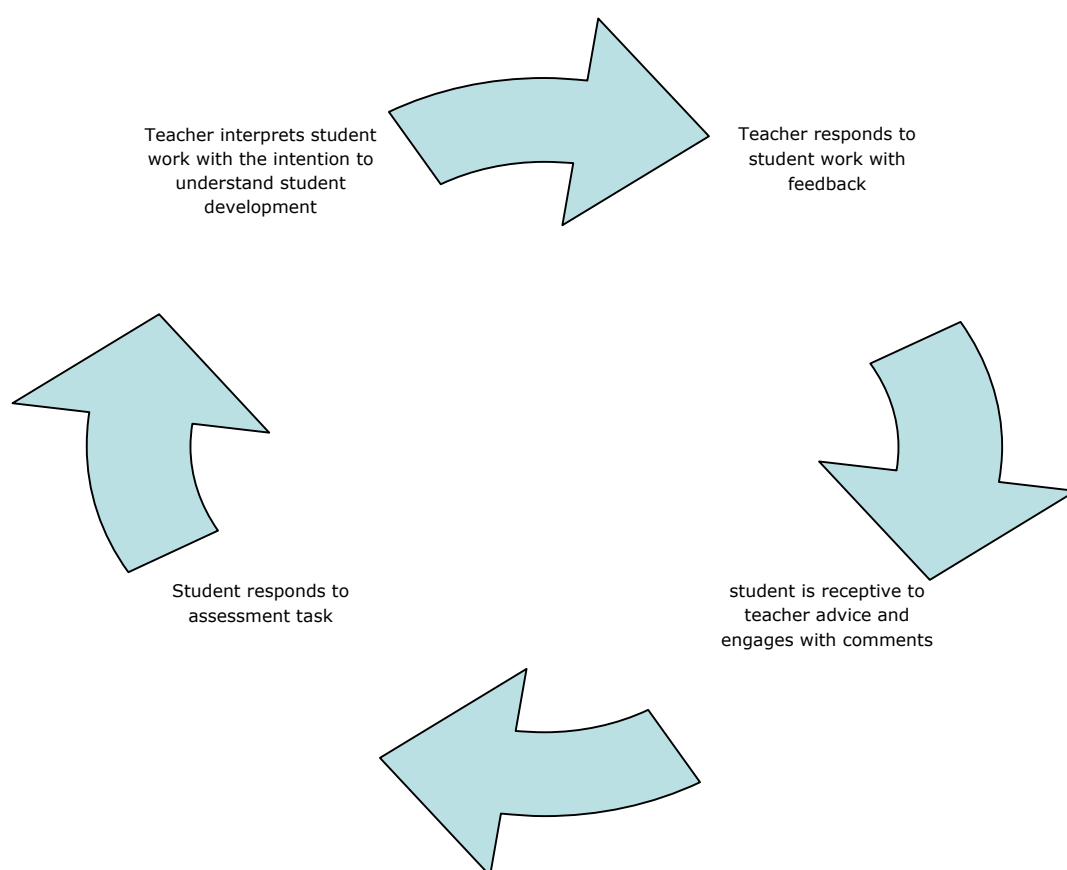


Figure 2.8: Dialogical feedback

Relating to good-practice within assessment, another influential model that lists seven principles of good feedback practice is drawn by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) through a synthesis of the literature around feedback and assessment. They suggest that good feedback practice is broadly defined here as anything that might strengthen the students' capacity to self-regulate their own performance. A synthesis of the research literature led to the following seven principles. The principles most relevant to this study are principles 4 & 6 (see Table 2.4 overleaf).

Table 2.4: Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) seven principles of good feedback

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD FEEDBACK
1. Helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards);
2. Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning;
3. Delivers high quality information to students about their learning;
4. Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;
5. Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;
6. Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance;
7. Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching.
Source - Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p.205

Increasingly, researchers of assessment in education highlight the necessity of both diagnosis and progression within assessment feedback. Paul Black (2003) and his team have argued that feedback can only serve learning fully, 'if it involves both the *evoking* of evidence and a response to that evidence by *using* it in some way to improve the learning' (Black et al., 2003, p. 122). Sadler makes the same point in setting out the, 'indispensable conditions' under which feedback can lead to an improvement in the quality of student learning:

The learner has to (a) possess a concept of the *standard* (or goal, or reference level) being aimed for, (b) compare the *actual* (or current) *level of performance* with the standard, and (c) engage in appropriate *action* which leads to some closure of the gap

(Sadler, 1989, p.121)

The term feed-forward assessment is still not commonplace either in the literature, or in university practice (Wimshurst & Manning, 2012). The term often refers to a two-stage process where students engage in a first attempt at an assessment item, receive feedback from lecturers and then use their increased understanding of the concepts and standards to complete the subsequent assessment piece. Basically, feedforward refers to 'timely and constructive feedback that feeds into the next assignment' (Hounsell et al., 2008, p.65).

In DCU feedback given to students is frequently after the assessment and only indirectly links to follow-up action by the students concerned. Since most assessments tend to be towards the ends of semesters, it can be difficult for the students to guess where and when the next chance may come to utilise the corrective element of the feedback. Therefore the potential impact of the feedback is inherently lost. Within post-graduate education this concept of feedback – feedforward is commonplace. Students often liaise with their supervisors regularly and provide drafts of theses, which the supervisor uses to feedback and to feedforward. Supervisors' comments can therefore 'feed forward' directly into refinements and revisions of the ongoing work. Through Case Study 1 (Chapter 7.) this is explored in relation to how teaching staff view and implement feedback processes in relation to assessment of learning outcomes.

For the student, the advantages the feed-forward assignment offers are 'low-stakes' practice on assessable work and students benefit directly from feedback in a way that can contribute to a subsequent higher formal mark or grade (see *Performance Indicators* in Chapter 8).

David Carless and his colleagues, in an article entitled, '*Learning-oriented assessment: principles and practice*' (2006), state:

we view feedback as feedforward as being a crucial component of learning-oriented assessment. By this we mean that tutor comments should carry clear implications for future tasks or the current task when time is available, rather than merely reviewing and/or justifying the grade for a completed assessment

(Carless et al., p.396)

The contention that, 'students need to be exposed to, and gain experience in making judgments about, a variety of works of different quality' (Sadler, 2010, p.544), relates well with the constructivists calls to develop 'assessment literacy' among students:

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of assessment processes, criteria and standards needs the same kind of active engagement and participation as learning about anything else

(Rust, O'Donovan, & Price, 2005, p.232)

Feedback has long been acknowledged as being central to learning (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Jaeger, 1998). Others have suggested that student-centred assessment is difficult to implement in a setting where the structures hinder its application. The Bologna Process and the rise of modularisation have both contributed to reduction of feedforward being applied regularly. Higgins *et al.*, state that feedforward is known to be deeply problematic in modularised higher education (2001).

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the key influential themes derived from the research process relevant for this study. Assessment in higher education is at times emotional, complex and unpredictable. If student learning can be deemed to be an outcome of university education then a more holistic approach to curriculum reform must take place. Progressive pedagogies must be utilised to gain momentum in this area. Learning outcomes are powerful tools to express the desired behaviours of our students relating to knowledge, skills and competences. Though we must not neglect the purpose and function of assessment. Assessment is often seen as the add-on aspect to the curriculum and not as a strong pedagogical tool within social constructivism. In recent years there has been a change in the way student learning is viewed. Increasingly the focus has moved from teaching to learning, with the emphasis shifting from what is taught, to *what has been learned* and more importantly *how it is learned*.

Assessment design sometimes fails to look much further than examinations, which have currency based upon their established tradition. 'They represent continuity and stability, whilst other more innovative forms of assessment may be seen as risk-taking' (Carless, 2007, p.58). The restrictions of summative testing have long been acknowledged, the controlled writing time and need to cram information into short-term memory seem to favour certain students (Knight & Yorke 2003). Entwistle and Entwistle (1992) also suggest that examination success is often not congruent with deep conceptual learning. Despite such critiques, summative exams still maintain their position as a major form of assessment in Irish Universities (this is evidenced in Case Study 1: Chapter 7).

This review of relevant literature supports the empirical research outlined later in this thesis, which argues that a further step needs to be taken in order to ensure that learning, once initiated, becomes sustainable. Thinking about assessment first can help the educator prioritise their intentions. Friere (1993) suggests that the starting point in 'education for liberation' is dialogue, as opposed to the hierarchal 'banking education'. He goes on to suggest that dialogue begins with the experiences of learners. Experiential learning means investigating our thinking and asking why we think the way we do. In this research the dialogue requires a co-equal relationship between teacher and student, in which knowledge is not a commodity to be passed down but is something to be negotiated. Dialogue is not just a teaching method. Central to the dialogical model is the transformation of teacher-student relationship and the way we think about knowledge. Through examining the literature about assessment and learning outcomes the inter-relationship between this and tacit knowledge is complex. It highlights how a learning outcomes approach to assessment may not enable

students to 'close the gap' and simply to use assessment to measure threshold concepts (based upon Saxon a competency model). This approach outlines how knowing is not enough (Non Satis Scire). Knowing what to do with knowing is a better question to ask.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In developing this research study, I was faced with a number of methodological choices. The first choice I had to make was whether or not to conduct this study primarily through quantitative or qualitative approaches.

Was there a story to tell and if so how would I present this story? What did I want the research to say, and how? I did however know that I did not want this study to simply be a study comprised of numbers, facts, and variables, but rather of stories, changing histories, the experiences of my colleagues, my students and myself. In order to frame the research question appropriately it is important therefore to examine the philosophical stance of the literature relating to the development of rigorous research perspective before deciding what approach I might choose. One aspect of this process has been the development of the research question itself and how this has evolved through a fluid process of revision and re-framing. Maxwell in Bickman & Rog (2009) warns against 'smuggling unexamined assumptions into the research questions themselves, imposing a conceptual framework that doesn't fit the reality you are studying' (p.229). This fluid approach to developing the methodology is captured well by the term *bricoleur* by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who suggest that this is a tricky process where the *bricoleur* must handle multiple methods; decipher multiple perspectives and work across blurred genres whilst ensuring the democratic nature of the research.

The beginning of this chapter outlines the challenges faced when confronted with the vast literature in relation to research theory, assumptions and perspectives all relating to the research design. Throughout my research career as an educator much of the research I was involved in was predominantly within the qualitative domain. This approach was informed predominantly by the work of Guba and Lincoln (1988) who used the terms 'scientific' and 'naturalistic' to distinguish between the viewpoints of research philosophies. Within the social sciences, qualitative research has often been seen as an appropriate methodology to examine the human condition.

Many approaches have been taken trying to define 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' research approaches and these have long been associated with different paradigmatic approaches to

research, 'different assumptions about the nature of knowledge (ontology) and the means of generating it (epistemology)', (Bazeley in Buber, Gadner, & Richards, 2004, pp.141-156).

The language associated with many of these authors often added confusion to my own research stance. Phenomenology, Interpretivist, constructivism, post-positivist and positivist are terms that all conspired to add confusion to my own understanding of developing a research perspective. Many of these writers described these stances as paradigms. Merriam & Webster dictionary (2004) describe the word paradigm as 'a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations (sic) and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated; broadly: a philosophical or theoretical framework of any kind'. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) view paradigms as often opposing worldviews or belief systems that are a reflection of and a guide to the decisions that researchers make. Punch (2009) suggests that the social and behavioural sciences have traditionally fallen into two camps with writers proposing various terminologies to distinguish these viewpoints. Guba and Lincoln (1988) use the terms 'scientific' and 'naturalistic' whereas Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) embrace the terms 'positivist' and 'constructivist'. The degree of differences between these paradigm positions, within philosophy and methodological design, are still heavily contested. Bryman (2004) suggests a quantitative approach implies the holding of positivist paradigm beliefs whereas a qualitative approach implies the holding of beliefs associated with a constructivist paradigm position. He also adds that these relationships are however, by no means fixed (ibid). In turn, the philosophy of post-positivism itself was discredited, and became replaced by constructivism associated with the constructed nature of social reality (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). This became known as the 'mono-method era' and reflected the adoption by researchers of a purely quantitative or qualitative approach to design. This was demonstrated by the use one or more methods drawn from either the quantitative or qualitative approaches, reflective of the dominant set of associated paradigm beliefs held either post-positivist or constructivist. The idea that one's paradigmatic view of the world might be related to the way one goes about researching the world was first mooted by Kuhn (1962), while Lincoln and Guba's work on naturalistic inquiry (1985) contributed significantly to the 'paradigm wars' of the 1980s. In 1962, Thomas Kuhn wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* where he defined and popularised the notion of the *paradigm shift*. Kuhn (1970) argues that scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but rather is a, 'series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions' (p.10), and in those revolutions 'one conceptual world view is replaced by another' (ibid). Fortunately, I am familiar with constructivism from learning theory, and the epistemology, although different, shares some of the same principles within. On further

investigation I discovered that these viewpoints or stances relating to research design choice are by and large based on one's own beliefs relating to the nature of knowledge. Within the research realm the constructivist paradigm is often viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deal with first principles. As such, it defines the nature of the 'lived experience', the researcher's place in it, and the range of possible relationships the researcher has to that world and the phenomena that constitute it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore the constructivist paradigm provides the assumptions, the rules, the direction, and the criteria by which research is conducted (Erlandson et al., 1993). However one of the issues with constructivism as a research concept is that in ontological terms, the paradigm suggests that realities are constructed from multiple, intangible mental constructions that are socially and experientially based, and that these are dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions (Guba and Lincoln (1994). As far as Guba and Lincoln are concerned this paradigm assumes that there are multiple realities with differences among them that cannot be resolved through rational processes or increased data. If this is truly the case, then quantitative research has no purpose. Philosophically there is agreement here but this research uses quantitative elements as a small-scale measure to help ensure triangulation and identify trends through the concurrent research process (Creswell, 2003).

In returning to the point, regarding the development of the research question, Maxwell in Bickman and Rog (2009) highlights the fluidity when devising a research question.

In your research design, the research question serves two main functions: to help you focus the study (the questions' relationship to your goals and conceptual framework) and to give you guidance for how to conduct it (their relationship to methods and validity)

(p.229)

Miles & Huberman (1994) suggest that a design in which the research questions are too general can create difficulties both for conducting the study, 'in knowing what site or informants to choose, what data to collect, and how to analyze these data—and for clearly connecting what you learn to your goals and existing knowledge (pp.22-25). Maxwell (2009) goes on to suggest that if the questions are precisely framed too early in the process this may lead to overlooking areas of theory or experience that are relevant to the understanding of the study, 'of what is going on, or cause you to pay too little attention to a wide range of data early in the study, data that can reveal important and unanticipated phenomena and relationships' (ibid, p.229). Later, in this chapter Figure 3.1 shows how the research question is constantly informed by the research process itself through *concurrent triangulation* (Creswell, 2003) and what themes and issues arise out of the emergent data.

3.2 RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES – CHOOSING AN APPROACH

Through my experience and familiarity of choosing a qualitative approach through the constructivist lens it seemed clear that an approach that would allow the data to be questioned and further analysed was important. The ideology of the constructivist paradigm seemed to suit my own worldview on constructed realities and multiple perspectives. Choosing an approach would need to satisfy these views but also allow for concrete and reliable truths to emerge. In this research study it would be important that I had a deeper understanding of the pros and cons of using a singular approach. The complexities of using case studies added to this dilemma.

Using mixed (or multiple) methods suits this research as it seeks to converge the 'truth' through multiple realities and multiple data sources. Therefore the ultimate findings link the research question from these multiple perspectives to pose a theory from the original question. These multiple sources provide triangulation and thus advance the validity process.

Within the mixed methods/models domain Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) continued the debate and the 'Paradigm Wars' commenced with a challenge to the dominance of the singular methodological era during the 1960s and resulted in the emergence of a mixed method and later in the 1990's of mixed model eras. The movement of researchers to mixed methods approaches indicated research designs that used *mixing* of quantitative or qualitative approaches during the data collection phase of a study. Creswell (2003) suggests that the use of methods drawn from both approaches within one study while the mixed model approaches used the mixing aspects of the quantitative or qualitative approach at multiple phases of the research i.e. design collection and analysis.

During the '*paradigm wars*' there was much debate over the relationship between paradigm and methodology (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). This ranged from theorists who saw the difference between the two traditional paradigms of post-positivism and constructivism as irreconcilable and therefore the use of mixed methods and mixed model approaches as untenable, these were termed the 'incompatibility theorists' and those that saw the differences being the two paradigms and the exclusivity of their methods as overplayed termed the 'the compatibility theorists' (Cherryholmes, 1992).

Today, there are still qualitative researchers who eschew mixed methods research because of the incompatibility of "mixing" paradigms. Rossman and Wilson (1985) called these individuals *purists*, who could not mix paradigms; others, they called *situationalists*, who adapt their methods to the situation, and *pragmatists*, who believe that multiple paradigms can be used to address research problems

In Creswell & Plano-Clarke's book '*Designing and Conducting Mixed Method Research*' (2007) the authors outline four phases in the development of mixed method research. Firstly they say that there was a *Formative Period* starting in the 1950s and continuing into the 1980s. During this period people such as Campbell and Fiske (1959); Sieber, (1973); Jick, (1979); Reichardt and Cook, (1979), began to question the mono-method approach as their own research studies demanded contextual approaches (Creswell & Plano-Clarke, 2006, pp.14-15). This period was followed by the *Paradigm Debate* period (ibid, p.15). As discussed previously this debate centered upon whether or not qualitative and quantitative data could be combined. A number of researchers took part in this debate such as Rossman and Wilson (1985) Tashakkori & Teddlie, (2003), and Greene and Caracelli, (1997), who suggested that we move past the paradigmatic debate (pp.5-17). The third development period of mixed method research was called the *Procedural Developments* phase (Creswell & Plano-Clarke, 2006, p.15). During the late 1980s there was a shift toward the methods or procedures for designing a mixed methods study. Notably the work of Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, (1989) brought the debate into the practical realm by looking at practical ways to design through mixed methods. Creswell & Plano-Clarke (2006) describe the final phase of the development of mixed methods research as the *Advocacy as separate design* period. Brewer and Hunter (1989) continued the debate by connecting multi-method research to the steps in the process of research. In 1991, Morse designed a notation system to convey how the quantitative and qualitative components of a study are implemented. This development led other authors to build upon these classifications and notations; many writers began discussing specific types of mixed methods designs. Creswell (1994); Morgan (1998); Newman and Benz (1998); Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) all began to map the contours of mixed methods procedures, and devise matrices and systems that paid special attention to validity and reliability. From the late 1990s right into the 2000s there has been a significant growth of interest in mixed methods research as well as authors advocating mixed methods research as a separate design in its own right (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell, 2003).

It was not until after an opportunity to meet Professor Robert Stake, author of the seminal work, '*The Art of The Case Study*' (1995), at a research master-class in Dublin in 2009 that my idea for a methodological approach became clearer. Stake suggested to me that case studies allowed for mixed model approaches, either within them (embedded) or as components of a larger study. He called these mini-cases. My initial reluctance to adopt a singular paradigmatic stance often stemmed from the fact that, although I firmly felt that a constructivist approach was closer to my own philosophy I also wanted the quantitative data from the case studies to

speak for itself. Therefore the issues of reliability and validity (Cronbach, 1971) were of great concern. This in turn could lead to complications with the issue of triangulation, which is discussed in greater detail later in this Chapter and highlighted again in the following Chapter relating to data analysis. I had been familiar with Stake's approach to case study design but found myself relating to Yin's approach due to my view that Stake's approach lacked rigour somehow. His disregard for transcriptions and detail seemed to put me off in the past. Though at this workshop he began to talk about the 'voices' within case studies and how they could come alive through rich description rather than be objects to be commented upon. The researcher is the primary research instrument so their feelings, views and emotions are also connected to the lived experience of the respondent. After my brief discussion with Robert Stake it was clear that the research I was working on then could form part of a larger study relating to *Assessment* and that these parallel research studies could be defined as case studies and sit within a larger piece of research. Stake wrote in 1978, 'Its (Case Studies) best use appears to me to be for adding to existing experience and humanistic understanding (p.4).

In 2004 Johnson and Onwuegbuzie advocated considering mixed methods as a legitimate design in educational research. Validity and reliability are key features of all research and they are especially relevant in mixed method research. *Within mixed method research validity or reliability does not carry the same connotations as it does in quantitative research* (Creswell, 2003). However, Creswell also suggests that in a limited way, 'qualitative researchers can use reliability to check for consistent patterns of theme development' (p.23). They can also generalise some facets of multiple case analysis (Yin, 1989) to other cases, though generally, reliability and generalisability play a minor role in qualitative inquiry. Validity however, can be seen as a strength within qualitative research and it is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the perspective of the researcher, the respondent, or the readers account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Terms abound in the qualitative literature that discusses this idea, terms such as 'trustworthiness,' 'authenticity,' and 'credibility' (ibid), and it is a highly debated topic (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The findings within Case Studies offer opportunities to provide *thick, rich descriptions*, (Creswell, 2003). The parallel interviews provide *Triangulation* and *Member Checking* (ibid). The process undertaken by the researcher ensures that *Reflexivity* is involved at all stages of the design and analysis. The process on reflection helps avoid Researcher Bias (Ibid).

3.3 PRAGMATIC PARADIGM

The mixed methods and mixed models debate lead to the emergence of a third set of beliefs: the *pragmatic paradigm*.

It is within this stance that my research model is situated. As previously mentioned, quite often the language associated with research philosophies has overshadowed the actual research design. Though it is important to acknowledge the ontological and epistemological questions, it is also important to choose a research design that is best suited to the research question. I have maintained a belief in looking for ways forward when I encounter barriers to either my teaching or my research, and I have continued to employ this philosophy in relation to this research. In this case the only way forward was to adopt a pragmatic approach to the research design. When searching for the rationale to choose a research methodology I looked toward my own philosophical viewpoint and my own principles. Notions such as values, practical reasoning, suitability, do-ability all led me to take an alternative route rather than the simplified and constrained stance represented within either the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This 'third way' represented another way, a flexible way, and practical way forward with the research design (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p.ix). For pragmatists, such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), by the late 1990s the position of the paradigm wars debate was largely over, though they did, however, acknowledge the importance of paradigms in research and a lack of clarity on associated terminology.

Supporting this, Darlington and Scott (2002) note that in reality a great number of decisions of whether to take a quantitative or qualitative research approach are based not on philosophical commitment but on a belief of a design and methodology being best suited to purpose. The pragmatic paradigm as a set of beliefs, illustrated above, arose as a single paradigm response to the debate surrounding the paradigm wars and the emergence of mixed methods and mixed models approaches. In short it is a pluralistic stance based on a rejection of the forced choice between post-positivism and constructivism (Creswell, 2003). The pragmatic paradigm has what Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Creswell (2003) see as intuitive appeal, permission to study areas that are of interest, embracing methods that are appropriate and using findings in a positive manner in harmony with the value system held by the researcher (ibid). For these reasons it can be argued that the pragmatic paradigm can be adopted for the purpose of this study and endeavours to be congruent with the mixed quantitative and qualitative approach taken within the predisposition of 'practitioner-based' research.

Pragmatism in the context of this research is not just a philosophy but also an approach. My

view was *not to make 'either/or' choices* of scientific concepts associated with the paradigm wars, but rather to focus instead on what could work in getting research questions answered (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). To do this could have methodological implications, which could later become insurmountable. As stated previously, in the first instance my research question is more important than either the method or the paradigm underlying the method. Another implication for my research approach is that specific decisions regarding the use of either quantitative, qualitative methods, or mixed methods are solely dependent on my research question. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003b) would argue that substantive issues should come before methodological and paradigmatic issues. This again, brings up the issues of the research question. Again Maxwell (in Bickman and Rog, 2009) warns of the dangers to the study if one does not carefully formulate the research questions in connection with the other components of the design.

Your research questions need to take account of what you want to accomplish by doing the study (your goals), and of what is already known about the things you want to study and your tentative theories about these phenomena (your conceptual framework)

(p.230)

There is however an overall correlation between the research approach and the research purpose when searching for a stance. While quantitative research may be mostly used for testing theory, it can also be used for exploring an area and for generating hypotheses and theory. Correspondingly, qualitative approaches can be used for testing theories hypotheses, though it is the most favoured approach for theory generation (Punch, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that:

both types of data can be productive for descriptive, reconnoitering exploratory, inductive, opening-up purposes. And both can be productive for explanatory, confirmatory, hypothesis-testing purposes' (p.42) I would concur with Keith Punch (2009) 'We do not need to be restricted to stereotypes in our thinking about the purposes of the two approaches. Each approach can be used for various purposes

(p.292).

3.4 DEVELOPING THE MIXED APPROACH

The complexity of choosing a research design cannot be understated. There are many theorists and educationalists that have written on the subject and little concrete agreement has been reached.

In mixed methods research, qualitative and quantitative methods and data are mixed,

or combined in some way. A single study that combines qualitative and quantitative data is mixed methods, but the term can also refer to several studies that combine both types of data (Punch, 2009, p.288).

Punch's definition is simple, but it is also highly contested. The language used to describe this mixed method research has at times been confusing and often contradictory. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) suggest terms such as 'multi-method', 'integrated', 'blended' and 'combined' (p.212). Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) describe 'multitrait-multimethod research', 'methodological triangulation', 'multi-methodological research', and 'mixed model research' (pp.5–6). The helpful addition of the *'The Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research'* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) encouraged the use of the term 'mixed' as an umbrella term to cover the multifaceted procedures of combining, integrating and linking the different types of methods and data (Punch, 2009, p.289). Norman Denzin again revisited this in 2010 in his article *'Moments, Mixed Methods, and Paradigm Dialog'*.

The literature on mixed method researcher often presumes the mix between strictly qualitative and quantitative, methods and/or approaches. However, this design seeks to use non-traditional methods such as case study as part of the mixed and within these stages there are quantitative and qualitative elements occurring, hence the mixed model design. This design is better known as within-stage mixed model design (Creswell, 1994). The mixed approach should allow for the researcher to construct a mixed approach that suits the research question and the lived context of the research. 'The recognition, that all methods are hybrids, emergent, interactive productions, productively extends the mixed methods-paradigm discourse' (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, pp.2-3). In 2005 Denzin & Lincoln, described the 'complex intersections between epistemology, methodology, and specific inquiry techniques are stressed. Pragmatics, multiple interpretive practices, and bricolage are paramount (p. 4). In 2010 Denzin revisited much of the discourse regarding mixed method and mixed. He suggests that it's now time to move past the QUANT vs QUAL distinctions of the 1980s into a more pluralist stance. In the same article Denzin quotes Schwandt who says 'we need to get rid of that distinction in research' (Schwandt in Denzin, 2010, p.423). One of the problems facing mixed model/method researchers is that of traditional or purist researchers whose research philosophy is still tinged with the after effects of the paradigm wars. Howe (2004) criticised the neoclassical and mixed methods versions of research. Neoclassical experimentalism represents a dogmatic adherence to quantitative methods.

3.5 METHODS WITHIN THE MIX

In choosing a research design one needs to ask the question what approach will help answer

my research questions best? In this study the research questions shifted and changed as the data was analysed over the research timeline. The overall research question seeks to discover *(What is) The impact of Europe's Bologna Process on the development of learning & assessment in the context of a higher education Institution in Ireland?*

Through examining this question I decided that parts of the question could be answered using quantitative methods and other aspects of the question would require a qualitative approach. Although the decision had been made to use case studies within a larger study I still had to choose how this could work in practice. What were the ontological and epistemological questions?

This initial research commenced in 2008. The first part of the research focused on curriculum reform within my own teaching practice. Through this inquiry I developed a research platform to seek the views, experience, behaviours and academic performance of my own students in the overarching field of assessment within the context of teaching and learning. This research was paralleled by a second piece of research, which centered on an empirical study aimed at seeking the views and experiences of my colleagues in relation to the curriculum, and especially on the way that learning was influenced by the processes of assessment. The second study added a further dimension, which sought to examine institutional curriculum reform, which in turn led to the broader research question, which forms the basis of this thesis.

Morse & Niehaus (2009) suggest that *mixed method research* is suitable when one core component (of the research) is supplemented by an additional component. They suggest that the defining characteristic of mixed method research is that it '*involves a primary or core method combined with one or more strategies drawn from a second, different method for addressing the research question by either collecting or analyzing (sic) data*' (p.14)

Therefore the research is presented through these multiple components, i.e: through case studies, and the presentation of policy change (at institutional, national and European level). Within the cases themselves narratives are recounted through open-ended questions. The case studies also offered an opportunity to analyse performance patterns, trends and statistical data. Therefore this study required a multifaceted research approach with each of these methods informing and enriching each other.



Figure 3.1: Multiple methods - Multiple embedded studies within the study

Therefore, 'Mixed method research often (but not always) involves the use of both qualitative and/or quantitative methods' (Morse & Niehaus (2009, p.14). The qualitative approaches looked for indicators of success or improvement through the experiences and stories of the learners (Merriam, 1988; Glesne, 1999). Qualitative research looks at the participant in natural settings and asks these individuals to participate in the data collection. Qualitative methods also allow for my own views and voice to be heard and acknowledge my own experiences and values. Qualitative methods allow for the researchers to bring their personal-self into the research along with their researcher-self. Values, biases, and interests are acknowledged and included in the reporting (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988).

The quantitative research instruments helped look at the microanalysis of certain variables. Conversely the qualitative instruments helped me to look at the research setting as an authentic context and gain a deep understanding of the contextual nuances. Within the case studies (particularly in relation to the *Learner & Assessment Case Study: Case Study 2: Ch.8*) the interest is in the views and the experiences of the students in their authentic setting. This goes beyond what the statistics infer - investigating the story behind the numbers. Therefore instead of trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis, qualitative research looks for themes, theories, and general patterns to emerge from the data. Qualitative research '*is hypothesis-*

generating' (Merriam, 1988, p.3) rather than serving to test a hypothesis. As stated previously, the research question was not bound by time, and changed as the data was revealed. This demonstrated the cyclical (or rather helical) nature of the research process. Therefore if research is truly cyclical (Leedy & Ormand, 2001) then there is a place of *mixed method design* (see Figure: 3.2) one component (or approach) can inform and help develop the other. In this study it was the findings generated from the qualitative research that led to the formation of the questions used in other quantitative surveys used later in the study.



Figure 3.2: The research model with flow patterns

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) argued that the term 'mixed model' is more appropriate than 'mixed method' for research in which different approaches are applied at any or all of a number of stages through the research, their point being that mixing often extends beyond just the methods used in the research. In my research this is very much the case. The methods were mixed within the case studies within the overall study. They were mixed in terms of research approach as well quantitatively and qualitatively.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to clarify just what is being mixed—and how it is being mixed. The "mixing" may be nothing more than a side-by-side or sequential use of different methods, or it may be that different methods are being fully integrated in a single analysis

(Caracelli & Greene, 1997, p.21)

Mixed method research is research in which the researcher uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of a research study and the quantitative research paradigm for another phase of the study.

Mixed model research generally refers to research in which the researcher mixes both qualitative and quantitative research approaches within a stage of the study or across two of the stages of the research process. For example, a researcher might conduct a survey and use a questionnaire that is composed of multiple closed-ended or quantitative type items as well as several open-ended or qualitative type items. For another example, a researcher might collect qualitative data but then try to quantify the data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The relevance of using a mixed model method is demonstrated in looking at how the two case studies within this research were conducted. The study largely used quantitative methods and instruments to gather data regarding the local research question. These were paralleled by deeper qualitative enquiry and the data was extracted from this and coupled with the quantitative to show a firmer picture of the situations. In the embedded design, one data set plays a supportive secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type. This design is based on the ideas that a single data set is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered, and that different types of questions require different types of data to answer them (Creswell & Plano-Clark in Punch, 2000, p.296).

Therefore, I chose a mixed model approach comprising of multiple studies (case studies or mini-cases) each of which was embedded in nature. The mixed model approach used a 'within-stage' design where quantitative and qualitative approaches are mixed *within one or more of the stages of research*. In this study these stages are represented through the case studies. An example of within-stage mixed model research would be where you used a questionnaire during data collection that included both open-ended (i.e., qualitative) questions *and* closed-ended (i.e., quantitative) questions. Five data gathering tools were used to generate the results within the overall study, the distillation of these results was then analysed through Creswell's concurrent triangulation method (2003). Through the mixed approach design these included:

- Extant data: (Chapter 5) EU and European reports, minutes, communiqués, policies and publications)
- Extant data: (Chapter 6) National reports, historical documents, press releases, policy documents and publications)

- In-depth Interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in the assessment field both external to and inside the University and as previously mentioned
- Case Studies; Case Study 1 – Study relating to experiences of assessment by my fellow teaching staff in DCU
- Case Study 2- Study relating to my own students and the assessment of learning outcomes

In order to increase the rigour and validity to support its robustness, a mixed model approach seemed like an appropriate choice. Using a mixed model research approach the research was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches both as separate components of the overall study and within specific study phases eg: case studies.

3.6 CASE STUDIES

It is not conventional mixed method (MM) practice to find case studies discussed within the MM research design. The term 'case study' is often taken to be synonymous with qualitative methods, for to study 'cases' seems to imply looking up close and being drawn into the world of alternative perceptions and different views about common and shared tasks and educational contexts, though the case study sits well as a 'within-stage' approach within the mixed model paradigm.

For this study there were two cases: the *Teacher and Assessment Case* and the *Learner and Assessment Case*. The cases themselves were bounded in terms of participants, location, data and time. Although these two cases are related to the same principle, this is not strictly an embedded multi-case study design (Yin, 2009, p. 59) in the purest sense, as the '*Teacher and Assessment case*' (Case study 1) and the '*Learner and Assessment case*' (Case study 2) were not searching to answer the same question *per se*; however they did share some common ground. This design choice allows isolation of the two cases as well as consideration of them together in the context of the overarching research question relating to Dublin City University itself.

Although the research and findings presented in Chapters 6 & 7 is examined through case studies, the use of case studies is selected as a vignette to help describe the research within the overall mixed method approach. Through case studies the researcher gets a sense of the

overall phenomena. In his paper entitled '*The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry*' (1978) Robert Stake suggests that:

Antipositivists such as Dilthey, Von Wriggle, and William Dray have claimed that Truth (sic) in the fields of human affairs are rich with the sense of human encounter: To speak not of underlying attributes, objective observables, and universal forces, but of perceptions and understanding that come from immersion in the holistic regard for the phenomena

(Stake, 1978, p.6).

This research is presented as mini-case studies to merely *validate* the overall research theme through a vignette. Through these mini-cases I sought to advance the creation of new knowledge regarding the area of 'learning and assessment'. As Stake states, 'The researcher examines various interests in the phenomenon, selecting a case of some typicality but leaning toward those cases that seem an opportunity to learn' (Stake, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In a paper regarding case study approaches he said

When explanation, propositional knowledge, and law are the aims of an inquiry, the case study will often be at a disadvantage. When the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and an increase in conviction in that which is known, then the disadvantage disappears

(ibid, p.232)

Stake's views on the richness of case studies helped me view these cases as an opportunity to immerse myself in the subject: '*Assessment*'. The inclusion of cases studies in the mixed model approach followed Yin, (2003); Merriam (1988); and Stake's (1995) advice regarding design and method. The case study method is well suited to this research because of its ability to answer the research questions appropriately. The case study is preferred in 'examining contemporary events but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated' (Yin, 2003, p. 7). Two additional instruments were employed within Case Study 1 (*The Teacher and Assessment*)(quantitative (1) and qualitative (2) surveys) and four within Case Study 2 (*The Learner & Assessment*); (1) quantitative surveys, and (2) analysis of performance patterns, (3) Open ended questionnaires, (4) Reflective diaries. The strength of the case study approach is in its ability to examine a '*full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts (sic), interview, and observations*' (Yin, 2003, p.8). Additionally, qualitative data generated from the '*Reflective diaries*' and analysed through a framework analysis approach helped explain the phenomena from the perspective of the 'learners':

...when description and explanation (rather than prediction based on cause and effect) are sought, when it is not possible or feasible to manipulate the potential causes of behavior, and when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for study

Yin (2003) recommends matching the type of research question to the strategy used to yield the data that responds appropriately to the question. This researcher's questions ask 'which', 'why' and 'how'. The approach to choosing the appropriate strategy should consider three conditions: the type of research question, how much control the investigator has over the events, and whether or not the focus is on contemporary or historical events and to what extent (Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1988). Within the case study the 'Which' questions that focus on contemporary events where the researcher has little or no control over the behavioural events could be considered exploratory or explanatory in nature and the use of a survey is then the most appropriate strategy to use (Yin, 2003). Merriam (1988) concurs stating 'A case study can also include data gathered by a survey instrument...[The survey] responses would form part of the database for the case study' (p. 8).

In choosing a case approach, and stemming from my research philosophy, both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) base their approach to case studies within a constructivist paradigm. Both seek to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored, and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed (Yin, 2003; 2006). Essentially I had determined that the research question is best answered using a qualitative case within the constructivist domain study and the case and its boundaries were determined, then what was left to consider what type of case study will be conducted. Yin (1993) has identified specific types of case studies, which were primarily, *Exploratory*, *Explanatory*, and *Descriptive*. This approach did not provide the required depth, which could utilise these cases as vignettes. Stake, (1995) on the other hand suggests that case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. The primary reason that I decided not to adopt Yin's design approach was because of his view that case studies *should not manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study* (2003). Stake's approach to case study design was chosen as it highlighted three important elements missing from Yin's (1993) design approach. Stake stresses the importance of case studies and their decision making factors. Stake further argues that case studies can also be: *Intrinsic* - when the researcher has an interest in the case; *Instrumental* - when the case is used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer, and *Collective* - when a group of cases is studied (ibid, 1995). Therefore my design approach used Stakes mini-case approach as part of mixed model design using intrinsic and instrumental factors.

Case Study 1 examined the concept of assessment from the perspective of the educator within the university setting: i.e., the Teacher. This case was concerned with how *teaching staff in DCU perceived, viewed and implemented assessment* and feedback in the context of learning and how their perceived assessment practices impacted on surface and deep learning (Marton,

F., & Säljö, 1976; 1997; Entwistle, 1998; 2000). The second case study did not try to answer the same question but rather tried to offer an insight into the role of assessment in the learning process from *the perspective of the learner*. Improving the students learning experience is closely connected with the promotion and implementation of an assessment strategy whose effectiveness relies on the quality of the formative aspect.

3.6.1 DATA INCLUDED IN CASES

Both cases used quantitative and qualitative data to inform their findings. In Case 1 the quantitative served to offer statistical data which gave an overview of practices and/or perceived assessment practices in relation to the use of learning outcomes in assessment. This was supported by qualitative data, which offer explanation of the quantitative findings and gave a deeper insight into the views and opinion of the teaching staff in the process. Case Study 2 also used both quantitative and qualitative data. Again the quantitative served to support the qualitative within an additional function of showing changes in performance patterns in terms of grades as and when the assessment model was implemented. Figure.3.3 shows the data types (which are explained in further detail in the relevant Case Studies Chapters).

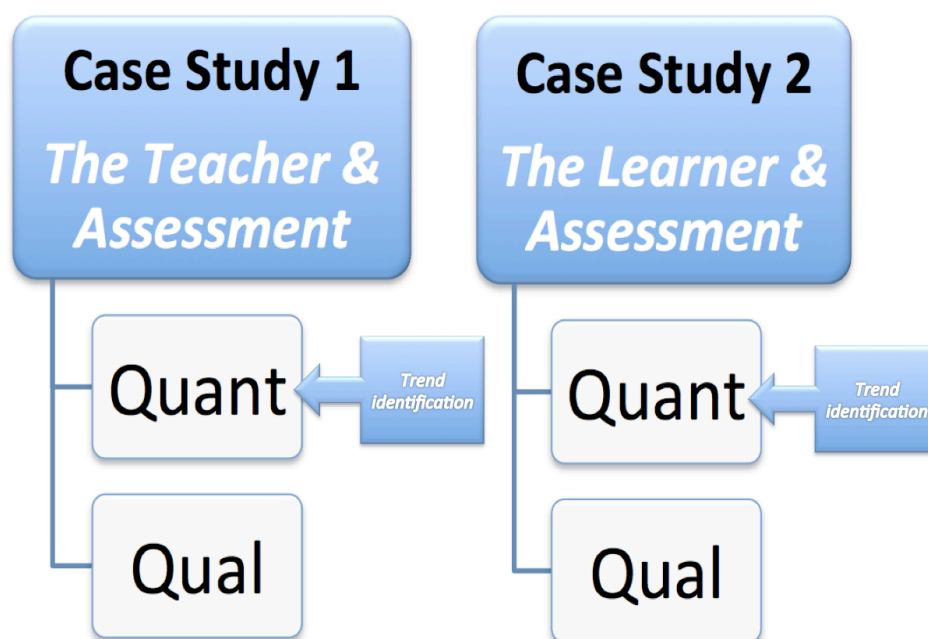


Figure.3.3: Embedded, within-stage case study model

Each case is bounded in time, including all participant communications between the start and end of the study they are a part of. The bounded nature of the cases is discussed in the next Chapter (Ch.3) in greater detail. Both Case Studies 1 & 2 commenced in September 2008 and ended in February 2012. The research within the case studies represents 8 academic

semesters and covers a period of 4 years. The approach to analysing these Cases is further described in the next Chapter (Ch.4: Handling the Data and Data Analysis).

3.7 CASE STUDY PROCESS AND INSTRUMENTS

This research emerged out of an initial research study aimed at improving the implementation of an assessment strategy within my own teaching context. In 2008 I also had begun to examine the views and perceptions of my peers in DCU specifically in relation to the link between deep and surface learning relating to assessment instruments, systems and procedures as a consequence of the introduction of the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) process. The initial findings from the staff research began to generate some interesting questions relating to curriculum reform and the influence of a revised approach to teaching and learning in the university driven by the parallel process of academic reform through the curriculum. It was at this point I decided to find out if there were any linkages to the questions arising and the possible context of these developments. Figure 3.4 shows how the initial research phases influenced the creation of the research question, which in turn developed the case studies into longitudinal four-year mini-cases (Stake, 1995).

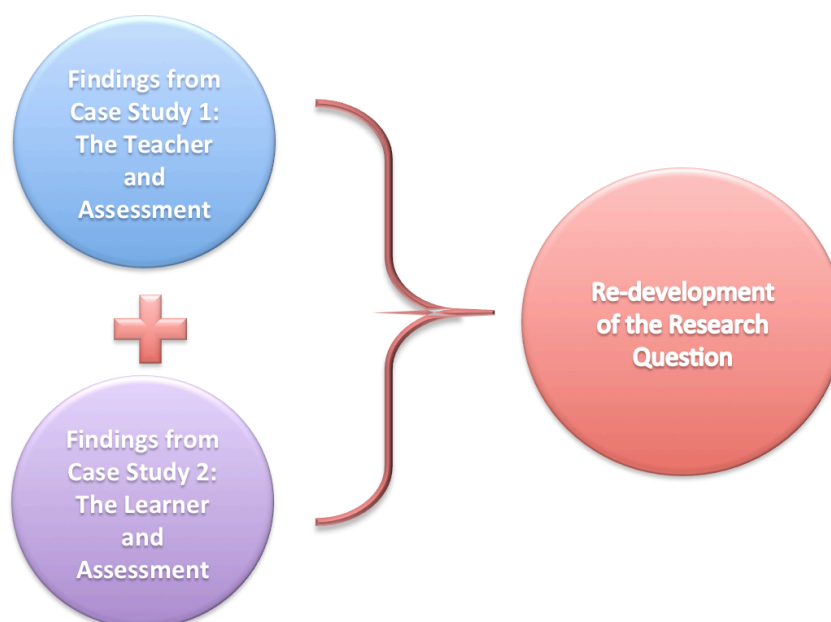


Figure 3.4: Origins and redevelopment of the research question

3.7.1 CASE STUDY 1 - THE TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A total population of 400 was chosen for each of the two phases of this case study, showing a 68% response rate in Phase 1 and 63% in Phase 2. Phase 1 (2008-2009) of this case study began with a simple piece of research that aimed at conducting an audit of DCU's academic staff's perceptions of their assessment practices and their relationships to the systemic process in 2008. 200 staff surveys were sent out, and 137 were completed (68% response rate). The initial reconnaissance was carried out by questionnaires. As the Case developed, the data gathered helped inform the global research process through the feedback loops built in to the development of an *assessment model* that could be implemented embracing the Bologna and AFI ideals. The original outcomes focused on the views regarding the principles and concepts of assessment as well as the practical aspects of the use of assessment instruments within the university.

The first phase of the research had a significant impact of how the research developed over the next three to four years. Part of the longitudinal aspect of the research was significant as the research could also examine if any changes in assessment and feedback practices (relating to the assessment of learning outcomes) had occurred, as the AFI process was rolled-out. Phase 2 of the research (2009-2012) focused again on the principles and concepts of assessment but this time within a vignette examining the practical aspects of curriculum reform. From 2008 to 2011 DCU's Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI) was implemented and this drove and moulded curricula and the subsequent *implementation of a learner-centred outcomes approach to assessment and learning* within the university. Phase 2 also looked at how the DCU teaching staff had changed their approaches to implementing assessment and feedback methods through qualitative inquiry to discover if the AFI process (driven by the national and European policy context) has had an impact on these processes. This phase focused on current practice in 2011-2012. There were 131 out of 200 surveys completed (65.5% response rate). The case study concluded in 2012. The timelines and model of Case Study 1 is represented here in Figure. 3.5 on the following page.

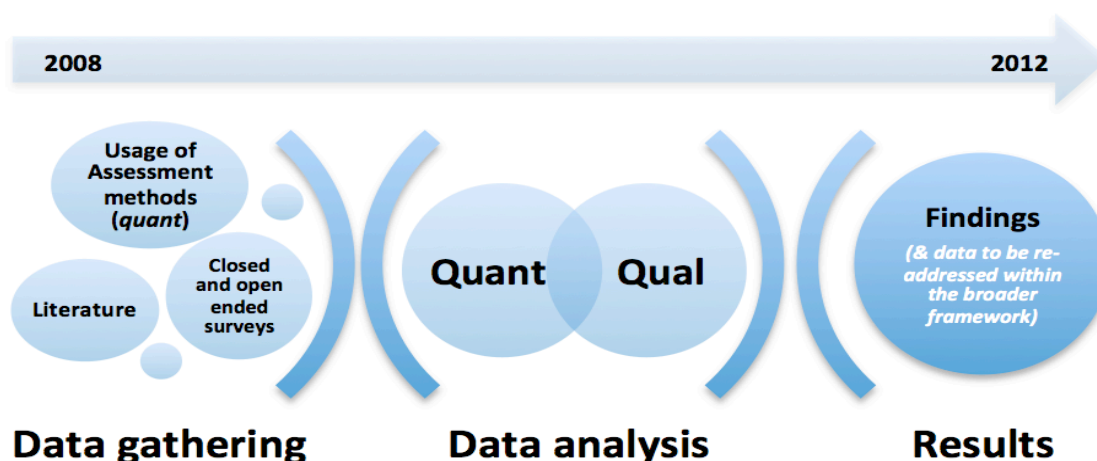


Figure 3.5: Case Study 1 – The Teacher and Assessment

3.7.2 CASE STUDY 2 - THE LEARNER AND ASSESSMENT

This case study (referred to as Case Study 2 – The Learner and Assessment) focused on the outcomes of a four-year process (2008-2012). A total of 600 surveys were analysed and 300 students involved as respondents within the three phases of this case study. This Case Study was conducted in parallel with Case Study 1 but honed the focus of the question down into the 'student experience' thus adding another (often neglected) voice to the research. Specifically the case study aimed at examining why and how a learner-centered assessment model (advocated by the Academic Framework for Innovation - AFI & the Bologna Processes) could be introduced into the overall curriculum that embraced the learning outcomes approach without reducing these to mere *threshold concepts* (Meyers & Land in Rust, (2003), thus enabling the learners to make sense of knowledge through reflection, professional decision-making and engagement. The case study through evaluative processes and triangulation of the data aimed to seek a common truth between the methods employed within the process. The research question within this case hoped to enquire if the revised assessment model could help students develop a positive attitude towards assessment, initiate reflective processes and equip themselves with knowledge transferable not only outside of the module but also to professional contexts of practice. Nel Noddings (2004, p.161) argues that 'it is not the job of teachers simply to secure demonstrable learning on a pre-specified set of objectives' and that the teacher role cannot be reduced merely to a set of skills. As the focus within Case Study 2 was with students within DCU, Phase 1 & 2 dealt with student teachers so the relevance of teachers within the research should be contextualised within the Case but not necessarily expanded upon within the larger study, as the relevance is minimal. Hogan (2004, p.20) adds that teaching is to be understood as a 'human practice, not just as a repertoire of

competencies (sic) to be mastered, transmitted and shared’. Figure 3.6 shows the model applied as an embedded Case Study in the mixed methods methodology.

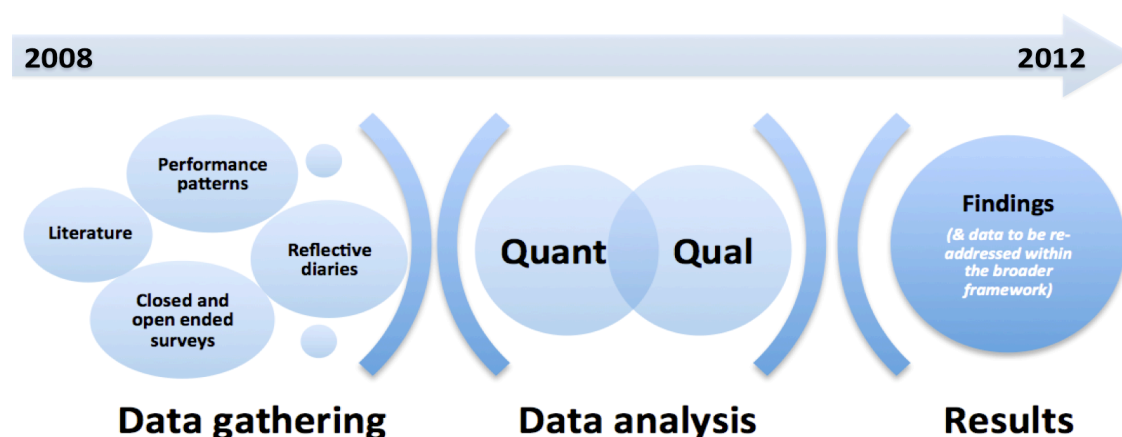


Figure 3.6: Case Study 2 – The Learner and Assessment

Chapter 8 outlines the purpose, method and findings from each of the study years (within Case Study 2): 2008-2009 (Phase 1), 2009-2010 (Phase 2) and 2010-2012 (Phase 3). As the focus of the case was on the learners, the context of these students was relevant, as all of them are ‘education’ students aiming to or already working in the education field. The case study also acknowledges the professional role of the teacher, and refers to the literature on teacher competences, as well as looking at progressive pedagogies for use in teacher education.

Through this case study the research aimed to highlight how *multiple voices within the reflective evaluation process can contribute significantly to the restructuring and development of the future curriculum and assessment model*. The overarching parameters of the research were designed to challenge the concept of assessment as a product and also challenge the mechanistic assessment models associated with the measurement of learning outcomes.

These research parameters are described in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: The research parameters and delimiters

RESEARCH PARAMETERS: CASE STUDY 2 – THE LEARNER AND ASSESSMENT	
	A shift of emphasis from assessment product to assessment process;
	The development of a shared understanding of assessment criteria;
	The establishment of a mutual relationship between assessors and assessees based on commitment and trust;
	Heightened students and teachers’ self-awareness both in personal (efficacy) and professional (competence) terms.

3.8 INTERVIEWS

Within the Mixed or multi-methods approach to data gathering is the interview. Within this context Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) suggests that the interview, 'helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone (p.9). Interviewing is a way to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. Kvale (1996) described interviews as:

an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes (sic) the social situatedness of research data

(ibid, p. 14).

Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views. Interviewees are given the opportunity to discuss their perceptions and views or certain situations. It is a chance for interviewees to go beyond the facts and express their points of view, which are entangled with emotions, history and personal experience. Within the broader qualitative domain, the interview, 'is the most prominent data collection tool...it is a very good way of accessing peoples perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch, 2009, p.144). Although interviews are basically about asking questions and receiving answers Keith Punch suggests that there is much more to it than that. The purpose of the interview will determine the utility of the data. There are many types of interviews and interview techniques. Patton (2002) distinguishes between three types of interview, the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardised open-ended interview. Lee and Fielding (1996) describe this in terms of standardised, semi-standardised, and non-standardised. The relative differences in these approaches are to do with the level of structure within the interview design, and how deep the interview tries to go (Punch, 2009). Minichiello et al., (1990) offer a clear model for conducting interviews and their uses. An adaptation of this continuum is shown below in Figure 3.7.

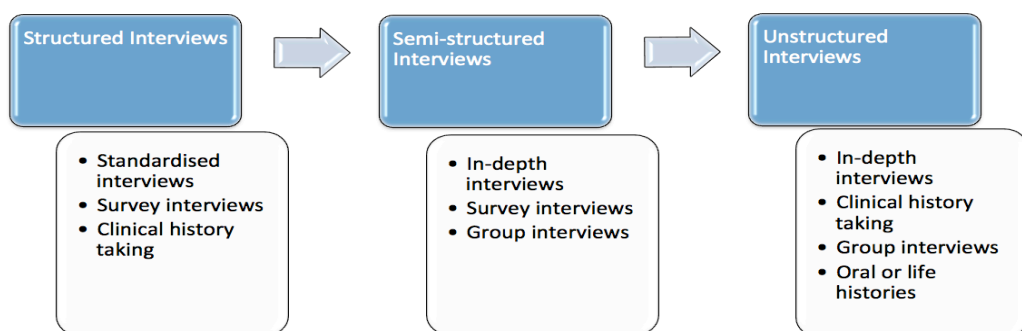


Figure 3.7: The continuum model for interviews (Adapted from Minichiello et al., 1990, p.89)

Within this research design the interview forms one of the pillars of data and therefore its function is to add additional meaning and perspective to the research questions. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), said about the interview, 'the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable', (p. 267). The interview approach for this study therefore used a point between unstructured and structured. Creswell's concurrent triangulation (2003) approach was used to analyse the interviews and relate this back to the other mixed (multiple) methods approach to analysis. See Chapter 4 for the analysis approach used for these interviews.

3.8.1 SELECTING INTERVIEWEES (SAMPLING)

Creswell (2007) discusses the importance of selecting the appropriate candidates for interviews. He asserts that the researcher should use one of the various types of sampling strategies such as criterion based sampling or critical case sampling (among many others) in order to obtain qualified candidates that will provide the most credible information to the study. Given (2008) suggests that, 'criterion sampling' should involve searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criterion, (Vol.2, p.697). Creswell (2007) suggests the importance of finding participants who will be willing to openly and honestly share information or 'their story' (p. 133). Given again goes on to suggest that 'stakeholder sampling' may be useful in the context and policy analysis from historical perspectives.

This strategy involves identifying who the major stakeholders are who are involved in designing, giving and receiving, or administering the program (sic) or service being evaluated, and who might otherwise be affected by it

(Given, 2008, Vol.2, p.697).

The four interviewees used within this study were carefully selected to represent key elements of the study. These stakeholders were chosen based on their range of knowledge and experience of the concept as well as because they all met the criteria of the study. One interviewee is a senior officer in the NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) and was one of the main developers of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications and has written extensively about the role of the Bologna Process in higher education in Europe and Ireland. The three remaining interviewees included the individuals responsible for decisions regarding adopting a learning outcomes approach in DCU and implementation of the AFI process. (All transcripts have been removed from this thesis on recommendation from the Viva Voce panel to protect the anonymity of the interviews and the political sensitivity of their

current and future professional roles).

Due to the nature of the status of each of these interviewees, it was difficult to organise these interviews and therefore an open-ended approach would not have been possible. The benefits of open-ended interviews are that there can often be an opportunity to revisit the interviewee and ask deeper more probing questions (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). This would not have been possible in this case. Semi-structured interviewing, according to Bernard (1988), is best used when you won't get more than one chance to interview someone and when you will be sending several interviewers out into the field to collect data. The framework analysis approach to these interviews is discussed in the next Chapter.

3.9 QUESTIONNAIRES

As discussed previously in this Chapter, questionnaires were used within the Case Studies. These blended both quantitative and qualitative elements, both used to help converge the data. Questionnaires are not among the most prominent methods in qualitative research, because they commonly require subjects to respond to a stimulus, and thus they are not acting naturally. However, they have their uses, especially as a means of collecting information from a wider sample than can be reached by interviews. Though the information is necessarily more limited, it can still be very useful. For example, where certain clearly defined facts or opinions have been identified by more qualitative methods, a questionnaire can explore how generally these apply, if that is a matter of interest. Ideally, there would then be a qualitative 'check' on a sample of questionnaire replies to see if respondents were interpreting items in the way intended. The surveys used quantitative methods to identify trends, which were further explored through the open-ended responses. Surveys within Case Study 1 & 2 used questions to elicit statistics though these statistics were only used for identifying trends. Many of these trends were processed through text analysis software such as SPSS V.10 and Survey Monkey and further represented through an emerging visual method of word-clouds. It should be stressed that any quantitative elements to the surveys were purely about gaining an insight into the phenomena, and are not meant to be comparative or presented as a true follow-up study. Statistical validity and reliability tests were not required as the data was used in a non-parametric manner. Significant reliance on the quantitative aspects of the surveys (presented within the cases studies) would involve large data sets with huge samples using conventional statistical testing. Instrument validity and reliability (both internal and external) therefore was not an issue with these surveys. Contamination bias was not relevant as there were no control groups, though bias should be acknowledged through the qualitative approach. Researcher

bias should be recognised, as the primary data-gathering instrument within qualitative research is the researcher himself.

Traditional positivist research paradigm has taught us to believe that what we are studying often has no personal significance. Or, that the only reason driving our research is intellectual curiosity (which is a valid reason on its own). But more often than not, we have our personal beliefs and views about a topic, either in support of one side of the argument, or on the social, cultural, political sub-texts that seem to guide the development of the argument

(Mehra, 2002, p.2)

3.10 REFLECTIVE DIARIES

In Phase 1 of the research, bounded within Case Study 2, the use of reflective diaries was one of the instruments used to gather data, which could contribute, to the overall development of the Assessment Framework (which the Case Study wished to focus on). The data was entirely qualitative and students gave opinions, views and descriptions of the practical aspects of their experience of assessment as well as their own personal opinions. The diaries had two functions, firstly to act as a pedagogic tool to help encourage the student to begin the process of personal reflection (discussed previously in Chapter 2: Literature Review), but also to act as a validity tool within the research process itself. The nature of the diary entries provided the study with vivid and rich descriptions of the context in which the assessments and the learning experience were taking place. According to Denzin (1989), ‘thick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts....Thin descriptions, by contrast, lack detail, and simply report facts’ (p.83). The benefit of thick descriptions is that they create:

statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus, credibility is established through the lens of readers who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation

(Creswell & Miller, 2000, p.128-129)

Analysis of the Reflective Diaries within the Case Study method used framework analysis and is discussed in the following Chapter (Ch.4).

3.11 EXTANT DATA

With the multi-methods approach the use of extant data can play an important role in providing a macro, and sometimes meso perspective of the other data sets. In this study the case studies (also known as mini-cases) form the dominant source of data at a micro and meso

level. These are self contained, embedded, within-stage studies that have additional functions outside of the study. For example the Cases can provide evaluative and corrective findings that help the learning process itself. The process also can resemble a reflection-on-action cycle similar to that of an action research approach as described in the Literature Review. Chapter 5 and 6 represent the extant data within this study. These chapters provide a detailed description of Policy formation, Communiqués, Declarations, Position papers, Working papers, Government and European Policy statements and so forth. A different analysis approach is employed within these chapters and the historical development of the narrative is designed to let the reader gain a neutral view of the contextual issues relating to the development of a learning outcomes approach to assessment. The critical voices within the chapters come from academics and politicians rather than the researcher. Each Chapter provides the context of the research question and also then uses document analysis techniques and to draw a linear description and narrative to aid the reader through the significant developments that led to the core investigation. These chapters (Ch. 5 & 6) are referred to as *data pillars* in many of the subsequent chapters as they form data in their own right and their distillations are then triangulated with the other Methods to create convergent (and often divergent) results. It should also be pointed out that this study included the ‘traditional’ Literature Review Chapter as a self-contained entity. The Literature itself was drawn through the multi-method approach; this formed an organic core (that was subject to change) but was added-to as the data emerged. The Literature review process was fluid due to the timeline attached to the various research design methods. Therefore, most of the relevant reviewed literature presented, finds its way into, and becomes *integrated* with, other data pillars; i.e., the Case Studies. This closely reflects the nature of the method and the role and place of the literature within it. This is an approach often described within the Grounded Research paradigm (Glaser, 1967).

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In relation to educational research, ethics refers to the search for rules of conduct that enable us to operate defensibly in the political contexts in which we have to conduct educational research (Pring, 2000, p.140). The main ethical debates in qualitative research revolve around the tensions between covert and overt research, and between the public's right to know and the subject's right to privacy. Research in the social sciences usually involves interaction and this interaction usually involved the research trying to find something out. In Education quite often this naturally involves dealing with students and teachers. Research by its nature is an intrusive process, in which the methods used such as interviews; questionnaires focus groups, observation, etc., can cause an impact and influence the participants being questioned.

Therefore ethical and political issues will inevitably arise. If we enter into people's lives and ask them questions about their lives then we have a responsibility to be sensitive in the uses of the findings. We have ethical obligations to our colleagues, students and larger society (Berg, 2004). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the main aspects of ethics within research to relate to *Informed consent, Deception, Privacy and confidentiality* and *Accuracy* (pp.144-145). Within the Case Studies each of the questionnaires had *informed consent* procedures built into each survey. Students could opt in or out of the research process on a voluntary basis. They were assured that no penalties or conditions would be imposed whether they participated or not within the study. The purposes of the studies were clearly communicated to the respondents and they were assured that there was not an act of *Deception* in the usage of the data. Respondents were also informed that the data would be held securely and would not be used by anyone other than the principal researcher. All means would be employed to ensure the *security and privacy* of the data and the details of the respondents. Respondents within the Case Studies were informed on a yearly basis of the outcomes of the analysis of the surveys and presentations were made to the classes in question outlining the initial research findings. This function again had a dual process. Firstly it acted as a mechanism for member checking. Member checks are argued to be a key to establishing the accuracy and credibility of many types of qualitative research, and they can indeed act in this way (Creswell, 1998). Secondly it helped encourage a buy-in within the research group as they could see how the results were being used to inform the next part of the curriculum reform process. This ensured accuracy of the results so that the data would be regarded as externally as well as internally valid (Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.145). Within DCU itself in 2009 the DCU Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for the case studies to go ahead. The interviews were transcribed and anonymised to ensure privacy and security issues. Interviewees were given transcripts of their interviews to view and amend if they so wished. This process of *Member Checking* (Creswell, 2003) helps ensure validity of the design.

3.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The research question informed the rationale for the decision to construct the research methodology outlined in this Chapter. Much has been written about the methodological approaches within the qualitative domain, and many models and formulae have been developed. It was important therefore to understand the basis of these models and viewpoints before making decisions about a research method. In this case the cue was taken from the question.

To date, the development of mixed methods theory has involved a dynamic interplay with creative practice in highly practical fields and with the felt limits of traditional theory in fields with strong disciplinary theoretical traditions. This has been generative and productive for the field, will likely continue to be so as the field develops, and so should be actively encouraged and nurtured

(Green, 2008, p.8)

The work of Jennifer Greene and John Creswell illuminated my decision to choose this approach. It became clear after the issues of reconciling the use of case studies within the mixed model were resolved, and after my conversation with Professor Stake, that a mixed model approach would work for this study. Mixed method or mixed model approaches seemed to be the most appropriate method to address the research question. Getting the balance between the data pillars and the balance within the mix in terms of quantitative and qualitative would be important. Based on the mixed method approach a model was developed that had the Case Studies embedded within the overall framework. Figure 3.8 on the following page shows the research methodology model applied to the overall study.

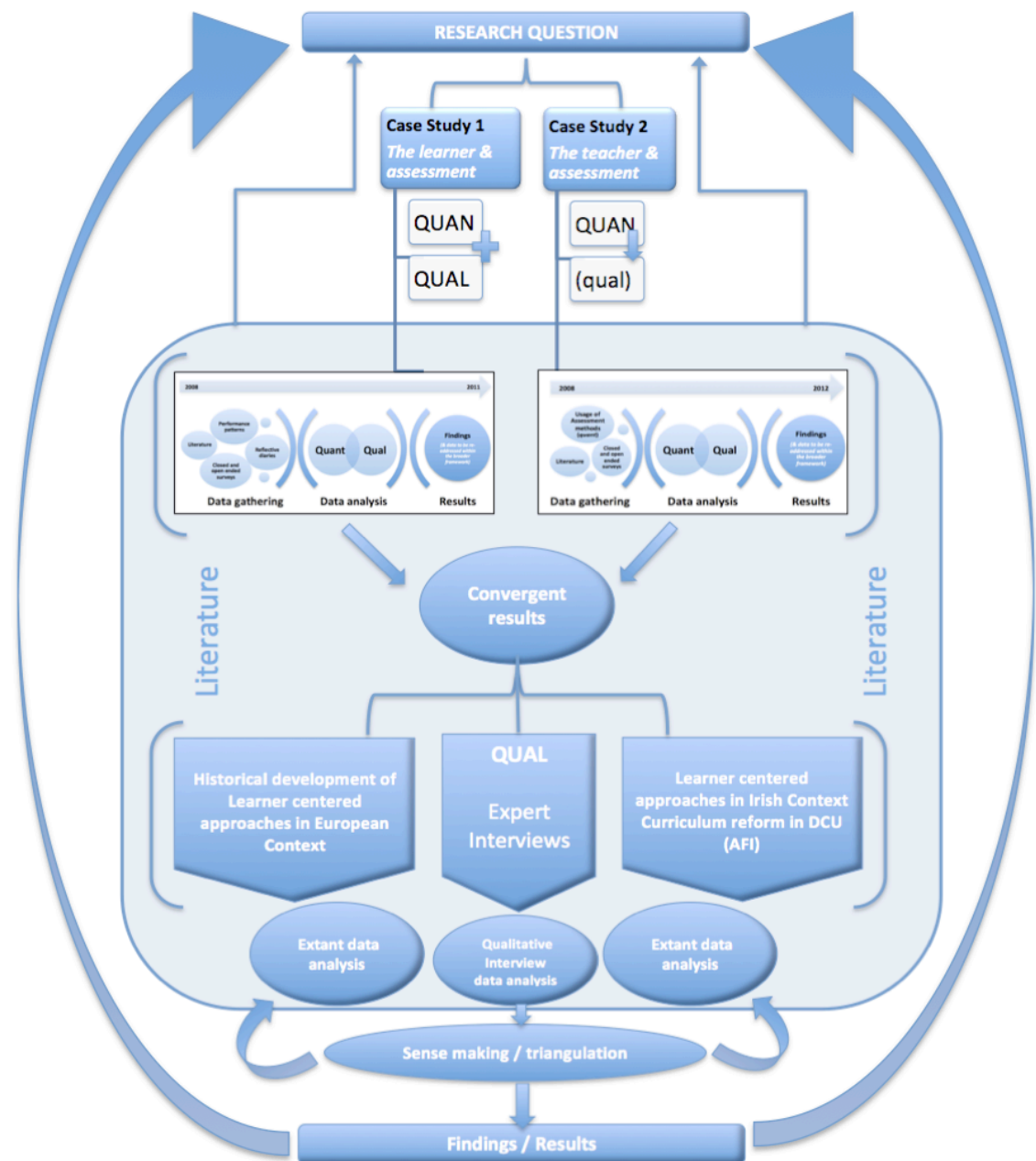


Figure 3.8: Research Design Model

In 2007 Creswell and Plano Clark argued that the ‘consistent and systematic use of the term ‘mixed methods’ to describe research that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, methods and data will encourage the research community to see mixed methods research as distinct, and increasingly used by researchers’ (p.6).

When a researcher asks a question that cannot be answered using single methods, the research outcomes may be improved by using more than one method. This occurs when the phenomenon is complex or when, for instance, the researcher wants to explore a question at the macro- (eg. the group) level as well as at the micro (eg. the individual) level researchers need to describe both minutely and globally

(Morse & Niehaus, 2009, p13)

This Chapter outlined how the research question could be investigated through the lens of research. Foremost to that was to outline my epistemological and ontological viewpoints through the various research paradigms. As previously stated my own experience conducting research has mainly been through the qualitative/interpretive domain and in order to gain a larger perspective and clearly provide an answer to my research question I knew from the earlier stages of this research that I would need to back this up with quantitative data too. These mixed methods emerged from my investigation into selecting and choosing a stance. The pragmatic approach suited my own philosophical lens as well as the research question. The literature informed me that I shared the views and ideas of Creswell (1998, 2003), Yin (2003), Stake (1995), Tashakkori & Teddlie, (2003) in relation to the use of mixing models and mixed methods. The following Chapter closely relates to this one and continues to outline how the mixed (multiple) methods approach was used in the *analysis* phases. Separating this into another Chapter helps inform the reader of the relationship between methodology, method and the data collection tools with the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

HANDLING THE DATA & DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter discussed the range of arguments regarding the value of mixing research methods, ‘many of which centre on the concept of triangulation and its value in validating data or analysis, or in gaining a fuller picture of the phenomenon under study’ (Mason, 2006, p.10). This Chapter aims to outline how the data was approached and analysed within the complex model of multiple methods. This study has several data sources, some situated in a methodology of their own (i.e.: Case Studies) and some stand-alone, and this can add greater complexity to the analysis process. However to add clarity to the process involved it is important to look at the methodological model used within this study (see Figure: 4.1).

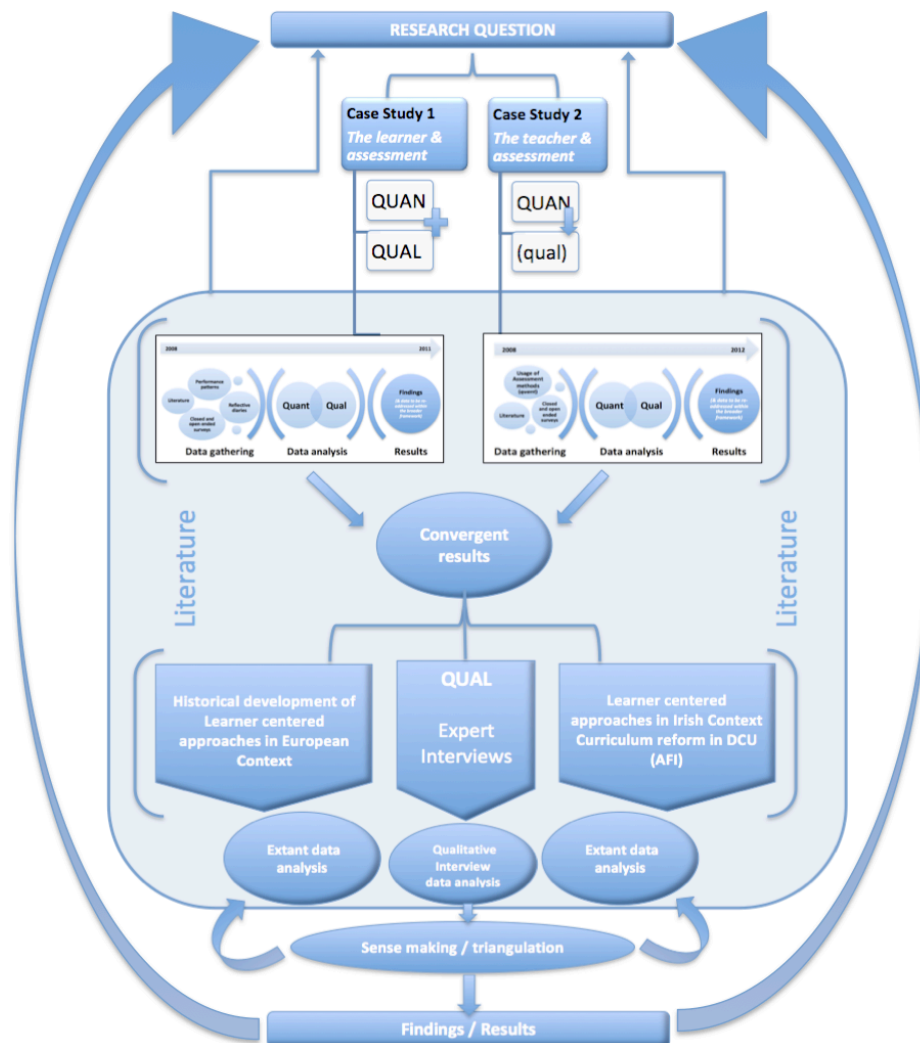


Figure 4.1: Research Methodology (data sources)

This study involves a range of methods, each with a unique context and boundedness. Therefore these methods form part of the larger research question. The multi-method approach highlighted in the Methodology Chapter describes the rationale for each. In terms of data analysis this chapter aims to offer an insight into how the data was handled, approached and described. The Chapter outlines issues with the overarching methodology, Multiple Method Research, and offers a deeper look at each method within this framework. The methods that required analysis were:

- Interviews
- Case Studies
 - Reflective Diaries
 - Surveys
 - Qualitative
 - Quantitative (trend identification)
- Extant Data: Policy and Historical Documents (*in Summary section*)

The rationale for using multiple methods is connected to issues of truth, validity and triangulation. In a study such as this there are multiple viewpoints and also multiple layers of exploration that need to be represented. These layers are not always on the same level. Therefore different approaches suit different levels, such as the local and global, or micro and macro. In the case of this research the macro is the European context of the study and the micro is the local, at institutional level and right down to my teaching practices. Between this is also the 'meso' perspective and this where the AFI process comes into the research context. Jennifer Mason (2006) makes a case for this choice of approach to the data. She suggests that there are two reasons: that, 'social experience and lived realities are multi-dimensional' and this being the case our comprehension of phenomena are lessened, 'and may be inadequate if we view these phenomena only along a single dimension' (ibid, p.10). Secondly she suggests that from the social aspect (and multi-dimensional) lives are lived, experienced and enacted simultaneously on macro and micro levels. She goes on to pose an interesting analogy between multiple methods and dualism related to the micro-macro.

The idea of micro-macro is of course a social scientific construction, and to a greater or lesser (and always contested) extent it may be seen to mirror other social scientific dualisms, including public versus private, sociocultural or collective versus individual, structure-agency, object-subject, structure- field-habitus, and even quantitative-qualitative

(Mason, 2006, p.12).

Like Mason, researchers should be less concerned with ‘theoretical wrangles’ about how we should conceptualise these dualisms than with the, ‘point that lived experience transcends or traverses them and, therefore, so should our methods’ (ibid, p.12). Rather than focusing on the theoretical contradictions that relate to the nature of triangulation and parallels, Mason subscribes to the notion of ‘qualitative thinking’ in the context of a starting point than a framework, ‘and as a way of transcending boundaries rather than reinforcing them’ (ibid). Using multiple methods to converge data is simply logical thinking and it is ‘ultimately more helpful to think in terms of multi-dimensional research strategies that transcend or even subvert the so-called qualitative-quantitative divide’ (ibid).

4.2 VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

Within the mixed methods model of research much has been written, particularly within the qualitative domain about issues regarding validity. Does the account provided by the researcher stand-up to scrutiny, and is it accurate, can it be trusted, and is it credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)? The data analysis approach to this study uses an analysis of the data derived from all the component parts of the research. The convergent and cyclical nature of the research model (see Fig.4.1) ensures that the research process develops over time. The case studies, the interviews, the extant data all offer relevant data which is in turn analysed and interpreted to help gain meaning and seek the truth (Leedy & Ormond, 2001). Creswells’ six-stage (2003, pp.191-193) approach to analysing data for qualitative research formed the original basis for the main approach to analysis. Table 4.1 outlines the steps involved.

Table 4.1: Creswell’s six-step data analysis process

STEP	ACTION
Step 1	Organise and prepare the data
Step 2	Read through all the data
Step 3	Begin a detailed analysis with a coding process
Step 4	Use a coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis
Step 5	Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative
Step 6	Make an interpretation or meaning from the data

At a ‘meso’ level each data pillar utilised an adapted version of Creswell’s six-stages analysis

process model (2003). However in order to use convergent results the analysis model was adapted to incorporate a parallel analysis process within the Mixed Model approach. During subsequent stages of the analysis a concurrent approach was used. This concurrent process helped highlight issues that could be reintegrated into either of the parallel Case Studies and thus re-examined. This approach to validity and reliability was one of the strengths of the study. Creswell (2003) described the ‘concurrent triangulation’ method (approach) as the most familiar mixed method approach. Within this method concurrent triangulation aims to use different methods concurrently to triangulate findings within a single study or case study. Qualitative and quantitative approaches, employed separately in a single data-collection phase, moderate the weaknesses inherent in each, while making use of their respective strengths to provide insights; analysis integrates these insights into a single narrative. The model is an adaption of Creswell’s (2003) Concurrent Triangulation as represented in Figure 4.2:

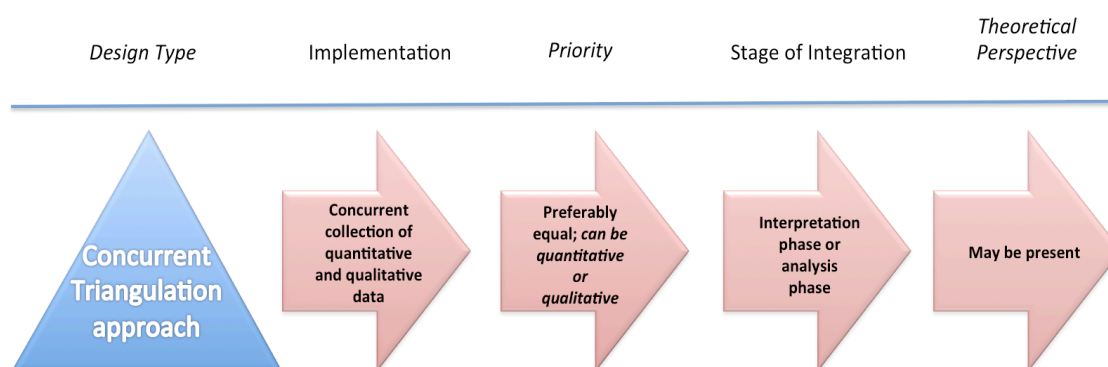


Figure 4.2 Concurrent triangulation approach with the Case Studies

Adapted from Creswell (2003, p.179)

This approach proved to be the most suitable for the overall analysis and lent itself well to the analysis from the interviews process. In order to add rigour and reliability to this approach Jick’s (1979) convergent *validation approach* helped to the make meaning of the data.

The qualitative data generated from the Reflective diaries, the interviews and the open-ended questions within the case studies used a framework analysis model. Framework analysis has been used in a multitude of settings. Although primarily used in health care setting (Gerrish, Chau, Sobowale & Birks, 2004; Read, Ashman, Scott, & Savage, 2004) it has also been used in the assessment of information retrieval from the Internet (Balley, et al., 2004), and in an educational study on student performance (Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read 2005). These users have stressed that framework analysis is deemed appropriate for the following reasons:

- Primarily based on the observation and accounts of the participants.
- It is a dynamic that allows the change or addition or amendment throughout the process.
- It is systematic in that it allows a methodical treatment of the data.
- Comprehensive in nature.
- The access to original textual data demonstrates its transparency, which allows others to formulate judgments.

Framework analysis is flexible during the analysis process in that it allows the user to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage the gathered data is sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Framework analysis involves a five-step process:

- Familiarisation;
- Identifying a thematic framework;
- Indexing;
- Charting;
- Mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

This method allowed Creswell's concurrent triangulation (2003) model to be utilised to revisit the other emergent themes drawn from the interviews the extant data and the literature.

4.3 TRIANGULATION

Triangulation is broadly defined by Denzin (1978)) as, 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (p. 291). Just at the emergence of the concept of mixed methodologies in research, Todd Jick (1979) in his article '*Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action*', suggested that there was growing recognition within social science that methods that advocate the use of multiple methods can aid validity of the design through triangulation. He described this approach as one of convergent methodologies (p.602). Others used the terminology, multimethod or multitrait (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Jick insisted that convergent validation was just another name for 'triangulation' (Webb et al., 1966). Leeuw & Vaessen (2009) suggest that, triangulation is a key concept that embodies

much of the rationale behind doing mixed methods research and represents a set of principles to fortify the design, analysis, and interpretation of findings' (p.36). As this more contemporary definition suggests, there are different types of triangulation. Mikkelsen, (2005) outlines 5 types of triangulation within research:

1. Data triangulation—To study a problem using different types of data, different points in time, or different units of analysis
2. Investigator triangulation—Multiple researchers looking at the same problem
3. Discipline triangulation—Researchers trained in different disciplines looking at the same problem
4. Theory triangulation—Using multiple competing theories to explain and analyze a problem
5. Methodological triangulation—Using different methods, or the same method over time, to study a problem

(ibid, p.96-97)

In the context of this study, using a triangulated approach ensured validity of the data. The research presented here used this concept of *convergent validation* (Jick, 1979) as a method of triangulation to ensure validity. Bouchard (1976) suggested that the 'convergence or agreement between two methods enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact (sic)', (p.268). This type of triangulation is labeled by Denzin (1978) as the, 'between (or across) methods' (p.302) type. Jick (1979) again illustrates what he calls the continuum of triangulation design. He uses the diagram to illustrate that research design can go from simple to complex and the triangulation methods associated with each has a specific function. Figure 4.3 outlines Jick's Continuum (p.3).

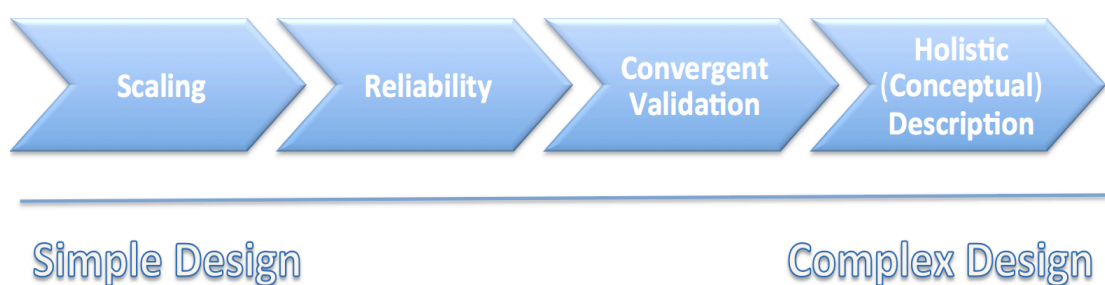


Figure 4.3: Todd Jick's continuum of triangulation design

The complexity of multiple method analysis should not be understated. Like many aspects of qualitative research the choices the researcher makes in choosing and selecting data will ultimately affect the interpretation of the results. Phillips (1971) oversimplified definition of convergence in data analysis, through multiple methods, does not take this bias or researcher preference into consideration. He says: 'different measures of the same construct were shown to yield similar results' (p.19). Jick (1979) urges caution, as he suggests that multiple

confirmations of findings may appear routine and if there is congruence, it presumably is apparent. Through practice, though, there are few rules for ordering micro-macro data in order to determine congruence or validity. He furthers this argument by asking if all components of a multi-method approach should be weighted equally. If so then on what basis should the data be weighted? Given the differing nature of researcher bias and reliability of the data collection the outcomes are likely to have some subjectivity.

While statistical tests can be applied to a particular method, there are no formal tests to discriminate between methods to judge their applicability

(Jick, 1979, p.207)

Bias will always be present in research, it is inevitable but as long as one acknowledges this then the truth can be formulated with this in mind. In relation to analysing the Case Studies within this research, Robert Stake in Denzin & Lincoln (2005) acknowledges that though no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation can serve to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the case is being seen by the researcher and the other stakeholders. Case Studies are interested in 'diversity of perception, even the multiple realities within which people live. Triangulation helps identify different realities' (p.453), and thus is a solid form of validity.

4.4 ANALYSING THE CASE STUDIES

The Case Studies (Chapter 7-8) formed the primary source of data for this research. The empirical study conducted over four years used qualitative and quantitative data to generate meaning and truth. Leedy & Ormond (2001) suggest that the:

researchers only perception of Truth is various layers of truth-revealing fact. In the layer closest to the Truth are the primary data - these are often the most valid and most illuminating, the most truth manifesting

(p.95)

This is the situation within this study, as the Case Studies (forming one of the pillars of data) form the method closest to the so-called 'truth'. This 'truth' is situated at the micro level where the implementation policy occurs. Another important aspect of using a Case Study as a method within a method is the very nature of the balance between quantitative results and interpretations through a qualitative lens and the quantifiable aspects of qualitative output. If all research requires reasoning (Leedy & Ormond, 2001), then a deductive and an inductive approach must further the researchers cause of 'truth-seeking'. The quantitative elements within the instruments helped the researcher presuppose a certain premise and thus the

testing of this premise through deductive reasoning through the identification of patterns and trends in the statistics. The qualitative approach on the other hand makes considerable use of inductive reasoning ‘they make any specific observations and then draw inferences about larger and more general phenomena’ (Leedy & Ormond, 2001, p.103). The two data types (quantitative and qualitative) act in a symbiotic way to compliment, challenge, contradict and converge with each other. The quantitative findings presented as tables and statistics are designed to illuminate and identify trends, which were further explored through the qualitative lens of open-ended questions. A framework analysis model again was adopted for analysing this data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood & Read, 2005).

4.4.1 BOUNDING THE CASE

The case studies presented in this research make up the ‘impact’ aspect of the question being studied. Therefore it is imperative that these cases are bound by their own context, and that the data does not try to be generalised in the broader research question. The results or findings within the case study are presented within the case study Chapters (7-8), as this bounds the results in context to the micro. Methodological rigour is discussed within the Case Studies Chapter themselves. The Case Studies are situated in their own context and there is a need to provide an overall understanding of the research question and contextualise this as an interpretive understating which in turn supports the belief in the need for a more constructivist approach to define the Cases. In relation to research within context, writers such as Lee (1991) who view that quantitative research is the true measurable form (or research) have much to learn about the rich aspects of using contextualised qualitative approaches. Lee, (1991) said:

The positivist approach makes the claim that its methods--the methods of natural science--are the only truly scientific ones, while the interpretive approach makes the counterclaim that the study of people and their institutions calls for methods that are altogether foreign to those of natural science

(p.350)

4.4.2 REFLECTIVE DIARIES

The approach to analysing the reflective diaries was the same as the approach used to analyse the interviews within the larger study. Chapter 9 offers an insight into this analysis process and the stages and models used to analyse the data. As these ‘reflective diaries’ were part of the students actual portfolio for assessment there are issues regarding the *Freedom of Information*

and usage which were carefully addressed with the informed consent and 'ethical aspects of the study. This is discussed later in the Chapter at section 4.5. Once again a framework analysis model again was adopted for analysing this data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read, 2005).

4.4.3 QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE SURVEYS

Within the two embedded case studies presented within the larger study, the mixed (multiple) methods consist of questionnaires administered to a range of stakeholders as well as performance indicators and evaluations. In both case studies the questionnaires are posed as qualitative tools, though parts of the questionnaires themselves have quantitative outputs in terms of statistics, percentages and Likert scales etc. In Case Study 2 there was a total of six questionnaires administered over a four-year period (See APPENDIX D1: Volume 2) totalling 600 surveys involving 300 student respondents. The details of the populations and response rates are outlined in Chapter 8 itself. The surveys were used at the beginning (N=300) of the delivery of the module (unit of study) within the BSc in Education and Training Programme in DCU. These questionnaires were designed through qualitative means to ascertain the level of experience students had of conducting, assessing and using assessment frameworks. The surveys administered at the end of the module (N=300) used quantitative and qualitative questions. These surveys included questions regarding satisfaction rates, opinions, emotions, and anxiety all of which were used to triangulate the qualitative elements, which were built into the pre and post surveys. Both Case Studies (Chapter 7 & 8) use an *embedded approach* as advocated by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), see Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3). Each questionnaire was designed and administered online through Survey Monkey, and the quantitative and statistical data was outputted to Excel and SPSS V.20 for analysis and representation to identify trends (represented through the use of 'word-clouds' as described in previous chapter) for further qualitative inquiry. The qualitative data was analysed using Miles and Huberman's (1998) flow model and Creswell's six-stage design (2003) with a framework analysis model. A framework analysis model again was adopted for analysing this data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read, 2005). Examples of the analysis process can see in Figure 4.4 overleaf, and details of all the results are contained at the end of the relevant case study chapters. The raw quantitative and qualitative data from the case study surveys are available in APPENDIX D: Volume 2.

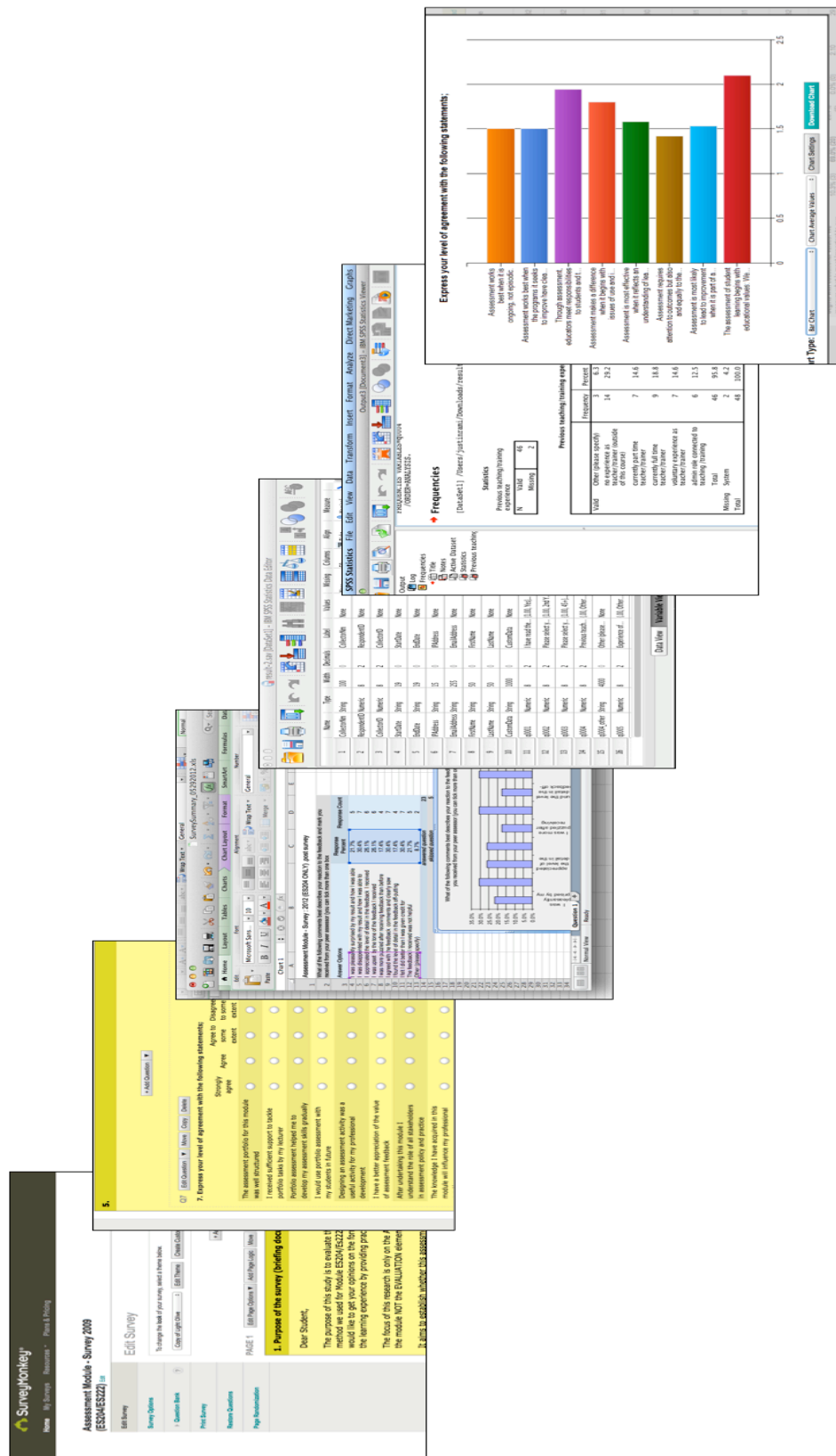


Figure 4.4: identifying trends through the qualitative data using framework analysis

Full details of the results are contained with the concluding Chapters. See APPENDIX B&D: VOLUME 2) for copies of all the Surveys and results used in the Case Studies.

4.5 ANALYSING THE INTERVIEWS & REFLECTIVE DIARIES

The data analysis approach used for the interviews and the Reflective Diaries was based on Creswell's concurrent triangulation (2003) approach and Framework Analysis as discussed in the previous chapter. Miles and Huberman (1984, p.23) present a flow model (Figure 4.5) of presenting and reducing data, which is a very helpful tool for the process taken within this study.

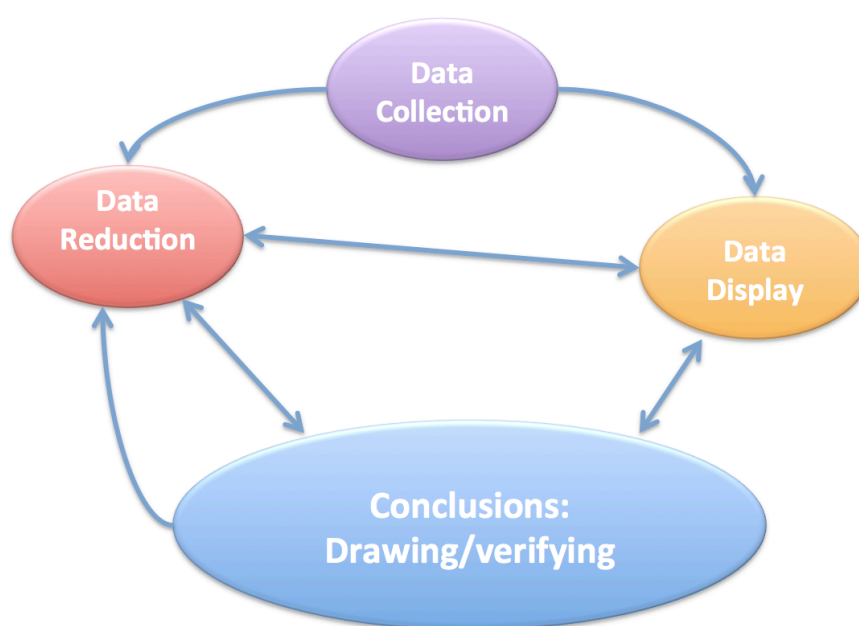


Figure: 4.5 Components of data analysis: flow model (Miles & Huberman, 1998)

Creswell (2003) suggests that understanding the different qualitative research traditions is helpful as he suggests that the researcher choose the levels and depth of the analysis based on the analytical differences depending on the type of design. The interviews referred to in the previous chapter formed a significant contribution to the overall study and were driven by the data analysed through the convergent results of the case studies. The Reflective Diaries only account for a small aspect of the first Phase of Case Study 2 and therefore the process for analysing these is not elaborated specifically here as they follow the same analytical process as the Interview analysis method.

The stages of the Interview analysis used a framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read, 2005) model and again broadly

The model helped gain a sense of the patterns and clusters emerging, colour codes were used to aggregate findings of convergent and divergent aspects of each interview as well as how they relate to the other data and each other (if at all). The final *clustering and grouping of themes, coded narratives and a category*, was also used as part of the concurrent triangulation process and the data was traceable through the page/line numbering, time-stamping and interviewee reference column as represented in Figure 4.7 below. Details of the codes used and the explanations of each are presented in a table in Chapter 9: *Expert Interviews*.

THEME: AFI – Curriculum reform (SC/ Bologna) (S/C Learning Outcomes)

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Page/Line	Timestamp	Category /	Theme	subthemes
So I think from the university sector's point of view, it was, as many things were, it was kind of light touch, so you were encouraged and hoped that you would, but it wasn't mandated. I mean, you kind of, ultimately you were going to have to, but that's not what they were saying.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/50-53	3:09	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
[3:27] So, I mean, a very good example of that is that when UCD did the Horizons program and moved to learning outcomes, they used the Dublin descriptors, not the framework.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/54-56	3:27	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
3:37] And the Dublin descriptors are only supposed to be for aligning frameworks with each other, so they're supposed to be at the meta-level, but they were never designed to be used at the program level or the org level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/57-59	3:37	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
Some people thought of it as a module description like you'd have up on the Web. Some of them thought of it as the course overview you're given your first class.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	11/390-391	25:21			
Well, I suppose the fundamental thing around this is the use of learning outcomes. It's a contested area as you well know. Part of the problem is that as it's being implemented, I suppose for some higher-education institutions or individual academics, they see it as an external thing being imposed upon them. [15:51] The idea really originated in an educational environment. It was never a case that someone in the department of education all over the world, "Let's impose."	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	4-5/164-169	15:17	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
Part of it has to do with, this has been going on in Europe, from an academic perspective with tuning which is very much owned by academics.	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	5/175-176	16:35	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
And the use of learning outcomes as a way of tuning, the Charles Keble, not harmonising curricula. [17:00] So that's a process of reform, if you want to use that term, coming from the institutions.	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	5/177-179	17:00	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform

Figure 4.7: Clustering and grouping themes, codes and categories, 3rd stage of Interview analysis.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter sought to outline how the approach to data analysis was used within the overall study. Firstly an overview of the broader analysis method was posed outlining how Creswell's (2003) concurrent triangulation method was applied to triangulate the data from the Case Studies, the Interviews and the *Historical & Policy related documents*. Within mixed methods it is also important to outline how methods within the methods are also analysed. The Creswell model also was applied for the *Interviews* and the *Reflective Diaries* as well. Miles and Huberman's (1984) method of approaching the data in terms of *data-flow* (see Fig.4.5) helped

inform the process and stages involved. Qualitative data utilised a framework analysis approach as it utilised a process that allowed for the data to be revisited through the concurrent analysis model. The framework approach was selected as it:

is grounded or generative, it is heavily based in, and driven by, the original accounts and observations of the people it is about. It is dynamic: it is open to change, addition and amendment throughout the analytical process. It is systematic: allowing methodological treatment of all similar units of analysis. It is comprehensive: allowing a full rather than partial or selective, review of the material collected. It enables easy retrieval: allowing access to, and retrieval of, the original textual material. It allows within-case and between-case analysis: it enables comparisons between, and associations within, cases to be made. It is accessible to others: the analytical process and interpretations derived from it can be viewed and judged by people other than the primary analyst

(Srivastava & Thomson, 2009, p.77)

As this study did not employ a linear process of analysis the Methodology Chapter (Ch.3) outlines how the analysis was fed back into the process through the concurrent triangulation methods. The analysis informed the findings as presented in the final Chapter (Ch.10): 'Non Satis Scire') as well as within the Case Study Chapters (6-7) themselves. As discussed in the previous chapter, all transcripts have been removed from this thesis on recommendation from the Viva Voce panel to protect the anonymity of the interviewees and the political sensitivity of their current and future professional roles (though the anonymised third stage analysis matrices can be viewed in APPENDIX E: Volume 2).

CHAPTER 5

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

(What is) The impact of Europe's Bologna Process on the development of learning & assessment in the context of a higher education Institution in Ireland?

In order to examine the research question in greater depth it is imperative to investigate the context of curriculum reform in DCU and how this has translated into the adoption of learning outcomes approach to assessment. The broader policy framework that triggered a move towards student-centred learning and a learning outcomes approach began with the development of the drive to create a European Higher Education Area otherwise known as the EHEA. This Chapter acts as a pillar of data within the broader study under the strand of extant data. The Chapter aims to outline the historical timeline and policy decisions that come under the framework of the development of the EHEA (which, also included the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent follow-up meetings) by the European Ministers of Educations and their government officials. The Bologna Declaration is a multi-faceted policy document, which is broad and wide reaching. Through ministerial inter-governmental meetings the Declaration had certain areas of priorities based on the needs and desires of the members of the process. This chapter charts this progress and focuses on *how the concept of Learning Outcomes developed as a basis to support the implementation of various Bologna action lines*. The chapter also examines the plan to develop a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (originally by 2010) as part of the Bologna Declaration and examines this in the context of learning outcomes and student-centred learning.

This chapter attempts to chart and discuss this policy framework by first describing the historical developments in Europe and their possible influences on an output-based approach to learning within higher education. The policy agreement signed by European member states in 1999 known as the Bologna Declaration provides an overarching-national context in which this institutional change process is set. A move towards a European knowledge economy and the shift to a learning outcomes approach (through the Bologna Declaration Action Lines) in higher education has all had a bearing on the current trends in teaching and learning in DCU. This chapter attempts to trace developments at the European and national level and goes on to examine the policy decisions and activities that provided the catalyst for the promotion of a learning outcomes approach to curriculum reform. It should be noted that the original Declaration document that became the Bologna Process made no reference to the issues of

student-centered learning until the Prague inter-ministerial meeting. At this meeting in 2001 the concept of lifelong learning and learning outcomes was first mooted. The participating ministers committed themselves to ensure the further development of quality assurance and development of national qualification frameworks. This objective was correlated with the lifelong learning action line, and has particular relevance in relation to the topic of this thesis, the relationship of these policy drivers to student-centred learning, learning outcomes and ultimately assessment. Through this communiqué the social dimension was first introduced

Chapter 6 expands upon this and looks at how the Bologna Action lines have filtered down into Dublin City University's (DCU) institutional strategy and the introduction of the Academic Framework of Innovation (AFI) (2007), linking it to national developments such as the introduction of the (National Framework of Qualifications) NFQ.

5.2 HISTORY

The reform of the European system of higher education began as early as 1988, when university rectors met at the University of Bologna to celebrate its 900th anniversary. They issued the Magna Charta Universitatum which lays down a series of principles to guide policy-makers and allow universities to remain centres of free thought and research, while better serving the cultural integrity and heritage of European societies (MCU, 1988). Ten years later, a meeting of the education ministers of Germany, France, Italy and the UK in Sorbonne, France, produced the joint Sorbonne Declaration, which committed the signatories to 'encouraging a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability' (Sorbonne, 1998). The Declaration continued that, 'we owe our students, and our society at large, a higher education system in which they are given the best opportunities to seek and find their own area of excellence' (Sorbonne, 1998). It is a common misconception that the Bologna Process is a European Union initiative. Though the European Commission is an important contributor to the Bologna Process, the Lisbon Recognition Convention was actually prepared by the Council of Europe and members of the Europe Region of UNESCO. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched along with the Bologna Declarations 10th anniversary, in March 2010, during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. As the main objective of the Bologna Process since its inception in 1999, the EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. From 1999 to 2010 all the efforts of the Bologna Process members were targeted at creating the European Higher Education Area and this became reality with the Budapest-Vienna Declaration of March 2010. However the process is by no means complete. The European Commission suggested that the overall picture in 2010 revealed that

substantial progress had been made in all the areas of the Bologna Process, and the benefits of enhanced European cooperation brought about through the Bologna process were evident.

The Bologna process has sometimes been referred to as 'Objective 2010' (EUA, 2008, p.1). In its brochure, *Europe's New Higher Education Landscape* (2008), the EUA stated that all of the following would change by 2010:

1. A European Higher Education Area with three cycles (Bachelors, Masters, PhDs)

All European universities deliver degrees based on a three cycle structure with generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes, competencies and credits for qualifications within the first and second cycle.

2. A shift from a degree structure based on years of study to a credit and a term system

3. *From a teaching to a student-centred approach*

4. *From an input-based approach to learning outcomes*

(ibid, p.8)

Point 3 and 4 of this statement are at the crux of this research. In Jean-Marc Raap's foreword in the EUs Trends³ 2010 report, *A Decade of Change in European Higher Education*, he paints a positive picture regarding the progress of the Bologna Process:

Trends 2010 confirms that the Bologna decision-making method – voluntary, cooperating with higher education, students, and other actors – has led to clear advances. Some of the most concrete and rapid changes include the reform of Doctoral education and the European QA framework, both led by the stakeholders. Similarly, the success of national implementation has been often predicated on the involvement of higher education institutional actors and students in national policy development.

(Jean-Marc Raap in Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.4)

Raap goes on to describe the Process development in the current European context:

Some changes have been slower to effect because they involve a range of conditions – often additional funding – that are not always present. Thus, *the paradigm shift to student-centred learning, which is critical to improving education, represents both a cultural challenge to some teaching traditions and a financial one to address costlier requirements such as human resource development, new classroom infrastructures and smaller student-staff ratios.*

(ibid, p.4)

It could be suggested that as European higher education is dynamic and evolving in a fast changing context, the reform process itself is continually creating new challenges as a

³ TRENDS: EUA's "Trends" reports, have accompanied the Bologna Process from its launch in 1999. Trends reports are well recognised as an essential information and dissemination tool by all stakeholders in the European higher education community.

consequence of the ways in which implementation has been addressed in each country. Thus the need to intensify cooperation at European level is becoming ever more acute, with improved monitoring mechanisms being essential to assess the impact of reforms (Eurodice, 2009). The purpose of the push to develop the EHEA explained in 2007 through the London Communiqué:

Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness

(London Communiqué, 2007)

Within the Bologna Process there are several levels of implementation: at the international level, the national level and, of course, at the level of the individual university. In general, at the international level, Bologna has been a success with regular ministerial meetings and other seminars that have involved a range of stakeholders including the Council of Europe (CE; Brussels, Belgium), the European Commission (EC; Brussels, Belgium), the Bologna Follow-up group, the European Students Union (ESU; Brussels, Belgium) and the European University Association (EUA; Brussels, Belgium). So far, a total of 47 countries out of the 49 countries that have ratified the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe (1954), have signed up to introduce the Bologna reforms, including some in the European Cultural Convention⁴ (ECC) such as the Russian Federation.

David Crosier, Programme Director at the EUA (European University Association), wrote after a meeting in London in 2007 that, 'it is extraordinary that an agenda for higher education reform is even being discussed, let alone shared and agreed upon among as many as forty-six countries' (Caddick, 2008, p.19). He put the progress down to cooperation because 'no-one, especially governments, institutions and students are threatened by the process, and everyone sees that they have an interest which can be pursued through the process' Similarly, Ján Figel', the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth at the time commented that, 'Bologna is successful because of the commitment which has been shown both by national and regional authorities, and by the stakeholders themselves' (ibid, pp.19-20). Crosier went on to say that there are several issues that still need to be addressed. 'I worry about implementation of reforms, about the lack of attention given to key issues in the change process, about the disparity between discourse on the importance of education compared to

⁴ The European Cultural Convention (ECC) is an international treaty opened for signature by the Council of Europe in Paris on 19 December 1954. Its signature is one of the conditions for becoming a participating state in the Bologna Process and its European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

the investment being made into it,'(ibid, p.19). On the In the Trends 2010 report Crosier stated in relation to the impact of modularisation:

the number of examinations are rather less encouraging with 44% of institutions that have introduced a modularised system reporting an increase in the number of examinations. This indicates that a coherent approach has not always been taken when introducing modularisation and that a student-centred approach needs to be further developed.

(Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.46)

Trends V reported that institutions were slowly moving away from a system of teacher-centred provision and towards a student-centred concept of higher education. It observed that 'understanding and integrating the use of a learning outcome based approach remains a key medium-term challenge' (Trends V, 2010, p.8). The 2010 report said that no data was available on this specific question student centredness, but from previous Trends reports and the data from Trends 2010 'regarding the development of learning outcomes, if taken at face value, are encouraging' (ibid, p.47)

Despite the positive picture painted by Figil, Crosier and Raap (2010), in relation to success within the process of the Bologna process, there do seem to be fractures emerging. Is the focus of the Declaration too broad? Is it simply not possible to get agreement between 47 countries? In his 2010 article, *'Mission Accomplished?- Which Mission? The "Bologna Process"- A View from Germany'* for the *Higher Education Review* Helmut de Rudder suggested that the Bologna Process has now become a 'mission impossible', (p.2) unintentionally creating a more diverse European academy with greater barriers to students. Professor de Rudder argues that it is not easy to assess what has been achieved in the past decade because the process has expanded so rapidly in size and remit. He goes on to suggest that the trend towards greater institutional autonomy means diversity among European universities has increased, making it harder for students to transfer between different institutions within one country, let alone between Bologna member states. In relation to his own country Professor de Rudder said that the introduction of Bologna and a modular higher education system led to, 'chaos of many kinds in most German institutions...statistics show that completion rates have fallen with the new bachelor's programme, and mobility within the first cycle of higher education is also down' (p.12). Professor de Rudder also argued that the 2010 deadline for developing the European Higher Education Area was 'unrealistic from the beginning' (de Rudder, 2010, p.18).

At the Bologna Ireland Conference: *Placing Bologna in Context* in Dublin in 2010 Ligia Deca, coordinator of the Bologna Follow-up Group Secretariat,⁵ emphasised that priorities and objectives had shifted as the Bologna process has developed. She suggested that this was apparent from the changes in emphasis in the post-Leuven work plan for 2009-2012. In the priority areas such as mobility, employability, and lifelong learning, there is an increased focus on ensuring that implementation occurs. The focus of other priorities has also been adjusted; for example, the global dimension is now focused on international openness, while the social dimension emphasises equitable access and completion. She went on to say that there is a renewed focus on the development of multi-dimensional transparency tools and on the encouragement of student-centred learning in higher education.

What we have been losing is the big picture - what does the European Higher Education Area look like after the Bologna Process? What are we aiming at? What is that dreamy, pink reality that everybody is chasing? The existence of a qualification framework? Quality assurance procedures? No, the reality is different and if we don't make people dream about that reality we won't motivate them to work towards it.

(Deca, BFUG, 2010)

Deca (2010) suggested that while much progress has been made in structural reform, the focus of attention and cooperation must now seek to combine national policy-making and system development with the content and reality of implementation in higher education institutions.

As the EU faces an uncertain future in the context of a European and global economic crisis, can the Bologna process carry enough momentum to achieve its long-term goals? Since the inception of the Bologna process:

Higher education institutions have been buffeted by a complex set of international pressures. Foremost among them is the growing importance of knowledge-led economies that have placed higher education at the centre of national competitiveness agendas

(Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.14)

The European Universities Association (EUA) makes it very clear how they view the function of Universities:

Higher education institutions are increasingly viewed by policy makers as 'economic engines' and are seen as essential for ensuring knowledge production through research and innovation and the education and continuous up-skilling of the workforce.

(Ibid)

⁵ Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat supports the work of the Bologna Follow-up Group, within all BFUG sub-structures. The Secretariat provides first draft agendas for BFUG meetings for decision by the BFUG Chairs on which items are to be included for discussion. The Secretariat also plays a significant role in drafting official documents within the European Higher Education Area and provides background discussion documents, liaising with relevant authors as appropriate.

The research question posed for this study seeks to examine if and how the Bologna Agenda has influenced curriculum in practice in DCU. This is examined through studies relating to the use of learning outcomes and assessment, which was one of the main aspects relating to several Action Lines in the Declaration and the subsequent follow up meetings.

...some still mistakenly consider Bologna reforms to be no more than a minor structural adjustment to higher education systems [...] in reality the changes imply a major cultural shift in educational philosophy

(Crosier, 2007, pp.16-17)

If Crosier's statement is true then it is worth examining the facts to see if the 'major shift' has occurred 'on the ground'.

5.3 POLICY DRIVEN REFORM

It is evident that higher education systems across Europe have their particular characteristics. Philosophical legacies steeped in history (such as those described by Bacon & Newman, in Chapters 1, 6 and 10) and other developments including governmental policies, have all shaped the emerging higher education vista. This logic would challenge us to put forward the expectation that policy trends are path-dependent (Huisman & Kaiser, 2002).

This chapter and the following chapter seek to examine the decision-making processes that brought about reform in Europe and within the Irish National context. DCU used the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) as the vehicle to implement the Bologna reforms. It is also important to note that each higher education system has its own strategic trajectory and dependent on the problems and challenges a government is confronted with, policies will be developed to steer higher education in a desired national direction. Only in the case of global trends, seriously affecting higher education, could one possibly expect governments to develop fairly similar policy solutions to similar problems (ibid).

The European Community (EC) has played a pivotal role in higher education over the past 40 to 50 years which Neave (1998) describes as, 'the gradual emergence of a trans-national policy for higher education' (p.vii). Prior to the 1970s, the principal view was that education was not on the policy agenda of the European Community, it was not a competence agreed under the Treaty of Rome⁶ (Neave, 1994) Anne Corbett's analysis of the EC, however demonstrates that policy makers within the EC considered numerous proposals of the EC's potential for activity

⁶ The Treaty of Rome, officially the *Treaty establishing the European Economic Community* (TEEC), was an international agreement that led to the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) on 1 January 1958

within higher education (2005) Table 5.1 outlines how the policy development within the European context has progressed throughout the last 60 years.

Table 5.1 - Policy/political outcomes in European Higher Education

Year	Decisions
1950s	Decision to create supranational university; Support for mobility: European recognition conventions;
1960s	Decision to drop supranational project. Ministers of Education and Rectors begin systematic cooperation
1970s	Decision to create European University Institute Decision to cooperate under EEC umbrella in addition to Council of Europe Creation of an Action Programme for Education and training
1980s	Erasmus Decision and creation of other programmes. ECJ ruling higher education compatible with Treaty provision on vocational training; Unanimous political support for Erasmus. Single European Act includes research. Magna Charta signed
1990s	Memorandum on Higher Education to mainstream HE TEU stabilises rights and responsibilities EU/Member States. Creation of Socrates and Leonardo programmes
1999-2000	Bologna Declaration on EHEA by cooperation / Lisbon Agenda for Europe of Knowledge/European Research Council agreed/European Institute of Technology agreed, for grants for mobile students, under an action programme in which intergovernmental action is strengthened by EC resources
Source: Corbet, (2005)	

Through an analysis of the policy documents the genesis of the EHEA idea points to the Ministerial actions in 1976 of *establishing an information network to provide a better understanding of national systems and structures* as a key trigger for policy cooperation. Others suggest that the launch of the 'Action Programme' in the 'Field of Education' as evidence of the increasing activity of the European Community in higher education (De Witt & Verhoeven, 2001). Hussey and Smith (2010) see the introduction of the Erasmus programme in 1987 as one of the most important developments undertaken by the Community, which may have led to the idea of the Bologna Declaration. Robertson (2008) contends that the principal aim of these initiatives was to develop, 'European-minded citizens, engaged with the expanded Community...committed to the concept of 'European' culture and values' (p.2).

From a policy perspective, the activity of the Irish state in relation to reformation of its higher education sector was mainly in line with other western countries. The policy documents suggest that the State's role in, and influence on, higher education is changing, if not, increasing (Hussey & Smith, 2010; Neave & Van Nugt, 1991). Bleiklie (2004) suggests that governments and their interaction with higher education have been influenced by academic

capitalism, thus introducing quasi-market mechanisms. However, he argues that other factors such as the increased political importance of universities and the growth of funding of universities necessitated an increase in governments' attention to higher education:

Where as a small institutionally homogenous system lends itself to informal mechanisms of management and control, the sharp growth and emergence of an institutionally and socially more heterogeneous and functionally more complex system, has been followed by the introduction of more formal mechanisms of management and control and the rise of stronger administrative apparatuses nationally as well as within institutions

(Bleiklie, 2004, p.31)

Farnham (1999) suggested that higher education itself was a key factor in the development of economic development. Instrumentality of higher education as:

...relevant higher education is increasingly seen as a key factor in contributing to national economic growth, providing employable, flexible graduates and being a source of scientific and technological innovation to benefit the corporate sector.

(ibid p.8)

The Irish universities have largely conformed to the policy environment of the State. The policy agendas of reform are broadly incorporated by the Irish University Association⁷ (IUA) in their vision for the future provision of university education. In its publication in 2005 entitled *Securing Competitive Advantage in the 21st Century*, the IUA sets out its vision for the future 4th level citizen. These views seem to parallel those of the Irish government.

Successfully meeting the needs of the knowledge society will require the universities to provide teaching and learning programmes to the highest international standards, to produce graduates capable of facing the lifelong challenge of working in creative, innovative, knowledge-intensive enterprises, and also to provide a cohort of graduates interested in and prepared for advanced study and research at fourth level.

(IUA, 2005, p.12)

5.4 TOWARDS A EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The European dimension is very much the *raison d'être* of the Bologna Process; it is its defining characteristic. The European dimension finds its expression in the fact that European higher education systems are based on diversity and cooperation, on the participation of all stakeholders and on academic freedom

(Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2010, p.4)

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched along with the Bologna Processes 10th anniversary, in March 2010, during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. As the

⁷ IUA (Irish Universities Association) is the representative body for Ireland's seven universities

main objective of the Bologna Process since its inception in 1999, the EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. Between the years 1999 and 2010, the efforts of the Bologna Process members were focused on creating the European Higher Education Area.

The Bologna Declaration was published on 19th June 1999 and put forward a series of reforms which the signatories felt were needed to make European higher education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents. The subsequent Bologna Process was launched to accelerate the creation of the 'Europe of knowledge' and to put in place the 'European Higher Education Area' (EHEA) by 2010. Originally the Declaration was signed by 29 countries, which 'undertake to attain the Declaration's objectives', and to that end 'engage in coordinating [their] policies'. A joint statement at the time by the then Ministers of Education stated:

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.

(Bologna Declaration 1999, p.1)

The Declaration also stated that it is a commitment freely taken by each signatory country to reform its own higher education system or systems in order to create overall convergence at European level. The Ministers insisted that the Declaration was not a reform imposed upon national governments or higher education institutions. They said that:

.. any pressure individual countries and higher education institutions may feel from the Bologna process could only result from their ignoring increasingly common features or staying outside the mainstream of change.

(ibid, p.3)

It should be said that up until this point the European Union had only a small role to play in the area of education. This was only referenced through articles 149 and 150 of the *Treaty* of the EU, which stated the members should, 'contribute to the development of quality education'. Though the Treaty of Rome did not make any extensive reference to education, it simply called in Article 3 for the Member States to make a contribution to quality education and training. It was only with the Maastricht Treaty that comprehensive reference was made to the contribution of the Community in the field of education and training. The process that progresses the Declaration has commonly been afforded the title **The Bologna Process**. The Bologna Process aims at creating convergence and thus, is not a path towards the

standardisation or uniformisation of European higher education. In trying to summarise the Bologna Declaration in their publication, *'The Bologna Declaration on the European Space for Higher Education: An Explanation'*, the Confederation of the EU Rectors' Conferences and Association of European Universities⁸ said that the fundamental principles of autonomy and diversity are respected.

The Declaration reflects a search for a common European answer to common European problems. The process originates from the recognition that in spite of their valuable differences, European higher education systems are facing common internal and external challenges related to the growth and diversification of higher education, the employability of graduates, the shortage of skills in key areas, the expansion of private and transnational education.

(Bologna Declaration, 1999, p.3)

5.5 THE GENESIS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS – THE *SORBONNE DECLARATION*

The genesis of the Bologna process was originally situated outside EU institutions. It actually began in 1998 in Sorbonne, when education ministers from the UK, Germany, France and Italy agreed to develop a plan for the, 'harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system' (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). A year later and based on the preparatory work of the Confederation of the EU Rectors' Conferences and the General Directors for Higher Education, Bologna was signed.

Although most activities and meetings were already financed by the European Commission, it was only in Prague in 2001 that the European Commission was invited as full member

(Balzer & Martens 2004, p.3)

In 2005 Anne Corbet suggested that that the beginning of this process can be traced back to single minister's initiative that consciously started without the EU's involvement. She suggests that it was the French minister for education, Claude Allègre, who was searching for solutions to reform the French higher education system. He then invited the other signatories to begin discussions. On 25th May 1998 they signed a declaration in Sorbonne, Paris at the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Paris.

This Sorbonne Declaration endeavours to create a European area of higher education by helping create a university structure with a system of two cycles and the use of credits. With

⁸ Confederation of the EU Rectors' Conferences and Association of European Universities, later become known as the EUA (European Universities Association).

the Sorbonne Declaration; other European countries were encouraged to join the original four countries in their aims.

It was no coincidence that this document was developed at a time when other European bodies were beginning to drive policy in a number of areas. The declaration made reference to *'The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region'* which had been developed a year earlier by the Council of Europe and UNESCO⁹. The Convention became better known as the *Lisbon Convention* and has since been ratified by most European countries. The *Lisbon Convention* set out to establish rights and protections for holders of higher education qualifications and the assessment, recognition and use of these qualifications in other European countries for access into further study or into the labour market (UNESCO, 1997). *Though there was no specific mention of approaches to student-centered learning, lifelong learning or learning outcomes*, the Declaration did highlight some areas that would become permanent actions within the Bologna Process.

5.6 THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international co-operation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world.

The envisaged European Higher Education Area will:

1. Facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
2. Prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
3. Offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

(EU Ireland, 2010)

By 2012 the membership of the Bologna Process has grown to 47 members, some of these within the EU and some outside of this structure. From the outset the Bologna Process was meant to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. At its most basic level its aims were to foster student mobility and employability through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies with easily readable programmes and degrees. However, the Bologna process emerging from the Bologna Declaration (1999) is not a single process but rather an organic, fluid process of change,

⁹ UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

development, stocktaking and reprioritisation. The Bologna process from the beginning had quite broad objectives described as 'Action Lines'. Over time the 'Action Lines' have developed and changed through a series of ministerial meetings since 1999, and have thus advanced the agenda and have given greater precision to the tools that have been created. The focus of this research is only directed towards the relevant aspects of these actions lines - the undergraduate/postgraduate degree structure that was envisaged to be modified into a three-cycle system, which would include the concept of qualifications frameworks, with an emphasis on the promotion of learning outcomes as a means of creating reference points on national qualification frameworks. As the process progressed many other action lines adopted themes connected to the function of a learning outcomes approach. The Bologna Process is organised on three levels. The first level is related to the EHEA through the inter-governmental ministerial meetings; the second through the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), with interest member groups from a range of agencies and authorities across the European spectrum; the third is through the BFUG sub-structures which developed Special Interest Groups (SIG) related to either groups of action lines or separate action lines.

5.6.1 BOLOGNA PROCESS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

The remainder of this Chapter goes on to look at the development of these so called 'Action Lines' and pays specific attention to the issue of student-centered learning and the promotion of learning outcomes. It should also be stated that learning outcomes only began to emerge on the Bologna agenda somewhere between the *Prague* and *Berlin ministerial conferences* from 2001-2003 and was further emphasised in *Bergen* in 2005. The concept of the social dimension of higher education was introduced into the Prague ministerial discussions in 2001. The recognition of qualifications is now perceived as a central pillar to the European higher education policies.

The Bologna declaration in essence committed itself to the principles of the Sorbonne Declaration and to the establishment of the EHEA by 2010 (Bologna Declaration 1999). The core objectives of Bologna are listed overleaf in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2: Core objectives of Bologna Declaration & delivery instruments

CORE OBJECTIVES OF BOLOGNA DECLARATION & DELIVERY INSTRUMENTS	
1. The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement	<i>Collaboration of national governments with higher education institutions and associations</i> <i>A conference held in 2001 in Prague by European Education Ministers to assess progress and plan ahead</i>
2. The development of a system based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate	<i>A consultative group established with representatives from all signatory countries</i>
3. The establishment of a system of credits such as the ECTS	<i>A smaller more focused follow up group consisting of Member States, the Commission and European Higher Education Rector Associations</i>
4. The removal of barriers to mobility for academic teaching and research staff, administrative staff and students	<i>The Bologna declaration as an agenda item at every meeting of the European Education Ministers.</i>
Source: Bologna Declaration, 1999, pp.3-4	

The Bologna process gained extensive support and the EU saw this as an opportunity to integrate its new strategy, the Lisbon Strategy. The Council of Europe meeting in Lisbon in 2000 established a new strategic goal for the European Union. When the Lisbon Agenda was launched in 2000 the focus on the ‘knowledge society’ was declared the core element of the EU’s political work. As the EU had no legal framework to develop education policy across Europe it developed a system called the *Open Method of Coordination* (OMC¹⁰), which allowed it to have an impact on areas such as education.

The European Union continued to drive policy within in the higher education arena and in 2000 the *European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA) was established receiving initial funding from the Commission (Witte, 2006). Following on from the Bologna Declaration the membership of the consultative group expanded to include the *European*

¹⁰ (OMC) Open Method of Coordination is an intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union, based on the voluntary cooperation of its member states. The open method rests on soft law mechanisms such as guidelines and indicators, benchmarking and sharing of best practice. This means that there are no official sanctions for laggards. Rather, the method's effectiveness relies on a form of peer pressure and naming and shaming, as no member state wants to be seen as the worst in a given policy area.

Students' Information Bureau (ESIB¹¹), and the Association of European Institutes of Higher Education (EURASHE) as well as the Council of Europe.

In the years between 1999 (Bologna) and 2001 (Prague Ministerial Conference) there was much intergovernmental discussion about the developments of some of the principles of Sorbonne and Bologna (Lourtie, 2006). Most of these discussions hinged around the structure of awards under a two-cycle system, the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms, mobility and internationalisation, employability, and the role of students.

5.6.2 PRAGUE COMMUNIQUÉ 2001

The EU Ministers acknowledged the related discussions, which had taken place after the Bologna meeting. The resulting Communiqué referenced heavily the outcomes of the *Convention of European Higher Education Institutions* meeting in Salamanca in March 2001 and the recommendations of the *Convention of European Students*, held in Göteborg also in March of 2001, as particularly relevant. It stated that:

they appreciated the active involvement of the European University Association (EUA) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) in the Bologna process. They further noted and appreciated the many other initiatives to take the process further. Ministers also took note of the constructive assistance of the European Commission.

(Prague Communiqué, 2001, p.1)

With the *Prague Communiqué*, the number of member countries grew to 33. Three further objectives were added to the existing Bologna action lines;

- Lifelong learning,
- Involving students as active partners
- Enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. (EHEA, 2010)

Additionally, the participating ministers committed themselves to ensure the further development of quality assurance and the development of national qualification frameworks. This objective was correlated with the *Lifelong Learning Action Line*, and has particular relevance in relation to the topic of this thesis, the relationship of these policy drivers to student-centred learning, learning outcomes and ultimately assessment. Through this communiqué the social dimension was first introduced. In order to monitor, evaluate and actively encourage member states to implement the Bologna Process action lines a Bologna

¹¹ European Students' Information Bureau (ESIB), which later became the European Students' Union (ESU),

Follow-Up Group (BFUG¹²) was established. The BFUG oversees the Bologna Process between the ministerial meetings and meets at least once every six months, usually for one-and-a-half days. The BFUG has the responsibility of setting up working groups to deal with specific topics in more detail and also, receives input from the Bologna Seminars. Through the BFUG a Bologna preparatory group was also established to plan the next conference in Berlin.

Following on from the *Prague* meeting several projects were undertaken, which fed into the next ministerial meeting in *Berlin* in 2003. These included; funding, quality assurance, and culture projects, all bound together in relation to the promotion of learning outcomes. A significant development about this time was the *Tuning Project*¹³. *Tuning's* work on the development of competencies in specific disciplines completed a huge amount of ground work for the development of discipline and generic focused learning outcomes (González & Wagenaar, 2008)

The progress of the Bologna Process by this stage had only made a slight reference to the exclusive use of learning outcomes. This is relevant for this study as the implementation of such a concept is widely contested and misunderstood. The complex conceptual relationship between learning outcomes and competences (as competences are interpreted in different ways in relation to learning outcomes) were initially explored as part of the Tuning Project (Adam, 2004). According to Tuning:

learning outcomes are expressed in terms of the level of competence to be obtained by the learner. Competences represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, and ethical values

(González & Wagenaar, 2008, p.28)

The Tuning project, as a parallel project driven by the Bologna Process has significant implications for the approaches to teaching (and assessing) in higher education, and the relationship of curriculum to student centeredness.

The other area on which the Action Lines related to learning outcomes were beginning to have an impact was on the work being conducted in relation to 'Mobility and Recognition of degrees'. In 2002, the Bologna seminar on '*Recognition Issues*' in Portugal acknowledged the

¹² The BFUG is composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO-CEPES, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE, as consultative members. The BFUG is being co-chaired by the country holding the EU Presidency and a non-EU country, which rotate every six months.

¹³ TUNING Educational Structures in Europe started in 2000 as a project to link the political objectives of the Bologna Process and at a later stage the Lisbon Strategy to the higher educational sector. Over time Tuning has developed into a Process, an approach to (re-)designing, develop, implement, evaluate and enhance quality first, second and third cycle degree programmes.

role that learning outcomes could play in issues relating to mobility and recognition of qualifications.

There is general agreement on the need for a framework in which learning outcomes can be described and assessed. Such a framework will need to take account of the different contexts of learning – both academic and professional, both national and international. The different purposes for which the assessment will be used are also of importance.

(Purser / DGIV/EDU/HE, 2002, p.5)

During this period issues relating to learning outcomes were beginning to be addressed at different levels and within a range of Bologna seminars and within other European structures.

In the 2003 *Vaduz Statement*, the ENIC-NARIC networks stated they would seek to:

Develop recognition procedures aiming at the recognition of learning outcomes rather than the formal paths that have led to these outcomes. In this, they will in particular build on the results of the Joint Quality Initiative and Tuning projects supported by the European Commission as well as on the work carried out on the recognition of prior learning and non-traditional qualifications. Recognition based on learning outcomes is important also with regard to facilitating lifelong learning

(ENIC-NARIC, 2003, p.4)

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA¹⁴) began to gain credence within the BFUG agenda and they started to promote learning outcomes as a 'Quality Assurance' indicator rather than a concept within the 'lifelong learning' or 'social demission' agenda. This move to addressing learning outcomes was largely promoted by the ENQA. In their document entitled, '*Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process*', from the proceedings of the International seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, the rapporteur for the EUA at the time Lewis Purser (now the current director of academic affairs at IUA (Irish Universities Association)) stated:

There is considerable scope for co-operation at European level in developing a framework for the recognition of learning outcomes and competencies. It should ensure a correct balance in order to take account of the varied intended purposes of learning, as chosen by the student, and to ensure the interests of the various groups of stakeholders.

(Purser / DGIV/EDU/HE, 2002, p.5)

¹⁴ ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) disseminates information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions

5.6.3 TUNING : TUNING EDUCATION STRUCTURES IN EUROPE

As previously mentioned the *Tuning Project* was a spin-off development connected to the Bologna Process that looked at the whole area of learning outcomes and competences within the Bologna Framework. The Tuning Project was developed in 2000 as a pilot project by a group of European universities after the creation of the Bologna Process. The Tuning Project is not a member of the Bologna Process, the Council of Europe, or UNESCO. The Tuning project serves as a platform for developing reference points at subject area level. These reference points were expressed in terms of learning outcomes and competences.

Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a learning experience. According to Tuning, learning outcomes are expressed in terms of the level of competence to be obtained by the learner

(González & Wagenaar, 2008, p.9)

During Tuning's first two phases (2000-2004) the Project focused on the educational structures and content of nine particular areas of study. At the Berlin Bologna follow-up seminar in 2003, degrees were identified as having a key role in the process.

This is made evident by the language used, where the Ministers indicate that degrees should be described in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile

(ibid, p.9)

Essentially *Tuning* focused on the learning outcomes issues from a subject discipline perspective rather than taking generic problems associated with their usage. Tuning developed documents that list the outcomes that a student should have for each of the nine specified subject matter areas. As Tuning progressed they prepared a number of documents that specify the competencies that they believed students should have. A sub-group discussed how these competencies addressed teaching, learning, and assessment in the selected subject disciplines. The importance of the Tuning Project was probably overstated in the context of the Bologna Process. Its relevance deminsised as the Process developed over the years. Issues relating to learning outcomes were developed through this process but the full articulation of a student-centered approach was not integrated in the Bologna Process until after the Berlin ministerial meeting in 2003. Tuning significantly made a distinction between learning outcomes and competences. They said that their research on current practice showed that the desired learning outcomes of a process of learning are primarily formulated by academic teaching staff, with little or the inclusion of student involvement.

Phase 1 of the Project (2001-2002) examined the role of competencies in higher education. The first Tuning report emphasised the importance of competences relating to a student-centered approach.

The development of competences and skills fits in well with the paradigm of primarily student-centered education. It consequently affects the approach to educational activities and the organisation of learning, which shifts to being guided by what the learner needs to achieve. It also affects assessment in terms of shifting from input to output and to the processes and the contexts of the learner. However, how the competences are to be worked, realized (sic) and assessed and the impact of this change, both at individual level and at the level of European university structures, needs further reflection and debate

(González & Wagenaar, 2002, p.43)

5.6.4 BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ 2003

The next Bologna Process Ministerial Conference was held in Berlin in 2003. The Process by then had grown to total 40 members. The main actions of the Communiqué that was developed during this meeting dealt not only with the expansion of previous objectives, *but particularly highlighted the promotion of quality assurance, not only as an action line but also as a cross-cutting theme*. In order to monitor, evaluate and actively encourage member states to implement the Bologna Process, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG¹⁵) was established. Through the BFUG a Bologna preparatory group was also established to plan the next conference in Berlin. In relation to the student experience the communiqué stated:

Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.....within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes

(Berlin Communiqué, 2003)

In the context of this study, the Berlin ministerial meeting had enormous significance for the paradigm shift from teaching to learning. The Berlin Communiqué directly identified 'learning outcomes' as having an important role in the overall process. During this conference a 10th action line was also added and defined within the Berlin Communiqué, which was:

- Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area

¹⁵ The BFUG is composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO-CEPES, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE, as consultative members.

The issue of qualifications recognition, based on input-approaches, proved complex and was viewed as a failure by some (Sharp, 2004). Assessment of credit for non-traditional qualifications such as joint degrees, parts of study etc. proved problematic. Rauhvargers (2004) suggests that the use of the output measure of learning outcomes was deemed an important method to overcome these issues, thus forming the basis for the recognition of lifelong learning activities. The action line of Lifelong Learning had just been added in the Prague Communiqué (2001). In a Bologna seminar in Copenhagen in March 2003 organised by the BFUG, the promotion of a learning outcomes approach again began to gain momentum. In the context of discussion mainly focusing on qualification frameworks and the possibility of creating a European qualifications reference framework, Sjur Bergan said:

What distinguishes the frameworks surveyed for this conference, however, is that they have gone a good step beyond the traditional frameworks in emphasizing not only input factors and formal characteristics but also output factors such as learning outcomes, and that they are explicit about some elements that have traditionally been assumed or understood.

(Bergan, 2003, p.6)

This was seen to be the genesis of what became to be known as the EQF¹⁶ (European Qualifications Framework). In July 2003 the EUA produced one of its regular Trends report, Trends 3. The report made reference to the issue of learning outcomes, but primarily in the context of 'external reference points' related to national qualification framework and the possibility of referencing them to a new European Qualifications Framework. Trends 3 went on to say that one of their key findings had been:

The growing trend toward structuring curricula in view of the learning outcomes and competences is often seen as a way to ensure that academic quality and long-term employability become compatible goals of higher education.

(Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p.29)

Trends 3 also commended a number of national frameworks already in development and highlighted Ireland, among others, 'as framework that left room for movement insuring diversity of circular designs' (ibid, p.55). The Berlin meeting called a stocktaking exercise commissioned again by the EU, which would focus on a number of key discussion areas to be brought forward into the Bergen talks in Norway in 2005. The agreed topics to be discussed were, 'the degree system, quality assurance and the recognition of degrees', (Bergen, 2005, p.2). The Stocktaking report entitled, '*Trends IV: Universities Implementing Bologna*' had a

¹⁶ The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) provides a common reference framework which assists in comparing the national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels. The EQF was formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 23 April 2008.

strong focus on the development of qualifications' frameworks, particularity in relation to degree structures.

A significant group of HEIs in our sample from all parts of Europe declare themselves fully or largely familiar with the concept of learning outcomes (or competences), have implemented (or are implementing) them in all programmes and consider them a helpful tool.

(Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p.20)

The stocktaking report also highlighted the slow pace of change in relation to curriculum reform with reference to learning outcomes. The report stated, 'In some cases these approaches may still be rather input and teacher-oriented but this is nevertheless as close as some HEIs get to the concept of learning outcomes' (ibid, 2005, p.18). The research also showed the diversity of student responses to this concept:

In a number of HEIs, only vague notions of learning outcomes exist, and sometimes with only one group (for example, deans or central administration) showing some degree of familiarity, while others (often the students) have never heard of the concept. In some HEIs in Austria, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and other countries where learning outcomes are not yet part of the institutional reality, the attitude is often rather positive and the wider implications of learning outcomes (such as an institutional approach, the link to ECTS and student-centred learning) are well perceived.

(ibid, 2005, pp.18-19)

From the institutional perspective the report stated:

Very few HEIs voiced explicit criticism or reservations against the concept of learning outcomes. On the other hand, the European dimension of the concept of learning outcomes was perceived only by those academics that had some knowledge of the Tuning project.

(ibid, 2005, p.19)

Trends IV pointed out the challenges for the future, and this information was helpful for the Bergen 2005 ministerial meeting agenda: In relation to future challenges it stated:

Learning outcomes are vital if the system of easily readable and comparable degrees across Europe is to be based on the same nomenclature for degrees. Learning outcomes are still considered by many deans, professors and students as an accessory, but must become an intrinsic element of the pedagogical shift intended by the Bologna Process

(ibid, 2005, p.20)

In the process leading up to the Bergen meeting the BFUG held 14 seminars across Europe in relation to the implementation of the Bologna action lines. These are outlined in the next table (Table 5.3):

Table 5.3: Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) seminars 2003-2005

Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) seminars	Where and When
Joint Degrees – Further Development	Stockholm, 6-7 May 2004
Bologna and the challenges of e-learning and distance education	Ghent, 4-5 June 2004
Using Learning Outcomes	Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2004
Assessment and accreditation in the European framework	Santander, 28-30 July 2004
Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research	Strasbourg, 21-22 September 2004
Designing policies for mobile students	Noordwijk, 10-12 October 2004
The employability and its links to the objectives of the Bologna Process	Bled, 22-23 Oct. 2004
New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for HE	Warsaw, 4-6 November 2004
Bachelor's Degree: What Is It?	St. Petersburg, 25-26 November 2004
Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points	Riga, 3-4 December 2004
The Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA	Copenhagen, 13-14 January 2005
The social dimension of the EHEA world-wide competition",	Paris 27-28 January 2005
Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society	Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005
Cooperation between accreditation committees/agencies	Warsaw, 14-16 February 2005
Source: From Berlin to Bergen: General report: Bologna Follow-Up Group. BFUG (2005)	

Again particular significance was given to the Edinburgh meeting where Prof Stephen Adam once more endeavoured to discuss the Bologna Process within the Learning Outcomes paradigm.

5.6.5 BERGEN COMMUNIQUÉ 2005

The Bergen communiqué welcomed the addition of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine to the Bologna process as this extended its membership to 45. The BFUG reasserted the need to look at all the Bologna Action Lines:

Table 5.4: From Bergen to Berlin: the 10 Bologna Action Lines

FROM BERGEN TO BERLIN: THE 10 BOLOGNA ACTION LINES	
1.	Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
2.	Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles
3.	Establishment of a system of credits
4.	Promotion of mobility
5.	Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
6.	Promotion of the European dimension in higher education
7.	Lifelong learning
8.	Higher education institutions and students
9.	Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area
10.	Doctoral Studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA)
Source: BFUG, (2005, p.9)	

The Bergen BFUG stocktaking report did not include an analysis of the development of the new style national frameworks (BFUG, 2005, p.13). Though it stated that, tangible progress at the supra-national level was being made along the quality assurance action line which incorporated explicit reference to the role that learning outcomes were to play in quality assurance processes which would influence all levels of the system as they complied with the ESG¹⁷:

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:
development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes

(ENQA, 2005, p.16)

In the section on 'Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards', The ENQA document stated that the quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- Development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- Specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- Participation of students in quality assurance activities.

(ibid, p.16)

...higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students.

¹⁷ ESG : Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

(ibid, p.19)

The ESG document explicitly dealt with issues around curriculum assessment. The report said:

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge, which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners support.

(ibid, pp.16-17)

Details of related assessment issues as a sub-category of quality assurance are highlighted in Table 5.5 below:

Table 5.5: Assessment and Quality Assurance as part of the Bologna framework

ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE AS PART OF THE BOLOGNA FRAMEWORK
Be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
Be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
Have clear and published criteria for marking;
Be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students toward the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
Where possible, not rely on the judgments of single examiners;
Take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
Have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
Ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institutions' stated procedures;
Be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.
<i>Source: ENQA (2005) ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i>

The Guidelines (2005) went on to add:

...In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will

be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance

(Ibid, pp.16-17)

From the Bergen meeting it was clear that the quality assurance agenda was the new driving force behind the promotion of a learning outcomes approach. Although Professor Adam had pointed out that Learning Outcomes, as a concept, were intrinsically linked to almost all the Bologna Actions, it was the ENQA that sought to expand this idea further and discuss learning outcomes as part of the institutional and programmatic quality agenda.

5.6.6 THE LONDON COMMUNIQUÉ 2007

With the *London Communiqué* the number of member countries within the Process grew to 46. The Communiqué focused on evaluating the progress achieved by that time, concerning mobility, degree structure, recognition, qualifications' frameworks (both overarching and national), lifelong learning, quality assurance, social dimension, and also set the priorities for 2009. The London Communiqué is arguably the most extensive of all the relevant Communiqués (Terry, 2008). The BFUG Group met a further five times before the meeting in London between 2005 and 2007. Also feeding into the London meeting a number of conferences, seminars and workshops had been relating directly to learning outcomes and indirectly in relation to other action lines.

Table 5.6: Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) seminars 2005-2007

BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP (BFUG) SEMINARS	WHERE AND WHEN
Making Bologna a Reality: Mobility of Staff and Students	London; February 2007
New Challenges in Recognition	Riga; January 2007
Doctoral Programmes in Europe	Nice; December 2006
Looking out: Bologna in a global setting	Oslo; September 2006
Joint Degrees - A Hallmark of the European Higher Education Area	Berlin; September 2006
Enhancing European Employability	Swansea; July 2006
Putting European Higher Education Area on the map: developing strategies for attractiveness	Athens; June 2006
A researchers' labour market: Europe - a pole of attraction?	Vienna; June 2006
The Cultural Heritage and Academic Values of the European University and the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area	Vatican City; April 2006
Source: Bologna Follow-Up Group. BFUG (2007)	

At the *Riga BFUG seminar* in January 2007 participants discussed the issues regarding Recognition of Prior Learning and made reference to the shift from input based systems to those measured by learning outcomes:

In view of the great variety of higher education systems and approaches worldwide this should include shifting the emphasis further *from input characteristics* of the qualifications *to the learning outcomes* achieved.

(BFUG, Riga Seminar 2007, p.2)

The EUA's Trends V report was explicit in reaffirming the relevance of a learning outcomes approach to the areas of 'Qualifications, Degree Structures and Employability' (London Communiqué, 2007, pp.3-7). The London communiqué indicated a clear movement towards learning outcomes as an overall part of the implementation of the Bologna Process. The 2007 stocktaking found that there has been good progress on specific action lines and indicators. Though it carefully pointed out that, 'it is not enough to look at these in isolation because all aspects of the Bologna Process are interdependent....There are two themes that link all action lines: a focus on learners, and a focus on learning outcomes' (BFUG, 2007, p.3 & p.50). The report went on to say:

If the Bologna Process is to be successful in meeting the needs and expectations of learners, all countries need to use learning outcomes as a basis for their national qualifications frameworks, systems for credit transfer and accumulation, the diploma supplement, recognition of prior learning and quality assurance.

(ibid, p.50)

The report was explicit in suggesting that this was a precondition for achieving many of the goals of the Bologna Process by 2010.

The 5th Trends report was entitled '*Universities shaping the European Higher Education Area*'.

The authors related learning outcomes here to student centredness.

Understanding and integrating the use of a learning outcome based approach remains a key medium-term challenge. When achieved, it will enable students to become the engaged in subjects of their own learning process, and also contribute to improving many issues of progression between cycles, institutions, sectors, the labour market and countries

(Crosier, Purser and Smidt, 2007, p.7)

The report also suggested that there might be a 'disconnect' between the concept of learning outcomes and the student experience.

Although progress in implementing new Bologna degree structures is clear, student-centred learning was mentioned surprisingly infrequently during the site visits as a guiding principle of curriculum reform. Paradoxically, however, this does not

necessarily imply the absence of a move towards more student-centred learning, but rather that the shift in thinking may follow instead of precede a reform of structures.

(ibid, p.22)

The Stocktaking report suggested that the learning outcomes approach remained slow (BFUG, 2007):

The challenge is therefore to ensure that tools are well understood and properly implemented so that everyone can benefit. It is particularly important for staff and students to think in terms of learning outcomes to ensure that curricula are re-considered in appropriate depth.

(ibid, p.46)

In 2006 the EUA began to publish the quarterly publication The Bologna Handbook (EUA, Froment, et al., 2006). As part of this publication Adam (2007) developed a typology of learning outcomes and their multiple applications in higher education. See Table 5.7 overleaf

Table 5.7: Typology of learning Outcomes and their applications (Adam, 2007)

TYPOLOGY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THEIR MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS THROUGH BOLOGNA

Mode & Area of Application	Features and Attributes
Modules <i>(learning outcomes employed at the level of the unit or module as statements that identify what a successful learner will be able to know, understand and / or be able to do)</i>	Concerned with the achievement of the learner Differ from 'aims' that indicate the intentions of the teacher Directly link to a teaching strategy for the effective delivery of the learning outcomes Directly link to an assessment strategy and appropriate assessment criteria Are developed in the context of a wide range of internal and external reference points and influences
Assessment and Grading Criteria <i>(at the level of the module, learning outcomes can be used to express the criteria that establish the standard of achievement and the relative performance of individuals)</i>	Assessment criteria describe what the learner is expected to do to demonstrate that the learning outcomes has been achieved. They are normally written at threshold level and distinguish the pass and fail threshold Grading criteria refer to the precise quality of the achievement of the outcome – how well an individual has passed or failed. They distinguish the relative performance of each student. Grading criteria are also written as learning outcomes
Individual Qualification Descriptors <i>(Learning outcomes used for describing and expressing each individual subject-specific qualification validated / accredited for a higher education institution)</i>	Written individually or collectively by academics for a specific qualification and institution Includes subject specific statements of skills, abilities and understanding Can include general transferable / transversal skills that are sought by employers Represent more than the sum of the individual component module learning outcomes Will be created within the context of the appropriate national and / or international 'external reference points' and qualification frameworks
National Qualification Descriptors <i>(Learning outcomes as generic descriptions of types of qualifications)</i>	Exemplify the generic (non-subject specific) outcomes of a nationally recognised type of qualification Produced by appropriate national authorities with stakeholders' agreement Will include statements of wider abilities of a typical holder of the qualification (transferable / transversal skills) Linked to national level descriptors. A generic qualifications descriptor can encompass several national level descriptors to show progression or just typify one level Generally describe the learning achieved by a student at the finish of a qualification (as do the international 'Dublin descriptors') Act as an external reference point, for those at the institutional level, developing individual qualifications
National subject sectoral / benchmark statements <i>(Learning outcomes employed as statements to make explicit the general subject-specific academic characteristics and standards of programmes)</i>	Subject benchmark statements set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the techniques and skills needed to develop understanding in the subject They have been extensively developed in the UK by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) They function as subject-specific external reference points for curriculum designers Internationally, the Tuning project explores the significance of

	subject-specific and general competences. It has encouraged detailed reflection on subject specific learning outcomes associated with the first and second Bologna cycles
National Level Descriptors <i>(Learning outcomes employed as generic statements that describe the characteristics and standards of programmes)</i>	Designed to provide a shared understanding of each level and to facilitate the comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at each level a qualification will often straddle several levels The number and complexity of national level descriptors is a matter for national decision. They are often expressed in terms of knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, practical applied skills, learner autonomy etc. They can be expressed in terms of what the best student might achieve (aspiration) or minimum standards (threshold) or something in between Act as an external reference point for those developing individual qualifications as well as modules and units
Cycle Descriptors <i>(Also known as the 'Dublin descriptors' describe the three cycles of the Bologna overarching qualification framework in terms of learning outcomes)</i>	Adopted by 45 Bologna Process countries and used to express the three cycles of the 'framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)' Are composed of generic statements of the typical expectations of achievement and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle Function as a meta-level international descriptors (guidance tools) that act as an external reference point for those developing 'new style' national qualifications frameworks and national level descriptors
Adapted from the European Universities Association EUA (2007) Bologna Handbook - Making Bologna Work	

5.6.7 LEUVEN/LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE COMMUNIQUÉ : 2009

In between conferences the BFUG continued to support seminars to disseminate practice and develop cognisance of the principles underpinning learning outcomes and qualification frameworks. A number of conferences and workshops were held relating directly to learning outcomes and indirectly in relation to other action lines. Table 5.8 (overleaf) outlines the meeting organised by the BFUG between 2008 & 2009.

Table 5.8: Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) seminars 2008-2009

Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) seminars	Where and When
Joint programmes and student mobility	Chelyabinsk 16-17 March 2009
Assessment of Prior Learning; Quality assurance and implementation of procedures	Amsterdam 11-12 December 2008
Quality Assurance in Transnational Education - from words to action	London 01-02 December 2008
European Conference on Qualifications Frameworks	Tbilisi 27-28 November 2008
Equality in a knowledge based society: How to widen opportunities?	Budapest 10-11 November 2008
Conference on Employability	Luxembourg 06-07 November 2008
Europe, an Area of Student Mobility	Nancy 04-05 November 2008
El/ESU Mobility Conference	Lille 06-07 October 2008
Seminar on Third Cycle Degrees	Helsinki 30 September 01 October 2008
Quality Assurance in Higher Education	Strasbourg 09-10 September 2008
Development of a common understanding of Learning Outcomes and ECTS	Porto 19-20 June 2008
Staff Mobility and Pension Arrangements	Berlin 12-13 June 2008
Fostering student mobility: next steps? Involving stakeholders for an improved mobility inside the EHEA	Brussels 29-30 May 2008
Seminar on Bologna Beyond 2010	Ghent 19-20 May 2008
ECTS based on learning outcomes and student workload	Moscow 17-18 April 2008
Universities and Lifelong Learning	Brdo 10-11 March 2008
Learning outcomes based higher education: the Scottish experience	Edinburgh 21-22 February 2008
Forum on Qualifications Frameworks	Strasbourg 11-12 October 2007
<i>Source:.. BFUG (2009)</i>	

By the time the Leuven meeting was held there had been over 19 different seminars across Europe linking into the Bologna Process. Many of these seminars explicitly discussed the use of learning outcomes. Undoubtedly the most significant of these was the seminar in Edinburgh in February 2008. Professor Stephen Adam again reiterated the impact of learning outcomes on a pan-European level.

The potential and widespread significance of learning outcomes is only just beginning to be realised. Their introduction is designed to facilitate the fundamental reform of existing qualifications and the creation of new ones fit for the 21st century. For this sort of bottom-up reform it is recognised that there is a need for fundamental changes at the institutional level where academics are responsible for creating and maintaining qualifications. This transformation from using traditional input/content approaches to output/outcomes approaches to conceive, validate, monitor and express qualifications is proving slow and difficult. This is to be expected, but does not make their resolution any easier.

(Adam, 2008, p.5)

The *Porto seminar held in 2008* reiterated the importance of learning outcomes to other parts of the Bologna Architecture.

The shift to ECTS and learning outcomes requires a great deal of work and resource. For some it will represent a paradigm shift towards a more learner-centred approach to education, for others a development of what they already do. Support and training for staff in developing, writing and assessing Learning Outcomes is essential and this needs commitment at the highest level, including from heads of institutions and from ministers. Sharing of good practice should be a priority.

(BFUG, Porto Seminar 2008, p.4)

With reference to assessment the Porto seminar participants also went on to recommend to the Leuven conference:

The development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks in each of the Bologna countries and within institutions, the development and delivery of learning, teaching and assessment which is consistent with their NQF and the Bologna framework.

(BFUG, Porto Seminar 2008, p.6)

The 2007 London Communiqué included the first mention of ‘more student-centred, outcome-based learning’. The significance of this ‘student-centred learning’ as opposed to ‘teacher-centred teaching’ should not be underestimated. Traditional input-based curriculum has proved to be too focused on the teacher instead of the learner (Adam, 2008). These changes have been associated with a need for improvement in curriculum design, and an acknowledgement that more effective and varied learning styles benefit the learner. ‘This pedagogical trend is at the heart of the Bologna agenda that emphasises the need for dramatic reform to modernise Europe’s antiquated education systems’ (Adam, 2008, p.14). In relation to this study and connected with the overall research question the Edinburgh seminar brought the issues of learning outcomes out of the policy arena (mainly driven by the Quality Assurance stakeholder agendas) and into the realms of teaching and learning. The Edinburgh seminar strengthened the need to examine learning outcomes from a holistic-learning perspective rather than simply as a quality assurance angle. In the Edinburgh seminar Professor Adam also stated:

The benefits in the creation of learning outcomes result from the dynamic and cathartic process of creation where a new approach to learning is honestly undertaken. This will involve a simultaneous reflection on possible learning outcomes, their mode of delivery and their assessment. All learning outcomes must be capable of assessment or they are not fit for their task and should be scrapped. At the level of course and module design there is an obvious and intimate connection between the teaching-learning-assessment relationships.

(ibid, 2008, p.14)

Adam ended the document with a warning:

The harmonisation of Europe's disparate higher education systems was never going to be straightforward or easy. Learning outcomes are not the universal panacea for all educational problems facing higher education and they certainly create distinct challenges that should not be underestimated. However, it is not possible to have a meaningful European Higher Education Area without their widespread and consistent use.

(ibid, 2008, p.19)

The 2009 national reports, which fed into the BFUG Stocktaking Report (2008), showed that learning outcomes were often confused with overall programme goals and were not measurable which meant they could not be used in student assessment. The 2009 stocktaking clearly indicates that, 'a fully-fledged introduction of a learning outcomes-based culture across the EHEA still needs a lot of effort, and it will not be completed by 2010' (BFUG, 2009, p.8). The report again pointed to the 2007 Stocktaking Report, which highlighted two themes that should link all action lines together; a focus on learners, and a focus on learning outcomes.

In relation to the development of learning outcomes the Stocktaking and Trends V reports were heavily influenced by a number of bodies such as the *ESU and CG*¹⁸ (the Coimbra Group). Particular credence was given to the 2009 CEDEFOP report, *'The Shift to Learning Outcomes'*.

The CEDEFOP Report warned that the political agenda that was driving policy across Europe, (EQF, National NQFs and EHEA agenda) could diminish the multi-faceted aspect of learning outcomes in an educational setting. They suggested that the use of learning outcomes for referring national qualifications levels to the EQF is not the same as using learning outcomes when defining standards, describing curricula or designing assessment approaches.

.... more and more stakeholders warn that the learning outcomes perspective can easily be reduced to mere rhetoric having little effect on education, training and learning practises. Some go even further stating that uncritical use of the learning outcomes perspective may prove harmful and represent a distraction.

(CEDEFOP, 2009, p.2)

The CEDEFOP report went into great detail about the role and types of uses that learning outcomes may utilise. In relation to the Bologna Process it said:

In higher education the Bologna process has clearly signposted major changes for curriculum and assessment. Overall, there is work in progress, but at quite early stages of development. For many observers, the Bologna process represents a potential paradigm change challenging the traditional Humboltian university model and

¹⁸ The Coimbra Group (CG) is a network of 40 European universities, some among the oldest and most prestigious in Europe. It was founded in 1985 and formally constituted by charter in 1987

approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that have dominated much of European higher education. Modernisation of higher education is putting more emphasis on strategic management, competitiveness, market links, performance measurement and alternative funding of teaching and research.

(CEDEFOP, 2009, p.100)

The comprehensive report outlined some of the technical difficulties associated with using learning outcomes and that there was no common agreement about their application. In relation to the technicalities of applying learning outcomes the Report questioned;

- (a) whether learning outcomes should be written as minimum 'threshold' statements or what a 'best' or 'average' student might be expected to achieve;
- (b) the number of actual outcomes and the level of detail for each module or unit of study;
- (c) the number of actual outcomes and the level of detail for each qualification (this also links to the development – or not – of national subject/sectoral benchmark statements);
- (d) the use of learning outcomes to establish the standard of achievement (assessment criteria) and the relative performance of individuals (grading criteria);
- (e) learning outcomes approaches to assessment and grading systems are strongly associated with criterion referencing, yet norm referencing is embedded in many European systems, particularly for general and higher education.

(ibid, 2009, pp.101-102)

The Communiqué itself suggested that learning outcomes are a crosscutting issue rather than a stand alone part of any singular action line. The Communiqué linked them to the role of teaching and learning.

We reassert the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes. Student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles.

(Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, p.3)

5.6.8 BUDAPEST-VIENNA DECLARATION 2010

The reason the conference was held in 2010 was clearly a political move to reassure the European partners in the Bologna Process that the EHEA had been achieved by the prescribed 2010 deadline; though this clearly was not the case. With the *Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference*, the EHEA expanded to 47 countries. The Declaration suggested that although the

aim of achieving a European Higher Education Area by 2010 had been achieved, the implementations of all the Bologna Action Lines had not been fully realised:

We welcome their affirmation that institutions of higher education, staff and students increasingly identify with the goals of the Bologna Process. While much has been achieved in implementing the Bologna reforms, the reports also illustrate that EHEA action lines such as degree and curriculum reform, quality assurance, recognition, mobility and the social dimension are implemented to varying degrees.

(Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010, p.1)

The EUA's Trends 2010 report (Sursock and Smidt) provided an in-depth account of the Bologna process to date particularly from the institutional perspective. As the Bologna process developed there was an increasing awareness of the crosscutting nature of learning outcomes, through teaching and learning through to assessment. This was often expressed in terms of student-centredness, input-process and lifelong learning. The data collected for the Trends 2010 Report was by far the most comprehensive relating to these issues.

Since student-centred learning is multi-faceted and depends on a combination of several Bologna tools, it is not an aspect that can be measured directly using questionnaire data. However, an indication of progress in relation to more student-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment can be derived by looking at a combination of the responses to the questions on modularisation and on learning outcomes and the evidence from the site visit reports, which reveals that two thirds of institutions said that they modularized (sic) and introduced learning outcomes. These are typically from very small HE systems, with one to ten institutions.

(Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.48)

Trends V said that many institutions were slowly moving away from a system of teacher-centred provision and towards a student-centred concept of higher education. Trends V had observed that 'understanding and integrating the use of a learning outcome-based approach remains a key medium-term challenge (2007, p.8). While no data are available on this specific question from previous Trends reports, the data from Trends 2010 regarding the development of learning outcomes, 'if taken at face value, are encouraging' (Sursock and Smidt, 2010, p.47). Although the data from Trends 2010 showed that only 4% of Institutions had not implemented a learning outcomes approach, the data does not show a clear understanding on learning outcomes in relation to learning outcomes relating to student-centredness. In realising the broader aims of the EHEA the Report suggests a four-point plan to help develop this aspect. Part of the plan said:

Institutional strategic orientations and European and national higher education policies would be enormously helped if they are framed within a broad vision of the society of the future and of its educated citizens. This would help institutions to exploit fully the link between the different elements of the Bologna Process and to engage in the required curricular and pedagogical renewal that the shift to student-centred

learning entails – a renewal that must be cast within a lifelong learning perspective, and with the goals of widening and increasing access.

(ibid, p.11)

Also in relation to the development of the EHEA, the report acknowledged the inadequate level of discussion regarding the rationale of the Bologna Process. This is perhaps a missed opportunity to engage in philosophical debate regarding a vision of the future European citizen. 'The lack of discussion has probably led to some confusion between the broad, humanistic objectives and the technocratic aspects of some Bologna action lines' (ibid, p.32). Finally, Trends 2010 stated:

The introduction of new degree structures, the 'Bologna tools' and action lines are closely linked with the shift towards a student-centred approach to higher education. A student-centred approach embraces flexibility and choice in progression routes and in approaches to learning and assessment, as well as the use of tools such as ECTS (for credit accumulation and transfer as well as recognition of prior learning) and support services for students, all in a European context embracing 46 countries and their higher education systems and in order to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century

(ibid, p.32)

5.6.9 BUCHAREST COMMUNIQUÉ 2012

The eighth Bologna Process/ EHEA Ministerial Conference and third edition of the Bologna Policy Forum, was in Bucharest, Romania, on 26-27 April 2012 at the Palace of the Parliament. Though the plan of having the Bologna Declaration fully implemented by 2010 has not yet fully succeeded the BUFG still manages the process of the Bologna actions related to the progression of the EHEA. The Bucharest Communiqué reiterated many of the intergovernmental aims of the Process. In relation to the topic of learning outcomes and student centered learning, at the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, the signatories stated that among the priorities for 2012-2015 is to, 'Ensure that qualifications frameworks, ECTS and Diploma Supplement implementation is based on learning outcomes' (p.5). And at a European level, in preparation for the Ministerial Conference in 2015 and together with relevant stakeholders, they will: 'Work to ensure that the ECTS Users' Guide fully reflects the state of on-going work on learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning' (ibid).

The Communiqué paid particular reference to the use of learning outcomes and attached the concept onto areas such as the Qualification Frameworks, the Social Dimension and interestingly advocated a pilot project looking a peer assessment through the use of learning outcomes. The document stated in relation to the EHEA and learning outcomes:

To consolidate the EHEA, meaningful implementation of learning outcomes is needed. The development, understanding and practical use of learning outcomes is crucial to the success of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, recognition, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance – all of which are interdependent. We call on institutions to further link study credits with both learning outcomes and student workload, and to include the attainment of learning outcomes in assessment procedures. We will work to ensure that the ECTS Users' Guide⁵ fully reflects the state of on-going work on learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning

(Bucharest Communiqué, 2012, p.3)

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Bologna Process began in 1999 when 29 countries signed the Bologna Declaration. The Declaration marked a sea change in the development of higher education in Europe. The Declaration set out a programme marked by specific action lines designed to reach a clearly defined goal, of the creation of a 'European Higher Education Area' (EHEA) by 2010.

The current members of the Bologna Process comprise of 47 participating countries and through the BFUG the European Commission manages the process. Inputs are also drawn from other consultative members, such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES¹⁹, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, ENQA, and BUSINESSEUROPE²⁰. The main support structure of the Bologna process is the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG). The BFUG manage the Bologna Process between the ministerial meetings. They established working groups to deal with specific areas of concern and also receive input from inter-ministerial Bologna Seminars.

Over the last thirteen years since the Declaration was drafted, a series of biennial ministerial meetings have refined and amended these objectives and set out guidelines for the Bologna Process in a series of Communiqués. The concept of the *Social Dimension* of higher education was introduced combined with the *Recognition of Qualifications* (referenced to a meta-framework; EQF or FQHEA) all of these had a link the concept of learning outcomes. These additions were clearly perceived as central to future of the EHEA. The process itself gave greater precision to the instruments through which the Bologna Process is implemented. The undergraduate/postgraduate degree structure proposed in the Declaration on the whole has now been modified into a three-cycle system, which now incorporates the concept of qualifications frameworks, with an emphasis on learning outcomes and student-centered

¹⁹ The UNESCO-CEPES: European Centre for Higher Education/Centre européen pour l'enseignement supérieur (CEPES) promotes co-operation and provides technical support in the field of higher education among UNESCO's Member States in Central, Eastern and South-East Europe.

²⁰ BUSINESSEUROPE : Is the Confederation of European Business - formerly the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), is a Brussels-based European association of industries and employers.

teaching and learning. A strong development was the quality assurance agenda, which was driven by the EUA and the ENQA through the ESG. In March 2010, the group of participating countries had grown to 47 and their ministers of higher education marked the launch of the EHEA at a conference in Budapest and Vienna in 2010.

The launch of the EHEA in 2010, while fulfilling the commitment made in the 1999 Declaration, does not represent the end of the Bologna Process. It does mark a shift in focus from the development of instruments and protocols to the task of promoting and supporting the implementation of the Bologna reforms in the real world of organisational and administrative structures and practices of higher education.

(Mernagh, 2010, p.5)

Through the *Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué* (2009) the main working areas for the next decade were laid out. These addressed a much wider and deeper set of aims. By this period Learning Outcomes had more of a crosscutting influence rather than linked specifically to one or more direct Action Lines.

The most recent ministerial conference in Bucharest in March 2012 again stressed that the issue of learning outcomes should be streamlined and rolled out across as many member countries as possible. The ministers set out their agenda leading up to the 2015 ministerial conference in Armenia. The meeting drew on several documents and projects that again pushed the concept of students centered learning. These related to many of the original action lines but also new elements such as peer assessment and peer learning have were discussed and pilot projects were endorsed. The Communiqué purports that indeed the Bologna Process by 2012 is beginning to put the student back into the frame. However one of the background reports that supported the conference was *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report* by Eurydice, Eurostat and Eurostudent offered a different perspective of the adoption of learning outcomes to date by the Bologna members. It concludes that all countries have made significant changes that have enabled the EHEA to develop. Though, progress is uneven against a backdrop of declining public expenditure on higher education and practical problems persist (2012, p.2) The report suggested that too many students drop out from higher education or graduate without employable skills.

It is taking time for some institutions to shift to; 'student-centred learning' - where educational programmes are tailored to what students need, and clearly set out what they should understand and be able to do as a result of their studies ('learning outcomes'). In general, higher education is not yet delivering on its potential to stimulate growth.

(European Commission – Press Release, 12 April 2012, p.2)

5.8 CONCLUSION

The Bologna Process has undergone constant change with many of the original action lines redesigned. The Bologna action-lines were not implemented one by one but rather through national priorities as the basis of agreement and progression was the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). It was some time before it became clear at the supra-national level that an underlying cohesive unit to describe learning activities was needed to facilitate a coherent approach to the various action lines (BFUG, Stocktaking, 2007). Learning outcomes were selected to provide this cohesion:

...acknowledged as one of the basic building blocks of European higher education reform...The humble learning outcome has moved from being a peripheral tool to a central device to achieve radical educational reform...

(Adam, 2008, p.5)

In March 2010 in Dublin Ms Ligia Deca, Director of the BFUG Secretariat highlighted the change in emphasis in the new post-Leuven work plan for 2009-2012. She said that there is renewed focus 'being placed on the development of multi-dimensional transparency tools and on the encouragement of student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education' (Deca in HEA, 2010, p.9). Ms Deca suggested that it was possible to discern certain key trends to the Bologna process. The first is a move from a focus on general policy-making at European level to a concentration on ensuring implementation actually happens in institutions. She went on to say although she believed there was a realistic understanding that the practical implementation of Bologna has not been perfect and the Process may need renewed attention or new approaches and an acknowledgement of critical voices. She also reiterated the point that the Bologna process is, 'placing an increasing focus on complex, yet more productive processes like Recognition of Prior Learning, Lifelong Learning and Student-Centred Learning' (ibid, p.10). In a presentation to the conference delegates Deca presented a slide showing how the EHEA could be unfolded and highlighting the gaps in implementation. The area of student-centeredness was one of those highlighted as a point for concern. See figure 5.1 on the following page.

Bologna action lines EHEA Objectives/ HE priorities

Pre-Leuven (as listed in the 2007-2009 Work Plan)	Post-Leuven (as listed in the 2009 – 2012 Work Plan)
Mobility Degree structure (?) Employability Recognition (?) Qualifications frameworks (?) Lifelong Learning Quality Assurance (?) Third cycle Social dimension Global dimension Stocktaking Beyond 2010 (?)	Social dimension: equitable access and completion Lifelong Learning Employability Student centered learning and the teaching mission of higher education Education, research and innovation International openness Mobility Data collection Multidimensional transparency tools Funding

Figure 5.1: The EHEA unfolded pre & post Leuven (Deca, 2010)

Bairbre Redmond, Deputy Registrar for Teaching and Learning at University College Dublin (UCD) and Irish Bologna Expert, said:

Ireland's successful focus on learning outcomes had helped shift the emphasis towards student-centred learning and recognition of prior learning. The experience of developing a robust national qualification framework offers a clear, coherent starting point for ongoing developments in the Bologna Process, and Irish Institutions now understand that quality control is everybody's responsibility

(HEA, 2010, p.9)

The European move towards a European knowledge economy and the shift to a learning outcomes approach in higher education have all had a bearing on the current trends in teaching and learning in higher education in Ireland. The drive by the European Commission through the Bologna process to have a EHEA by 2010 was an ambitious one. At the time Deca suggested that though these tasks were difficult and complex, many of the Bologna Action lines were well on their way to full implementation. As the ministerial meetings adjusted these action lines international factors have come into play. The global economic down turn has increased the need for a pan-European higher education area. Others have critiqued the process as a nod to instrumentalism and have asked for clearly philosophical debate about the rationale of the EHEA. Indeed in Ireland others have strongly criticised the process by Europe to create these reforms suggesting that the motives were purely driven by economic needs and the citizenship agenda has largely been left behind. At the Irish 2010 Bologna conference Professor Ray Kinsella from the Smurfit Business School, UCD, argued that education needed to bear in mind that its principal objective is the personal development of the learner. Building

from that basis, education can make Europe more competitive and help maintain a high standard of living (HEA, 2010, p.33). Professor Kinsella said:

I think that we have to ask questions about why we, as educators, didn't critique the false philosophy in corporate capitalism whose undoing has caused such catastrophic damage' he said. 'Why wasn't it critiqued? Where did we fail?

(Kinsella in HEA, 2010, p.33)

The Bologna Implementation Report presented at the Bucharest Ministerial meeting in April 2012 stated that the problems with the use of Learning Outcomes had yet to be resolved. The Implementation Report also highlights the confusion amongst members regarding the adoption of learning outcomes as means to moving from a teacher centric approach to a student-centred. The report said that most countries follow two well-known and non-antagonistic patterns of definitions of learning outcomes. One comes from the EHEA overarching framework: what the student is expected to know, understand and be able to do (Adam, 2006) (e.g. Andorra, Azerbaijan, the French Community of Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)). It went on to say that the definition that is gathering momentum is drawn from the EQF for LLL (European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning) "knowledge, skills and competences" (e.g. Denmark, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway and Slovenia). It suggested that there were many countries that were not even using these definitions as a benchmark and others had no definitions:

These definitions are then in some countries further sub-divided into more categories. There are some countries, however, that have not yet agreed upon a national definition of learning outcomes (e.g. Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and Switzerland). There are also other definitions which appear compatible with the two most common patterns, such as "Learning outcomes explicitly express knowledge, skills and other abilities" (the Czech Republic), "knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Estonia and Serbia), "learning outcomes are knowledge and skills and corresponding autonomy and responsibility ..." (Croatia), "skills students are expected to have acquired" (Sweden), "knowledge, skills, or aptitudes" (the United Kingdom (Scotland)), "skills and competences" (the Holy See)

(EURODICE et al, 2012, p.52)

In Chapter 2 (literature Review) the literature relating to the use of Learning Outcomes is discussed from a pedagogical and learning perspective and much of that material is directly linked to the policy development outlined in this chapter.

The next chapter explores how the Irish Government brought Bologna into the Higher Education arena in the State. It looks at the development and implementation of the Irish

National Qualification Framework (NFQ) and how the HEA through the RGRAM funding mechanism pushed Universities to implement key aspects of the Bologna action lines. Chapter 5 also examines the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) process in DCU and how this links this to a student centered curriculum reform process through NFQ compliance with the NFQ delivered through a process of curriculum alignment. The AFI project was a direct result of the Bologna Reform Process. It was connected to the Action Lines through the Quality Assurance, Lifelong Learning (Social Dimensions) and the ECTS Action lines. The approach to learning outcomes was the main focus of the Project and this is discussed in greater detail in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 6

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN IRELAND

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to frame the research question from a National and Institutional perspective. The previous chapter outlined the development of the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) through the Bologna Process and described how these developments related to assessment of learning outcomes through student centred approaches. Within the Bologna Process Action Lines the concept of *Learning Outcomes* and *Student Centered learning* began to emerge through the inter-governmental ministerial meetings and disseminated through Declarations and Communiqués. The process was fluid and organic, and changes, additions and omissions occurred along the way. This Chapter initially describes how this Process affected Ireland through several pathways, including the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (and its reference to Learning Outcomes) and also through the Quality Assurance agenda driven in Europe by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and in Ireland by the HEA (Higher Education Authority) and the IUQB (Irish Universities Quality Board). The chapter describes how a range of Pan-European interest groups largely drove the Bologna agenda and organisations that were regarded as major stakeholders in the Bologna reform Process. Ireland also had a strong history of involvement in the development of European policy particularly in the early to mid 90's. Ireland was instrumental in the development of European Qualification Framework structures, and the NQAI was a major actor in this process.

The chapter goes on to describe how these national developments and the paradigm-shift to a learner-centred approach, through the use of learning outcomes, influenced practice in DCU. It further describes the process of curriculum and educational reform developed in DCU, through the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) process. The chapter discusses the genesis of the AFI project and its subsequent link with the HEA, the IUA (Irish Universities Association), the IUQB, and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). By examining the wide-ranging extant data in this field the chapter aims to trace the policy trajectory leading to a process of *Quality Assurance*, which ultimately translated into a student-centered, learning outcomes approach to curriculum reform.

On a macro level this study looks at the influence of the Bologna Process through the related Irish structures and policies, and examines through a micro lens into how these influences

play-out in teaching and learning, with a particular reference to assessing learning outcomes. In order to frame this question and to give a context of where Ireland was, and is now, in relation to higher education and its purposes, it is helpful to take a look backwards to the historical development of scholarly pursuits, and the birth of these centres of learning: *the University*.

The chapter begins by describing Ireland's link to the European University concept. It suggests that Ireland has always been a eurocentric nation and that the development of the EHEA through the Bologna Process was part of an historical cycle connected to economics, religion and instrumentalism. The remainder of the chapter outlines the development of the NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) in Ireland in terms of legislation, its development and implementation, with specific reference to the university sector. Finally the chapter links the process of curriculum reform in DCU through a learning outcomes approach to strategic organisational directives built around compliance with the Bologna process.

An important background aspect of this chapter relates to the economic developments within the State and how these were also connected to Ireland's 'false economy' driven by an overreliance on capital spending and an underspend on educational investment. Some would say that higher education particularly suffered as the 'Celtic Tiger' years paid little or no attention to investment in the system, and a utilitarian philosophy driven by economic aspirations rendered Irish universities into centres of vocational learning. During this 'economic boom' period the notion of the University (particularly) fundamentally shifted.

6.2 GOING BACK TO GO FORWARD

The process of educational reform in Ireland gathered huge momentum in the early 1990's, though scholarly education had been a focus of Irish 'desire' for centuries. The development of human capital through the acquisition of knowledge is not a new concept for Irish universities. Cardinal Newman, the first rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, (known now as University College Dublin - UCD) had pressed the idea of *knowledge creation* in his seminal work, *The Idea of a University* (1955). He felt that universities should shape the intelligence of youth, such that:

A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom . . . This then I would assign as the special fruit of the education furnished at a University

(Newman, 1955, p.26)

His vision was that while the university would cultivate the intellect of young men through the sharing of knowledge, it would not necessarily pursue a critical paradigm or the production of new knowledge (Readings, 1997; Blackmore, 2001).

The educational legacy of the British influence on the Irish education system should not be understated. The original function of the universities within Ireland was more focused on the expansion of the British Empire than furthering the development of the Irish citizen. However, Ireland's relationship to the Universities of Europe goes further back in history to 1589. In the early modern period, Ireland's maritime links with France, Spain and Portugal took on a new educational significance. This was due partly to political and religious changes in Ireland and partly to the re-configuration of European politics as religious differences hardened (O'Connor in François & Isaacs, 2001, p.109). In 1589 the first of these Irish Colleges was formed in Lisbon, Portugal. Other foundations followed, notably at Salamanca in 1592. The College founded in Salamanca provided an education specifically for Irish seminarians and according to some accounts, the Irish College there was the first such school in Europe (O'Dwyer, 2011):

Priestly formation was only one aspect of the colleges' role. Compostela, for instance, was founded in 1605 to cater for the retinue of Domnall Cam O'Sullivan Beare, many of its early students studying medicine and law in the local university.

(O'Connor, 2001, p.111)

The Irish legacy of education in Europe was predominately orchestrated by religious orders. Paris was always a popular destination for the Irish. From the end of the sixteenth century until the 1930s a community of Irish clerics lived in the university district on the Left Bank in Paris. Irish clerics ran these colleges primarily as seminaries; due to the French Revolution and the separation of Church and State in France in 1906, these Colleges effectively began to disappear.

Ireland's first university was authorised by Pope Clement V in 1311, and founded in St Patrick's Cathedral. Trinity College (Dublin) received its charter and university status in 1592. As the university of the Protestant ascendancy, at the time Trinity received significant state and private funding. Most students would have read for the BA (Bachelor of Arts), covering classics, mathematics, science and philosophy; this course remained essentially unchanged until the 1830s (9th Level Ireland, 2010). From the 1840s Irish Universities including the Queen's University in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, the Royal College of Surgeons and the rapidly expanding Catholic diocesan colleges began to play a significant role in shaping imperial and colonial processes, a role they continued to play until the second quarter of the twentieth century (TCD, 2010). The Catholic hierarchy resented the secular status of the new universities, especially as most of their students were Catholic, the 'Godless colleges', were subsequently

condemned, notably by the Synod of Thurles²¹ (1850). As the Irish State tried to shrug off the shackles of the British legacy, during the 1930s, many initiatives were introduced to refocus nationalism and embrace economic protectionism. Éamon de Valera²² abandoned free trade, pursuing a protectionist policy, which embraced self-sufficiency. These initiatives largely failed because of lack of finance and growing discontent shadowed by impending war in mainland Europe. In the 1960s the economy greatly expanded, under the leadership of Seán Lemass²³. He paved the way for Ireland to open up its trade paths again and set the scene for Ireland's entry into the EEC (now the European Union) in 1973. Growth in the University sector developed rapidly aided by the establishment of the Higher Education Authority in 1968 which in practice operates as a bridge between the universities and the Department of Education. DCU's (Dublin City University) birth came about through the creation of two National Institutes for Higher Education, to provide technical education at university level. The first of these was NIHE Limerick in 1972, followed by NIHE Dublin in 1975. University status was granted to both in 1989, NIHE became the University of Limerick and NIHE Dublin became Dublin City University (Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath).

6.3 MONASTERY OR MARKETPLACE?

When discussing the development of the Irish University it is also important to follow economic changes. This is relevant to this study, as one of the hypotheses being posed here is *that there is a link between economic development and educational reform*. Some educationalists would argue that there should not be such a link and this link devalues the very nature of education particularly in relation to the notion of the 'University'. Newman's view was that the intrinsic value of Education should be enough. One of the difficulties that some educational philosophers have experienced in recognising a significant vocational aspect to education arises from the influential view that the aims of education are intrinsic to education itself (Reid, 1998). However others do see the importance of the instrumental link of education and economics. Christopher Winch (2002) argues that:

²¹ The Synod of Thurles was the first synod of Catholic clergy since the Middle Ages. The Synod took place in St. Patrick's College, Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland and commenced on Thursday, 22 August 1850

²² Éamon de Valera was head of government from 1932–48, 1951–54 and 1957–59 and President of Ireland from 1959–73. De Valera also introduced the Constitution of Ireland.

²³ Seán Lemass was the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland from 1959 until 1966. Lemass is widely regarded as the father of modern Ireland, primarily due to his efforts in facilitating industrial growth, bringing foreign direct investment into the country, and forging permanent links between Ireland and the European community

Education can be an intrinsically valuable activity, but this does not imply that its value is only to be found within itself. One of the points to stress is that vocational education can itself be an intrinsically valuable activity which also leads to the pursuit of intrinsically, as well as instrumentally, valuable activities later in life

(p.102)

The link between the Bologna reforms and Ireland's engagement with the European Commission and its structures relates to the rapid economic growth within the State from the mid-nineties to the mid-noughties. Ireland had received millions of Euros through the EU Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund²⁴, namely through the ERDF, ESF, and CAP structures. In 2012 The Irish governments EGFSN (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs) published its *Statement of Activity 2011 Report*, which stated,

Recent developments in the field of human capital studies have focused attention on the impact of human capital at the firm level. To date, research on Ireland is limited by the absence of appropriate datasets.

(EGFSN, 2012, p.55)

The report went on to suggest that to invest in education should not be necessary when the global economic 'markets' were buoyant. 'In a hypothetical situation of perfect markets, there would be little or no need for state intervention in the provision of education and training (ibid, p.56). The report made it clear that its view on educational reform was about a return on human capital investment,

individuals may not fully appreciate the true value of acquiring an education, due to either lack of awareness, risk aversion (i.e. there are not definitive guarantees that the returns to the individual will be as significant as presumed) or to the uncertainties about the future state of the labour market

(ibid)

By the beginning of the 1990's Ireland had developed into a modern economy, which generated substantial national income that benefitted the entire nation. Ireland's international economic boom of the 1990s led to it being called the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. In reality the Irish economic boom was fuelled by a hugely inflated property market, coupled with a global phenomena of cheap credit, driven by a carefully balanced set of National Partnership Agreements, which kept the workforce largely in check. As a result of these partnerships,

²⁴ The **Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund** are financial tools set up to implement the Cohesion policy also referred to as the Regional policy of the European Union. They aim to reduce regional disparities in terms of income, wealth and opportunities. Europe's poorer regions receive most of the support, but all European regions are eligible for funding under the policy's various funds and programmes. The Structural Funds are made up of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Together with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

inward international investment along with significant support from the ESF²⁵ and ERDF²⁶, Ireland's GDP rose at an average of 4.9% a year compared to an OECD²⁷ (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average of 2.4% during 1986-1996. Employment also grew by 1.8% per year compared to the OECD average of 0.3%. In early 2008 the economic bubble began to collapse. Hounahan (2009) said,

that that the warning signs for Ireland and Europe were there from 2002. The cause of the problem was classic; too much mortgage lending (financed by heavy foreign borrowing by the banks) into an unsustainable housing price and construction boom. The boom seemed credible to enough borrowers given sharply lower interest rates with adoption of the euro on top of the protracted expansion in output, employment and population especially from the mid-1990s.

(p.2)

The unemployment rate, once among the lowest in the EU rose from 4.7% in 2007 to 14.7% by 2012 (CSO, 2012). Based on the government's view of higher education having a utilitarian pursuit, the EU's move in the late 90's to use Bologna as a cohesion process towards a EHEA could be viewed also as a vehicle to increase the vocationality of higher education and thus opening up or exploiting the 'market place.

6.4 IMPLEMENTING BOLOGNA IN IRELAND

In Ireland the process of national educational reform was driven largely by national policy objectives rather than a perceived need to comply with any external global or European processes. In relation to the three-cycle model that came out of the Bologna Process Ireland already had largely implemented this system based on a similar UK model. The reform of the qualifications system was already a key national goal when Ireland became involved with Bologna (Mernagh, 2010).

Importantly, however, these national drivers and the initiatives and reforms that followed broadly fit in with the overall principles behind Bologna, and reflected some of the specific action lines associated with the process

(Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., 2010, Vol.2.p.18)

²⁵ ESF - The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the EU's Structural Funds, set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions, and therefore promoting economic and social cohesion.

²⁶ ERDF - The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is a fund allocated by the European Union: The ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions.

²⁷ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: OECD is an international economic organisation of 34 countries founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

The educational reform process in Ireland gathered rapid momentum in 1999 when the State brought in the 1999 Qualifications (Education & Training) Act, which was to radically change the face of qualifications in Ireland for the coming years. The Act was enacted in July of that year. The Act defined the learner as a person acquiring or having acquired knowledge, skills or competence (NQAI, 2001). There is an implicit definition of learning outcomes associated with the learner and any programme of education and training in the Act:

programme of “education and training” means any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence and includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment and references to “programme” shall be construed accordingly

(Government of Ireland, 1999, Sec.2.1)

The main objectives of the Act were:

- To establish and develop standards of knowledge, skill or competence,
- Promote the quality of further education and training and higher education and training,
- Provide a system for coordinating and comparing education and training awards,
- Promote and maintain procedures for access, transfer and progression.

(ASTI, 2011)

Responsibility for Ireland’s implementation with the Bologna Process rested with the Department of Education and Skills. To advise the Department on policy issues arising out of this linkage, a national steering group was established. This was chaired by the Department and had representatives from the Irish Universities Association (IUA) (formerly CHIU), the Council of Directors of the Institutes of Technology, the Dublin Institute of Technology, the HEA, HETAC and NQAI (Mernagh, 2010). The NQAI had overall authority to make recommendations to the Department based on the inputs from the previously mentioned representatives.

This infrastructure provided Ireland with a centre of knowledge and expertise in qualifications-related fields, as well as a group of dedicated qualifications- focused agencies, that were a key resource in Ireland’s interface with European developments such as the Bologna Process and, latterly, EQF

(Mernagh, 2010, p.8)

One of the most important developments that came out of the 1999 Qualifications Act in relation to the promotion of learning outcomes was that a new Qualifications Authority was established. During this period of change other issues arising from the recent Qualifications Act (1999) were also being discussed at various educational sectoral levels. Issues such as equity and access to education, lifelong learning and vocational education and training were being

discussed in the context of national reform. Mernagh (2010) suggests that the Irish higher education communities' early relationship with the Bologna Process could be described as, 'low key', (p.30) compared to the situation in other European countries, where the challenges of structural reform were more complex and less developed. During this time Malcolm Skilbeck was commissioned by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to write a report on higher education in Ireland. In his report, entitled *'The University Challenged - A Review of International Trends and Issues with Particular Reference to Ireland'*, Skilbeck drew attention to the challenge for higher education staff. 'New and improved ways of teaching students is one of the challenges facing higher education staff' (Skilbeck, 2001, p.73).

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was established in 2001 on a statutory basis as provided for in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999. The Authority was made up of membership from a range of stakeholders. The Authority itself has three principal objectives, which were also set out in the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act, 1999. The objectives of the Authority are outlined in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1: Objectives of the NQAI

OBJECTIVES OF THE NQAI
to establish and maintain a framework, being a framework for the development, recognition and award of qualifications in the State (in this Act referred to as a "framework of qualifications"), based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners;
to establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of the standards of further education and training awards and higher education and training awards of the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the Dublin Institute of Technology and universities established under section 9 of the Act of 1997; and
to promote and facilitate access, transfer and progression.
Source: (Government of Ireland, 1999, Sec.7.a,b,c)

In their first major discussion document *Towards a Framework for Qualifications*, (2001), the NQAI suggested that there was a need to build a new Framework in the context of ongoing European developments as well as driven by the recent Qualifications Act itself.

The Irish Government took the view that instituting a NFQ was the key infrastructural development that would support and enable the (further) implementation of many of the Bologna Action Lines at the national level, and address the other related issues, which were

also of some concern (Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., 2010). Furthermore the CHEPS 'Independent Assessment' document by Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., (2010) stated:

key stakeholders involved in developing the NQF in Ireland also worked at the European level to raise the significance of qualifications' frameworks in the Bologna Process itself, along with the development of the overarching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and descriptors for the three cycles.

(Westerheijden, Beerkens et al, 2010, Vol.1, p.17)

In essence the aim of developing the NFQ was to; 'rationalise and 'tidy up' the degree awards system and to increase transparency' (ibid, p.17).

6.5 QUALIFICATIONS REFORM (THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS)

Between 1999 and 2002 the NQAI engaged in a comprehensive consultative process; producing a discussion document setting out the principles of the NFQ; inviting submissions and finally holding a public seminar whilst developing the NFQ (NQAI, 2001). The relationship between the universities and the NQAI in the Act required the NQAI:

to establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of the standards of further education and training awards and higher education and training awards of the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the Dublin Institute of Technology and universities established under section 9 of the Act of 1997;

(Government of Ireland, 1999, Sec.7.b)

Further to the consultation process the NQAI engaged in comparative research on the development of Qualifications Frameworks in other jurisdictions, such as Scotland and New Zealand (NQAI, 2002). The research identified that in jurisdictions similar to the Irish system a shift to learning outcomes was underway (ibid). The infrastructure and statutory backing for processes around awarding degrees, validating qualifications, and other quality assurance elements were initiated through the Qualifications Act (1999), along with the Universities Act (1997), Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992) and updated to include the DIT Act (2002).

The Qualifications Act (1999) set out explicitly that all awards at every level of education in Ireland were to be mapped to the new framework and that the universities should, 'co-operate and give all reasonable assistance to the authority', to achieve this (Government of Ireland, 1999, Sec.40.1). During the early stages of developing the NFQ the Universities took a cautious position. In response to the NQAIs 'discussion document' the CHIU reported:

The relationship between the universities and the Authority is at an early stage in its evolution, and its development must be approached by all partners with sensitivity

..... The universities are mindful that their principal obligation under the Qualifications Act is *to co-operate with and give all reasonable assistance to the Authority in carrying out its functions*, and to promote this the Act includes a representative of the universities among the members of the Authority

(CHUI, 2002, p.2)

Their caution related principally to the placement of existing awards though they did stress their *support for the broader learning oriented aspects of the Framework*.

The universities identified the establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in Ireland as one of the principal drivers of the shift to a learning outcomes approach within Irish universities (IUA, 2008). The response of the universities to the NQAI's initial discussion document indicated their support for an outcomes approach to the configuration of NFQ levels (CHIU, 2002). Between 1999 and 2002, the NQAI engaged in a series of detailed consultations with a variety of stakeholders. In response to the NQAI Discussion Document on the development of a National Framework of Qualifications CHIU stated;

The primacy of meeting student needs in the design of the framework is welcome, and the secondary benefits to providers, employers and funding agencies will flow from a student-centred structure.

(CHIU, 2002, p.3)

CHIU's main concerns at the time mainly focused on the metrics by which HEIs set their standards and warned off external referencing to these standards.)

In relation to *assessment*, CHIU warned the NQAI about the issues *of flexibility in assessing learning outcomes*:

Modes of assessment should not be a factor in defining levels, provided that the methods of assessment employed are appropriate; for example, where standards of skills and competence are in question the modes of assessment must adequately measure their attainment.

(ibid, p.6)

Caution was also expressed in relation to the European developments such as the Bologna and Lisbon Declarations. Before the NQAI launched the *National Framework of Qualifications* they published a policy document in 2003 setting out the rationale for the specific function of the Framework. The document referred to the 1999 Qualifications Act, which set up the National Qualifications' Authority of Ireland under section 8 (2)(a) of the Act. The Act itself referred in several places to the outcomes of education and training as the acquisition of knowledge, skill and competence. 'This is an implicit definition of learning outcomes for the purposes of the Act

and of the Framework of qualifications’ (NQAI, 2003, p.5). The NQAI Policies and Criteria document various distinctions between kinds of learning outcomes.

In practice, most awards, and certainly most outcomes of programmes of education and training, will include some mixture of knowledge, skill and competence.

It is considered that there is a need to set out what is meant by:

- *Standards*

- *Knowledge, skill and competence.*

(NQAI, 2003, pp.19-20)

6.6 UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM REFORM

With the implementation of the NFQ in Ireland the Universities did not embrace the developments as quickly as the Institutes of Technologies (IoTs). As the 1999 Qualifications (Education & Training) Act had helped create the NQAI it also instigated the formation of two other accrediting bodies. HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council) and FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Councils), both had jurisdiction over accreditation with the non-university HEIs and the Further Education sector respectively. To encourage curricula reform HETAC directed all its HEIs under its remit to comply with the framework by 2005 (Westerheijden, Beerkes et al., 2010).

The universities’ umbrella organisation CHIU established a working group to liaise directly with the NQAI on matters relating to the framework (CHIU, 2004). In 2005 they attempted to promote understanding of the NFQ amongst university staff and students through the publication of a broad based information booklet (IUA, 2005b) Not much attention was paid to the *concept of learning outcomes within the document* except to reiterate their role in credit accumulation and transfer and progression. The sectoral engagement with the NQAI increased during this time because of the:

...increasing awareness within the university sector of the far reaching implications of the National Framework of Qualifications and the desire expressed by the IUA Registrars’ Group for the universities to be active guardians of the integrity of this framework.

(IUA, 2005a, P.22)

In 2004 after the previous European Bologna Ministerial meeting had taken place, each member of the process was asked to nominate so-called ‘*National Promoters of the Bologna*

Declaration (IUA, 2004, p.26). The Department of Education and Science²⁸ appointed a team of Irish educational experts to act as these National Promoters. The Bologna Promoters would be responsible for the dissemination of the relevance of the Bologna Declaration to Irish higher education institutions and Irish policy developments (ibid). Also in 2004 the OECD produced its '*Review of Higher Education in Ireland*'. This was a very pivotal publication, which highlighted some of the inherent weaknesses in Ireland's education policies, and the Government at the time took it very seriously. The report stressed that overarching cohesion from further education to tertiary education must be a priority. It quoted this in relation to ongoing developments regarding inclusion, access and transfer (OECD, 2004). The report stated:

Much more needs to be done to facilitate credit transfer and accumulation, including the recognition of work experience and prior experience. This is an intrinsic part of the agenda of the NQAI, which is seeking to promote a culture change whereby emphasis is placed on the outcomes of programmes achieved by the learner. The NQAI is working to standardize qualifications so that transfers between institutions and the recognition of prior certified learning can be facilitated

(OECD, 2004, p.31)

There were two distinct elements in Ireland that furthered the concept of a student-centered and learning outcomes approach to curriculum in the universities. The first was the *NFQ*, which used the concept of awards being placed within levels in the Frameworks, based on the achievement of *Learning Outcomes* under the precepts of Knowledge, Know-How (Skills) and Competence. The second determining factor was the parallel developments within the IUQB (Irish Universities Quality Board) mirrored by the EUA and the ENQA around *Quality Assurance* which also encapsulated 'teaching and learning' as one of the primary performance indicators. The ENQA by this stage had become a very prominent stakeholder and contributor to the Bologna Process in Brussels.

6.7 IMPLEMENTING THE NFQ IN THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES

In Ireland the Universities still struggled to implement all aspects of the NFQ fully (Mernagh, 2010). Parallel to the development of the NFQ the NQAI, and in collaboration with sectoral stakeholders, a national approach to credit was agreed for higher and further education based on ECTS (ibid). The IUA had previously submitted proposals to the HEA for the future funding of students based on ECTS (IUA, 2006c). The implementation report concluded that Ireland

²⁸ Until September 1997 the DES was known simply as the "Department of Education" and after this the Department of Education and Science until on 23rd March 2010 when department was renamed from Department of Education and Skills

was good at developing coherent national policies but that the main challenge remained the 'implementation of change at the institutional level' (ibid, p.24). The NQAI undertook a review of the implementation and impact of the NFQ in 2008. The IUA (2008) asserted in its submission that the, 'joint impetus of both Bologna implementation (European) and NFQ implementation (national)' (pp.13-14) had led the universities to adopt and integrate a learning outcomes approach. The review by the IUA said:

using NFQ as part of implementation of the Bologna process in Irish HE. The main lines of this - from the perspective of the Irish universities integrating a learning outcomes approach, ensuring the Irish university quality assurance framework and practices are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance, and the improved recognition of international and domestic qualifications

(IUA, 2008, p.4)

The sector had engaged with implementation at differing speeds and at different levels within institutions, with the NFQ instrumental in the roll-out of modularisation within some institutions (ibid). A challenge identified by the universities was the 'ongoing development of the learning outcomes approach in programme design and assessment' (ibid, p.13).

NFQ has been of major use in the development and roll-out of student-centred modular learning..... The learning outcomes at module level are based on Bloom's taxonomy, while at programme level the learning outcomes have been based on the NFQ. This implementation has included training for staff on how to write learning outcomes, developing and using module and programme template, including identifying a suitable NFQ level for each module and programme

(IUA, 2008, p.4)

Within universities, the Framework is seen as part and parcel of the wider academic reform process underway (ibid). During a site visit by the IUA review team, the opinion was expressed that:

the NFQ filled a vacuum which existed and will improve information for the public and for students. While this is useful conceptually, there can also be elements of confusion regarding the actual role of the Framework.

(ibid, pp.8-9)

6.8 THE NFQ & LEARNING OUTCOMES (1ST PILLAR OF STUDENT CENTREDNESS)

In 2003 the framework was launched – it included ten levels based on learning outcomes conforming with Adam's (2007) description of national level descriptors. The learning outcomes classified as knowledge; know-how & skills; and competence were divided into eight sub strands with learning outcomes associated with each level. The NQAI stated:

The intention of the Authority is that all relevant and measurable learning should be covered by the Framework and that collectively the expression 'knowledge, skill and competence' should have this generality

(NQAI, 2003, pp.20-21)

The Framework broke down the concept of learning outcomes into three strands, Knowledge, Skills (Know-How) and Competence. Through the NFQ, the NQAI described 'Knowledge' in relation to the measurement or attainment of prescribed learning outcomes as:

This is the form of learning outcome commonly identified with declarative knowledge. Declarative knowledge is the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings.

(ibid, pp.21)

The second strand, 'Know-How and Skills was described as

Skill is the goal-directed performance of a task in interaction with the environment. The exercise of a skill is the performance of a task that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the person. Know-how underpins skill but is not identical to skill. Know-how, or savoir faire, is the procedural knowledge required to carry out a task. Know-how may be measured directly or implied from performance. Skill can only be measured by performance

(Ibid, pp.22-23)

The third and final strand of the NFQ in relation to 'Learning Outcomes' was 'Competence'.

The NQAI describe competence in the context of the NFQ as;

The practical application of knowledge and/or skill requires learning beyond their primary acquisition. The unique characteristic of competence is the effective and creative demonstration and deployment of knowledge and skill in human situations

(NQAI, 2003, pp.22)

The Framework suggested that, 'competence draws on attitudes, emotions, values and sense of self-efficacy of the learner, as well as on declarative and procedural knowledge' (ibid). One of the most important factors relating to the NQAIs description of 'competence' was that they explicitly recognised that competence could not be divorced from the situation in which the learner demonstrates this competence. Therefore the context and discipline is at the forefront of this. The development of the learning outcomes approach promoted by the Bologna Process are present through the Irish NFQ and into degree programme descriptors. Learning outcomes are at the core of this framework and their relationship to competences is one of the most contested issues. Table 6.2 on the following page, describes the strands of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications in relation to learning outcomes.

Table. 6.2: NFQ Strands of Knowledge, Know-How and Skills and Competence

STRANDS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN IRISH NFQ		
KNOWLEDGE	BREADTH	Knowledge outcomes are associated with facts and concepts; that is, they refer to knowledge of, or about, something. The more diverse, complex and varied the facts and concepts, the greater the breadth of knowledge and this is a matter of level. Breadth is distinguished from the number of different facts and concepts learned, which relates to volume
	KIND	The representation of facts and concepts, including ideas, events or happenings, is cumulative. The more facts and concepts are layered on top of each other, and draw successively upon each other to construct meaning, the higher the level of learning. This process is typically associated with progressively greater abstraction from concrete phenomena into theory
KNOW-HOW (SKILLS)	RANGE	Skills, in both their execution and the demonstration of underpinning procedural knowledge, encompass the use of many different kinds of tool. 'Tool' refers to any device or process that facilitates individuals having some effect on their physical, informational or social environment. Tools include cognitive and social processes as well as physical implements. Tools, and the skills to use them, range from commonplace or familiar to novel or newly-invented. The sheer number of skills acquired is a matter of volume, rather than of level. The diversity of skills is a feature of this strand that contributes to differentiation in level. The completeness of the set of skills (and associated knowhow) in respect of an area of activity is another feature that helps indicate the level.
	SELECTIVITY	The performance of tasks depends on the learner having an appropriate understanding of the environment in which the tasks are performed and being aware of his/her own ability and limitations, while at the same time being able to correctly judge the fit between the demands and ability. Whereas the range of know-how and skill refers to what a learner can do, selectivity (which might also be called procedural responsiveness) refers to the judgment that the learner exercises in carrying out procedures, through selecting from the range of know-how and skills available to him/her, in accordance with his/her appraisal of the demands of the task.
COMPETENCE	CONTEXT	Human situations, whether occupational or general social and civic ones, supply the context within which knowledge and skill are deployed for practical purposes. Such situations range in complexity and hence in the demands they place upon the person acting in them. Highly defined and structured situations or contexts constrain the behaviour of the individual and require lower levels of learning. The range of responses required, and hence the extent to which a broader range or higher level of knowledge and skill have to be drawn upon also depends on how predictable the context is. Acting effectively and autonomously in complex, ill-defined and unpredictable situations or contexts requires higher levels of learning.
	ROLE	For many purposes, joining and functioning in various kinds of group is a key component in putting knowledge and skill to effective use. Joining a group successfully requires individuals to adopt appropriate roles within the group. This requires the application of social skills and an understanding of the tasks of the group. Higher levels of competence are associated with playing multiple roles as well as with roles requiring leadership, initiative and autonomy. Higher competence is also associated with participation in more complex and internally diverse groups.
	LEARNING TO LEARN	This strand encompasses the extent to which an individual can recognise and acknowledge the limitations of his/her current knowledge, skill and competence and plan to transcend these limitations through further learning. Learning to learn is the ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to extract and retain meaning from these experiences. While drawing on other aspects of knowledge, skill and competence, this sub strand places an emphasis on the relationship of the learner to his/her own learning processes. This provides a basis for abstraction and generalisation that, in principle, facilitates regarding this as a separate sub-strand of competence.
	INSIGHT	Insight refers to ability to engage in increasingly complex understanding and consciousness, both internally and externally, through the process of reflection on experience. Insight involves the integration of the other strands of knowledge, skill and competence with the learner's attitudes, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive style and personality. This integration is made clear in the learners' mode of interaction with social and cultural structures of his/her community and society, while also being an individual cognitive phenomenon. A learner's self-understanding develops through evaluating the feedback received from the general environment, particularly other people, and is essential to acting in the world in a manner that is increasingly autonomous.

Source: NQAI, 2003, pp.22-24

Each of the strands was sub-divided again into sub-strands. In the first strand, relating to learning outcomes, Knowledge is divided into 'Breadth' and 'Kind'. The second; Know-How (Skills) is sub divided into 'Range' and 'Selectivity', and then this is sub-divided into 'Context', 'Role, Learning to Learn' and 'Insight'.

while basic knowledge and skills can be described more or less independent of context, for the description of competence it is essential to make explicit the range of contexts in which the learner can demonstrate their competence. Competence outcomes can thus be stated in the form, "In a specified range of circumstances, a learner will be able to. . .

(Ibid, p.22)

The NQAI developed award type descriptors corresponding to each level (NQAI, 2003) Levels eight to ten were associated with universities and their major-awards i.e. honours undergraduate degrees, master degrees and finally doctoral degrees.

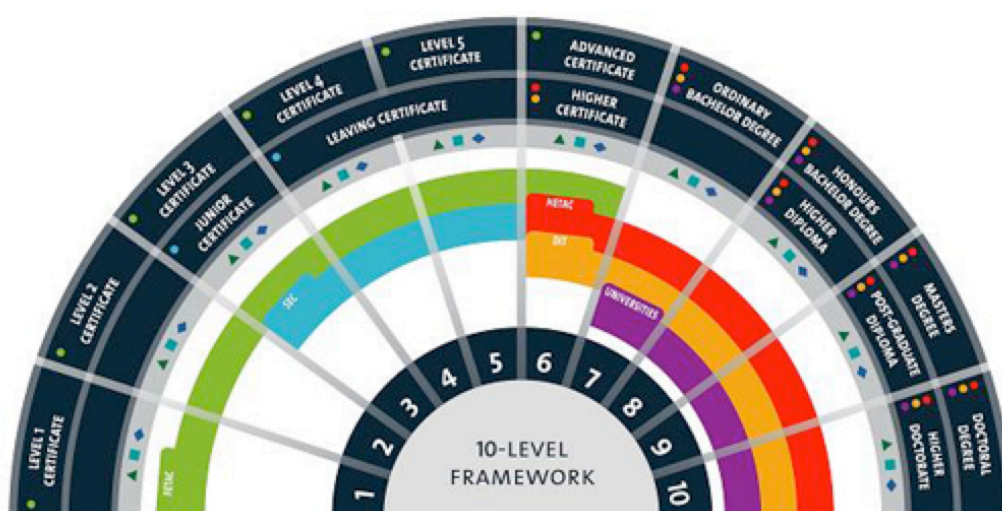


Figure 6.1: Fan Diagram of the National Framework of Qualification

Source: NQAI, (2003)

There were a number of compliance issues, which the IUA and the NQAI had not fully resolved. Most of these however were in relation to the alignment of certain awards (Higher Diplomas and Postgraduate diplomas) at level eight (undergraduate) or at level nine (postgraduate Masters level) on the framework (NQAI, 2006). The articulation of the learning outcomes associated with these awards was identified as an underlying problem with their alignment at level eight or nine on the framework by the NQAI and IUA (ibid). The NQAI proposed that these programmes undergo a review to determine the appropriate level for their alignment (ibid). In spite of these issues Cullinane (2006) reported to the BFUG that the awarding bodies of Irish Higher Education had agreed to use the award-descriptors as outlined by the NQAI. In relation

to the ongoing European developments, compatibility of the Irish NFQ with the Bologna Framework was formally verified in 2006 (FIN, 2009). This was set out in their document, 'Verification of Compatibility of Irish National Framework of Qualifications with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area', (2006).

In April 2008, the European Commission introduced the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL), a lifelong learning meta-framework that was subsequently referenced by Ireland to its NFQ along the eight levels of the EQF in 2009. This framework though outside of the EHEAQF (Bologna Framework) which embraced only higher education would become instrumental in the future development of many European national qualifications frameworks which in turn acted as reference points to the use of learning outcomes. Respondent 'A' (Interview, 2011: See APPENDIX E.) suggested that in fact the EQF LLL, has more of an influence in acting as a reference point for *learning outcomes* for other national qualification frameworks.

Table 6.3: Correspondences established between the NFQ and EQF Levels

Irish NFQ	EQF
10	8
9	7
8	6
7	6
6	5
5	4
4	3
3	2
2	1
1	1

Source: NQAI (2009, p.40)

6.9 THE NFQ & QUALITY ASSURANCE (2ND PILLAR OF STUDENT CENTREDNESS)

In regard to the 'quality' agenda there was an increase in the awareness of the link between quality assurance and teaching and learning in Higher Education amongst academics working on Bologna related developments in the universities. The OECD report had suggested that the Irish Universities should pay attention to this area, which again links into European developments such as the ESG and the ENQA (OECD, 2004). Irish Universities are required under section 35 of the Universities Act (1997) to establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and arrange for a review of the effectiveness of these procedures 'from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years' (Government of Ireland, 1997, p.28). In 2003, the Irish universities established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), which was sanctioned to coordinate reviews of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the individual universities (IUQB / HEA, 2005). The first formal review of Quality Assurance procedures and their effectiveness in the seven Irish universities commenced in January 2004 and was completed in February 2005. The IUQB and HEA jointly commissioned the review, which was undertaken by the European University Association (EUA). The review made recommendations on all seven Irish Universities. In relation to Dublin City University's (DCU) *Self Evaluation Review* (SER), in reference to 'teaching and learning', the report said:

The SER states that DCU has a "strong teaching and learning ethos". There are numerous indicators that the quality of teaching and learning is a priority concern at DCU which lead the EUA team to agree with this statement

(IUQB/HEA, 2005, p.13)

Among other recommendations the report by the EUA also stated that DCU should 're-examine the relationship between teaching and learning in DCU's programmes, so that this fits well with the desired learning outcomes of each programme' (ibid, p.25). In relation to European influences it stated:

It is also worth noting that DCU was recently chosen to become a pilot institution in Ireland for the full implementation of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, key elements of the Bologna Process

(ibid, p.15)

In 2008 the HEA proposed to link the implementation and compliance with NFQ with institutional funding (HEA, 2008a). They proposed that all third-level institutions develop specific learning outcomes for programmes, modules and other learning activities as part of institutional performance evaluation. The HEA's document in 2008 entitled '*Proposals for the Incorporation of Performance into Institutional Funding*' put pressure on the universities to bring in the reforms that the OECD, Bologna and the EUA had been recommending. In relation

to the implementation of learning outcomes and the RGAM funding mechanism it said, 'A continued focus on quality of teaching and learning, the key development of a learning outcomes approach and improved outcomes for students is a Key area' (ibid, p.6). The report though also highlighted the need to support these reforms through specific funding mechanisms.

The development of performance funding must be aligned with the Strategic Innovation Fund. Where an Institution is concerned that it has inadequate capacity to achieve the kind or quality of outputs that are implied in the national priorities, the SIF provides an opportunity for institutions to develop and create capacity to achieve those objectives in the future

(ibid, p.7)

In 2006 the Government introduced a multi-annual *Strategic Innovation Fund* (SIF) for higher education. The Fund was intended to be a catalyst in bringing about change and quality improvement to the higher education institutions as well as promoting collaboration. SIF was one of the measures introduced by the Government as a result of the OECD Review of Irish higher education in 2004 (Davies, 2010). Its purpose was meant to stimulate innovative thinking and action within higher education institutions and across the Irish Higher Education sector system. It has a particular focus on:

- The quality of teaching and learning;
- Improved graduate education;
- Broader access to higher education;
- Better managed higher education institutions.

(Davies, 2010a, p.2)

Many of the initiatives targeted through the Fund were aimed at institutional reform, enhancing teaching and learning and improving access and life long learning. Funding of some €42m was approved in 2006 for projects under the first cycle of SIF and a further €100m approved in 2007 under the second cycle. As the Department of Education and Science (DES) had indicated to the universities that funding under the recurrent grant allocation model (RGAM) would be conditional on the alignment of awards with the NFQ (IUA, 2006b) the universities began to pay more attention to the curriculum reform process. Though the IUA did warn that:

Linking the Framework to funding issues through the HEA's recurrent grant allocation model (RGAM) is seen as a potentially distorting driver, in that it may be perceived by some as pushing universities towards certain types and sizes of programmes

(IUA, 2008, p.9)

In 2008 the HEA developed a set of strategic goals for the higher education sector as part of a proposed process to evaluate the performance and funding of institutions (HEA, 2008a). A shift to a learning outcomes approach was seen as a key element for institutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning as part of performance assessment. The HEA asserted that institutions would need to demonstrate that all programmes and units of learning were aligned with the NFQ and that all programmes conformed with ECTS and the agreed national implementation guidelines for credit (ibid). The university sector appeared to accept the HEA's direction in relation to the linking of institutional compliance with the NFQ and funding (IUA, 2008). The IUA asserted that perhaps this link might act as a stimulus in the development of flexible student learning (ibid).

Deepening the engagement of institutions in the process (McKenna, 2005) was cited in the 2005 national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process in Ireland as one of the primary challenges facing the implementation of the process in Ireland. In Tim Cullinane's 2006 report to the BFUG he stressed that the IUQB:

is in the process of updating the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities and this will include the formal incorporation of the European Standards and Guidelines

(Cullinane, 2006, p.11)

The change in the funding landscape around this time and the link to institutional funding through performance indicators increased collaboration as well as competition between HEI's. The second SIF funding rounds was announced in 2008 and funding was based on open competition between institutions rather than through direct institutional funding (HEA, 2008b), additionally institutions were required to provide matching funding for projects (Davis, 2010a) In his evaluation of SIF projects Davies states:

One item that should receive significantly more attention in SIF projects is the stipulation of higher education outcomes ("What results do we propose to achieve?") and a method of assessing them ("How do we know whether students are learning and, if they are, what they are learning? How do we assess the productivity of institution-based research?")

(Davies, 2010b, p.41)

The majority of projects funded under the first cycle of SIF did not involve curriculum reform in terms of learning outcomes (Davies, 2010b). One project did however aim to focus on the implementation of the Bologna action lines. The establishment of the National Academy for the Integration of Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) in 2007 sought to promote the development of a learning outcomes approach through a series of national and international workshops and a dedicated publication (ibid). The proposal to establish NAIRTL (The National Academy for

Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning) was made by three universities and two IoTs and received three million Euro in funding. Two major projects were funded by SIF to support curriculum reform in five of the seven universities – these projects involved the redesigning of awards and modules using a learning outcomes paradigm (HEA, 2008c). As part of the SIF II funding round four universities and four Institutes of Technology (IoTs) came together to establish the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA). These were Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), Dublin City University (DCU), National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) and four Institutes of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology (IADT), Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), and the Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT) all within the Dublin region. For the second round of the SIF the eight members of the Alliance identified four strands of activity where there is an immediate need for resources to enable collaborative actions. The *Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance* (DRHEA) proposal is an integrated collaborative programme of work addressing these challenges as a system rather than as individual institutions (HEA, 2008). Dublin City University (DCU) was awarded €21,640,000 in funding to manage the DRHEA alliance for an ‘Enhancement of Learning strand’. The strand comprised of four major projects including the establishment of the Dublin Centre for Academic Development (DCAD). Each project focused on different aspects of enhancing learning, reforming the curriculum, teaching for engagement and retention, E-learning, and supporting the learner. A major component of the SIF project was DCU’s internal change management project, the Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI), the majority of which also falls under the Enhancement of Learning Strand (DCU, 2009). This is discussed further in the context of AFI in the next section.

In 2008 the NQAI commissioned *The Framework Implementation and Impact Study*, which was published in 2009. The report found that some institutions needed ‘to work through and elaborate their understandings of learning outcomes’ (Collins, Kelly et al, 2009, p.36). They advised institutions to engage in ongoing and meaningful debate with academics to support a comprehensive engagement and an effective use of learning outcomes in programmes – asserting that such debate ‘should not be construed as resistance’ (ibid, p.37). The report said that:

The universities’ Framework Implementation Network, established jointly by the IUA and the Qualifications Authority to support deeper implementation of the Framework through the exchange of experience and practice between its members, is also working on discipline specific learning outcomes, programme design and assessment of learning outcomes

(Collins, Kelly et al., 2009, p.36)

Issues relating to curriculum development that came to the surface during the consultation process of the study included; a view that learning outcomes were reductionist; that differing approaches and conceptions existed of learning outcomes in vocational and academic contexts; the feasibility or desirability to detail learning outcomes for all levels and what were the appropriate assessment techniques to assess the sub-strands of insight and learning to learn (ibid, p.37).

The study found the implementation of learning outcomes was at various stages of progress across higher education and within institutions; a common interpretation of learning outcomes did not exist but that this was essential for the adoption of a consistent and coherent approach to the development of discipline specific learning outcomes (ibid). The dissemination of knowledge by international initiatives such as the Tuning project should inform national and institutional debate on learning outcomes. The study finally warned institutions to engage in a sustained debate on learning outcomes with all stakeholders to counter against the fear that:

A rushed approach can lead to compliance rather than real engagement if institutions prioritise meeting targets for implementation over effectiveness

(ibid, p.36)

Importantly in the context of this study the Impact Report paid special attention to the link between learning outcomes and assessment:

It is expected that the shift towards learning outcomes will, in the long-term, impact on and be supported by teaching and assessment practices. A learning outcomes approach can challenge existing practice and norm-referenced assessment methods in particular. It takes time to develop alternative reliable methods and to build trust in them. The context of assessment is also an important consideration.

(ibid, p.38)

On the pan-institutional interpretation of learning outcomes the report suggested that any confusion over the definition of learning outcomes should be discussed and articulated to the key stakeholders. The report pointed to international evidence, which stresses the need for time and for on-going engagement with stakeholders to align learning outcomes with assessment practice. 'There is a risk that in the initial stages of Framework implementation, there could be 'over-assessment' to compensate for any perceived shift in reliance on traditional assessment stages or methods. In the Irish context, there is a need to clarify whether the learning outcomes described in the award-type descriptors and Framework Levels are 'typical' or 'threshold' (ibid, pp.38-39)

The report went on to stress that the debates regarding reductionism and utilitarianism need to be ongoing. They suggested that the fall out could include the risks, 'that assessment

practice is a process of reductionism in which the holistic experience of learning can be lost, and that assessment can drive curricula (ibid, p.39). In response to the report the IUA (2010) implied that the established *Framework Implementation Network* (FIN), which was established in 2007, was tasked with looking at the areas of learning outcomes in relation 'typical' and 'threshold' concepts, and had published guidelines relating to it.

The universities have noted from the start of the NFQ that this cultural shift requires sustained effort over the medium to long-term. During the first phase of FIN, considerable work was undertaken around the development and enhanced use of learning outcomes, including for assessment purposes. The FIN publication arising from this work has been welcomed by other HE providers and players as an important contribution to the field

(IUA, 2010, p.10)

They said that the universities had contributed significantly to the debate around the concepts and use of learning outcomes during the initial implementation of NFQ, and they were looking forward to continuing their commitment to these developments. 'The FIN publication referred to is also a contribution in this area' (ibid, p.11). The NQAI's response to the Impact Report in relation to learning outcomes said:

The learning outcomes approach, the subject of Recommendations 12 and 13, is now more deeply embedded in award specifications and programme design in all sectors of education and training. It is recognised that this requires sustained effort and debate over the long term

(NQAI, 2010, p.2)

The *University Framework Implementation Network* (FIN) was jointly established by the NQAI and the IUA at the end of 2007. The purpose of the network was to deepen the implementation of the NFQ within the university sector, primarily through the exchange of experience and practice between members. The network later became known as FIN:

The original protocols of the Bologna Process recognised the need for strong administrative instruments to give tangible meaning and shape to the ideals – the Diploma Supplement and ECTS were mentioned – and as the process developed the need for firm qualifications frameworks, explicit learning outcomes and transparent assessment procedures became apparent. It is in these three areas that FIN makes its modest proposals and its contribution

(FIN, 2009, p.6)

At its inaugural meeting the FIN group reported that knowledge of the framework was mixed, asserting that programme developers were more knowledgeable of the NFQ than administrators and registrars within universities. The network comprised of academic and administrative representatives from the universities and their associate institutions. They reported that learning outcomes had only been developed primarily at the modular level and that the majority of institutions were in a transitional phase (FIN, 2009). Three working groups

were established focusing on technical aspects of designing or redesigning programmes for inclusion on the NFQ; discipline specific learning outcomes and finally the assessment of learning outcomes (FIN, 2008). The network produced a report in late 2009 for dissemination amongst stakeholders in higher education in these three areas.

Professor John Scattergood (Trinity College, Dublin) acted as the Chair of the University Sector on the FIN group. In his introduction within the FIN publication, *University awards and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ): Issues around the Design of Programmes and the Use and Assessment of Learning Outcomes*, (FIN, 2009) he quoted Professor Jenny Moon in relation to Learning Outcomes:

It is important to note that there are clear differences in the nature of programme outcomes and learning outcomes written for modules. Programme outcomes are written for a typical or average student and they may be aspirational. They are not, therefore, directly testable. For example, programme outcomes may evidence areas of learning that are the outcomes of the student's experience of engagement in the programme, on the basis that the whole may be greater than the sum of the parts

(Moon, 2002 in FIN, 2009, p.9)

6.10 DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY: INSTITUTIONAL REFORM – NFQ TO AFI

In DCU the drive to develop the area of teaching and learning had several historical influences. In 2001 DCU had already begun to plan for educational and curriculum change through pedagogical approaches. In reference to the theme of '*education and learning*' the 2001-2005 Strategic Plan said, 'this theme addresses technological and pedagogical development, particularly in higher education (DCU, 2001, p.3). Building upon this strategy in 2005 the new strategic plan (2006-2008) entitled, *Leadership through Foresight*, vowed to review or redesign the entire DCU portfolio (Respondent 'D': Interview, 2011). This is described again in Chapter 8 In relation to DCU's *Strategic Objective No.3*, the Strategy stated that, 'DCU will continually reinvent the education portfolio to ensure that it is innovative and radical and responds to student needs and strategic national priorities'.

Other developments at the time such as the *modularisation working group report* and the streamlining of Marks and Standards led the University to put curriculum reform high on its agenda. Of course all of this was timely, because as the SIF II funding cycle came around there was an opportunity, not only to develop some pedagogic and curriculum changes through the DRHEA, but also to use this funding for curriculum reform within the University. Before the SIF II funding cycle came along DCU had already drafted a document, which was the genesis of the

Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI) in 2006. After consultation with the VPLI²⁹, the DCU Registrar, the Head of the LIU³⁰ and the Students Union Education Officer, the AFI proposal was presented to DCU's Academic Council in 2007. When DCU submitted the idea to SIF the *'Enhancement of Learning Strand'*, the proposal consisted of collaborative inter-institutional Teaching & Learning projects in which some or all of the DRHEA institutions would participate but also for Curriculum and Teaching and Learning projects which would be primarily internally focused. The strength of the proposal was that any learning gained from the internal projects would be shared, disseminated and developed by the DRHEA consortium. In DCU's case the AFI project was the priority *'Enhancement of Learning'* project. The SIF funding helped DCU move relatively quickly in embracing its already espoused learner centered philosophy through real institutional reform. The SIF funding was not directly related to the Bologna Process however as the HEA administered the fund, and as the HEA had adopted a new recurrent funding mechanism ensuring all HEI's comply with alignment to the NFQ and thus Bologna. It was envisaged that SIF would help the HEIs align fully with the NFQ as well as with other priority areas highlighted by the arguments made by the OECD in their report on Ireland in 2004. In their call for proposals for SIF Cycle II the HEA made reference to the rationale in which the fund was realised.

The achievement of world class quality in higher education has been identified as one of the primary challenges for European higher education. In the Irish context, the OECD Review of Higher Education in Ireland made a compelling case for the reform of the higher education system and this has been strongly endorsed by Government and key partners across the sector

(HEA, 2007, p.1)

DCU viewed the *'Enhancement of Learning Strand'* of the SIF funding as ideally situated to help with its new idea of the AFI. In relation to the SIF II funding the HEA said:

the implementation of a learning outcomes based approach to programme design and review with the aim of ensuring that the needs of students are met – the approach to this has been agreed by all stakeholders in higher education as part of the implementation across education and training of the National Framework of Qualifications

(ibid, p.2)

²⁹ Vice-President for Learning Innovation at Dublin City University

³⁰ Learning Innovation Unit at Dublin City University

DCU's Academic Council subsequently approved the AFI proposal³¹ in 2007 (DCU, 2007). At the time the aim of the proposal was to assist in the delivery of the Learning Innovation element of the Strategic Plan. It aimed to do this by

- Placing DCU at the forefront of educational thinking
- Building upon existing strengths
- Enabling interdisciplinarity
- Rectifying current anomalies
- Fostering flexible approaches to programme development
- Widening student choice – both in terms of curriculum and modes of study
- Supporting retention

(DCU, 2007, p.1)

The AFI proposal set out four component proposals, which were, *Guiding Principles*, *Supporting the Framework*, *AFI Precepts*, and *Implementation Schedule*. Many of the Precepts were concerned with improving transparency and equity within the Marks & Standards systems such as coherent registration processes, new procedures in marks allocation etc.

6.11 AFI : A LEARNER CENTRED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

There were four Precepts described in the proposal ranging from flexibility of learning to operational guidelines. In the context of this study the most important of these was Precept 3.1, which stated, 'The DCU portfolio of programme and awards will be compliant with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)' (ibid, p.3). The principle underlying rationale for the 3.1 Precept was firstly, 'to meet Bologna requirements' (ibid, p.5) and secondly, 'to facilitate compliance with national/EU standards and quality enhancement of the students' learning experience and outcomes' (ibid). The proposal went on to suggest additional benefits and outcomes, one of these being, 'Alignment with Formal European and national Quality assurance procedures', (ibid). Precept four has also had a huge influence on this study. This Precept (3.4) related to 'New operations and procedures surrounding the allocation of marks and degree classification will be established' (ibid, p.3). The underlying principles supporting this precept were, 'To guarantee fair and equitable assessment for all students (full or part time, etc), and to properly/fully implement Learning Outcomes model' (ibid, p.8).

³¹ For the full AFI Proposal see APPENDIX A: VOLUME 2.

These Precepts clearly link the development of the Bologna process through the two pillars of student learning discussed in this chapter and in the previous European chapter; the alignment of national qualification frameworks with the Bologna process through a learning outcomes approach expressed through national qualification frameworks, and the need to improve the student experience of learning through the development and integration of a quality enhancement and assurance procedures. The AFI document stated that this element of curriculum and academic reform was based on the need to be compliant with the Irish NFQ.

The implementation plan was ambitious starting with Information and training sessions on NFQ and Learning Outcomes in September 2007. It was anticipated that this would be all rolled out by Aug 2011 (DCU, 2007, p.4). As the AFI project progressed DCUs *'Enhancement of Learning Plan'* was launched as part of DCUs Strategic Plan *'Leading through Challenge'* launched in 2009. This plan expanded up the context of the AFI agenda and reiterated its link to the Bologna Process. Among the nine *Guiding Principles and Values* underpinning the strategy were:

- Commitment to a learner-centred approach which emphasises research informed teaching and learning which works towards the integration of research and teaching
- Creation of a learning environment where all students can access a range of pedagogical and technological innovations appropriate to their needs
- Commitment to on-going quality improvement in teaching and learning based on an active dialogue between staff, students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders

(DCU, 2009, p.12)

Arising out of these guiding principles, four overall objectives were developed:

1. Strengthening the Distinctive DCU Learning Experience
2. Advancing the Flexible, Responsive and Accessible University
3. Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Learning
4. Ensuring the Integration of Teaching and Research

(ibid, p.19)

Objective 2 stated that:

Embracing the opportunities presented by the Bologna Agreement and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as well as a modularized (sic) curriculum, DCU has embarked on a major curriculum reform process – the Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI). As well as aligning with the NFQ and developing more student-centred learning outcomes-based programmes

(ibid, p.21)

A set of Sub-objectives was developed within Objective 2. The second of these objectives made an explicit reference to assessment within the Learning Outcomes domain. *'Implementing the Academic Framework for Innovation'* (2.1) specifically with *reference to the Bologna process, the NFQ and learning outcomes and assessment.*

.....Having already redesigned all programmes to align with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and meet the requirements of the Bologna Agreement, DCU will continue this transformation process to achieve deep reform in teaching, learning and assessment. All DCU modules will be redesigned according to the Learning Outcomes paradigm and will be evaluated to ensure alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. A novel award-to-module mapping process will be developed with the aim of ensuring cohesion between awards, module learning outcomes and assessment

(ibid, p.21)

6.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

DCU's commitment to a *learner-centered approach* originated from its vision of a Learning Enhancement Strategy (DCU, 2009). Concurrent developments in Ireland such as the *introduction of the NFQ* and the revised *HEA funding mechanisms* aided DCU to convert this vision into reality. Through its involvement with the DRHEA (Dublin Region Higher Education Area) Network, and supported by the SIF I and SIF II funding cycles, DCU seized the opportunity to use AFI as a vehicle to implement Bologna in the University. The University was also very aware about the timing of this and considered it possible to bring about real curriculum reform in the University through this process.

It is difficult to say if the AFI process would have occurred at all if the SIF funding had not been there to help structural reform through the DRHEA *'Enhancement of Learning Strand'*. This strand, supported by the SIF funding cycles through the HEA may not have even been developed if it had not been for the OECD Review report on Higher Education in Ireland in 2004. The Government's embarrassment resulting from the OECD report, coupled with the reviews by the IUQB and the IUA had a major bearing on the curriculum reform in DCU and in other Irish HEIs. The timing of the Bologna implementation process coincided with the rapid economic growth in Ireland. The State saw this process as an opportunity to invest in infrastructural proceeds including the SIF I and SIF II funds. The HEAs decision to force all HEIs to comply with Bologna in terms of the NFQ was also a major factor in the development of moving to a learner centered/learning outcomes approach.

The NQAI's involvement in the stakeholder process relating to quality assurance, as well as development of the NFQ also contributed to the AFI strategy. Undoubtedly the NFQ and the

drive to enhance and improve Quality in higher education were framed within European institutions such as the ENQA and the EUA who were both instrumental in drafting the Bologna process Trends Studies series.

The development of the Irish NFQ was viewed as a central factor to facilitate the national implementation of a number of the Bologna action lines (Casey, 2008.) The national legislation establishing the NFQ provided a direct link between it and the learning outcomes approach (Government of Ireland, 1999). As one of the first countries in the Bologna process to develop a National Qualifications Framework, which could be broadly referenced to EQF and the Bologna Framework, the NQAI played an important and influential role in the development of NFQs and the FQEHEA³² at a European level (Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., 2010). The introduction of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, was a key driver in 1999 as an organisational infrastructure which led to the reform process that was put in place by 2001, leading very quickly to the development of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as the single, integrated system in Ireland for defining the relationship between education and training awards (Mernagh, 2010).

In the Irish State the IUA acknowledged that the evolution of the NFQ played, ‘a major role in the reform of higher education’, both relating to broader EU developments and at the Programmatic level (IUA, 2008, p.24)

The ongoing broader reform of higher education is key to Framework implementation. Many of the key Framework elements are also part of the Bologna process, of broader developments in teaching and learning (the move to learning outcomes and student-centred learning), and of generally increased transparency across publicly-funded institutions. While Bologna may initially have been perceived within the Irish universities as of little relevance (given the focus elsewhere in Europe on implementing a three-cycle degree structure), the importance of effective and functioning credit systems, student centred learning, learning outcomes, recognition procedures and quality assurance have all helped to raise the profile of the Bologna process in Irish HEIs

(ibid, pp.14-15)

The IUA also stated that with the implementation of the NFQ it was unlikely that without the timing of the joint impetus of both Bologna implementation and Irish NFQ implementation that either would have had the same impact. ‘The same actors have been active in covering both agendas within HEIs and other bodies (NQAI, IUA, HEA, USI, etc)’, (ibid, p.15). The establishment of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) in 2002, in which the HEA played a

³² FQEHEA = Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

key role, was an important development within the implementation of quality structures and systems in Irish higher education.

Another significant Irish quality assurance initiative in the context of the Bologna process was the 2003 decision to establish the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN), covering all of higher education including the universities, Institutes of Technology and other higher education providers. IHEQN's membership includes the key bodies with a stake in quality assurance in higher education including the Department of Education and Skills, HETAC, IUQB, HEA, NQAI and Irish Universities Association along with institutional representation from universities (Ibid). Other significant Irish initiatives also contributed to the development of curriculum reform in DCU. These included the development of FIN³³, the founding of NAIRTL³⁴, the publishing of sectoral publications and the establishment of a sectoral fund to support curriculum reform initiatives. SIF facilitated major teaching and learning reforms within HEIs including projects supporting the move to a learning outcomes approach within most universities. Uncertainty however exists over the continuation of SIF. This led the IUA to call for a dedicated funding line to be established to mainstream teaching and learning initiatives within a new funding model (IUA, 2009).

In the 'Taking Stock - Ten years of the Bologna Process in Ireland by Edwin Mernagh for the HEA', Mernagh (2010) presents a table (See Table 6.4 on the following page) outlining the milestones in a timeline and the connection between educational Irish developments to those at European level.

³³ FIN - The University Framework Implementation Network has been established jointly by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and the Irish Universities Association and is comprised of representatives from the universities and their associated colleges

³⁴ NAIRTL – national Academy for the Integration and Research, Teaching and Learning: NAIRTL is a SIF funded collaborative project between University College Cork (lead partner), Cork Institute of Technology, National University of Ireland Galway, Trinity College Dublin and Waterford Institute of Technology

Table.6.4: Milestones in Ireland of the Bologna Process in relation to European developments

Ireland	Year	Europe
	1998	Sorbonne Declaration
Ireland joins the process	1999	Bologna Declaration Decision to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
	2000	
Development of National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) begins	2001	Prague Communiqué
Joint Quality Initiative (JQI) begins its work in Dublin IUQB is established	2002	
NFQ is launched IHEQN is established	2003	Berlin Communiqué Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) established Objectives are set out: an overarching Framework of Qualifications for EHEA (FQEHEA) and national qualifications frameworks in each country
New range of Framework awards adopted for higher education in Ireland BFUG begins its work in Dublin	2004	Dublin Descriptors are introduced by JQI. BFUG begins work on FQEHEA, incorporating the Dublin Descriptors
Ireland is asked to undertake pilot referencing to FQEHEA	2005	Bergen Communiqué FQEHEA adopted
Verification of compatibility of Irish NFQ with FQEHEA—final report	2006	
Framework Implementation Network is established	2007	London Communiqué
	2008	
	2009	Leuven Communiqué
	2010	Budapest/Vienna Declaration Launch of EHEA Target date for NQFs in all countries

Source: Mernagh, for HEA 2010: Taking Stock - Ten years of the Bologna Process in Ireland

In the same report Mernagh (2010) also suggested that Ireland was able to make an ‘exceptionally strong contribution to aspects of the Bologna Process’ (p.15) partly due to the

coincidence of Irish qualifications system development with the development phase of the Bologna Process. With the introduction of the 1999 Education & Training (Qualifications) Act) agencies began to be put in place whose remit was specifically focused on qualifications systems and many of these agencies had experts already familiar with some of the key reform concepts.

Taking into account the availability of expertise and resources, and also the willingness of the Irish authorities to get involved at key points in the Bologna Process, it is not surprising that much of the philosophy and many features of the Irish approach to qualifications frameworks are reflected in elements of the Bologna infrastructure

(ibid, p.15)

6.13 CONCLUSION

With the support of SIF II funding DCU was able to roll-out its AFI project. As of 2012 the process is yet to be fully implemented. This study aims to examine in what sense the curriculum reform vision has filtered down to teaching and learning. The following Chapters describe two case studies, which were aimed at uncovering the reality of teaching and learning in DCU and how this revised approach to learning outcomes and students centered learning has impacted on the learning process itself. How have the policy developments such as Bologna influenced teaching and learning in DCU on a micro level. Though the first phases of the AFI project have already been implemented the final part of the process involves *curriculum alignment with the learning outcomes approach*. These case studies offer in the first instance a vignette on the student's perspectives of learner-centered teaching and learning, and the second case seeks the views of the teachers involved in this curriculum reform process and how they perceive their own assessment practices relating to learning and how these connect to learning. At the heart of the curriculum is the learning outcomes approach and thus the assessment component that seeks measureable attainment of these learning outcomes.

The national implementation report to the Bologna process stated that all institutions had described their awards in terms of learning outcomes (Casey, 2008). The framework implementation study however, called for institutions to further their understanding of learning outcomes through continued debate and engagement with academics to ensure the effective use of learning outcomes within programmes and (Collins, Kelly et al., 2008). Mernagh (2010) stated that Ireland had taken the lead in Europe in many ways especially in relation to the development of the NFQ and contributing to the design of the EQEHEA and the EQF. He also asked if Ireland could again be a front-runner in the area of curriculum reform.

Can Ireland again show a lead in making the Bologna changes real and lasting, in inserting concepts such as the use of learning outcomes into the fabric of higher education?

(Mernagh, 2010, p.16)

The 2009 CHEPS Bologna Process Independent Assessment (Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., 2010) identified a noteworthy challenge to individual institutions in the need to deepen and consolidate the reforms within their systems. Mernagh suggests that in Ireland we should:

follow the source of this challenge further into the heart of the higher education system, where we encounter the issue of how to achieve real implementation of the learning outcomes approach at the level of the discipline or programme

(Mernagh, 2010, p.16)

He went on to suggest that it is not simply a 'matter of arranging a systemic commitment: it involves devising ways of supporting higher education practitioners to work out how to accommodate learning outcomes in their areas of practice' (ibid). The FIN project has begun to devise solutions to these issues as they have supported groups of practitioners to collaboratively develop tools for designing programmes and awards for inclusion in the outcomes-based NFQ and for designing appropriate assessment procedures for use in this context.

The collaborative approach that underpins FIN, and the techniques and procedures developed by the network groups, provide models that could have wide application internationally

(ibid)

In the next two chapters of this thesis the case studies will provide an opportunity to describe how and if these aspirations have achieved their aims. The case studies were conducted from the beginning of the AFI process in 2008 in DCU and concluded in 2012. This process of describing learning and assessment from the teachers' and learners' perspectives carries the debate further and seeks to find a common truth, or reality 'on the ground'. By examining the extant data relating to the European and national higher education developments in the context of educational reform we can begin to form a picture of the current state of play. Coupling this data with empirical sources drawn from case studies a form of triangulation emerges. Westerheijden, Beerkens et al., (2010) assert the need for increased participation and involvement of academics and practitioners in HEIs to ensure successful implementation of Bologna initiatives within institutions. SIF funding supported five universities to undertake projects to align their awards, programmes, and modules with NFQ developments. In 2009 the HEA reported that the architecture to develop flexible learning i.e., learning outcomes and the

alignment of awards with the NFQ has been completed within most public and private higher education institutes in Ireland (HEA, 2009).

The following two Chapters (described through self contained within-stage mini-case studies) aim to help describe and illustrate how DCU's AFI process through the NFQ and the Bologna Process have shaped a curriculum reform process through the adoption of a learner-centered approach focusing on alignment and the ultimate process of recognising and accrediting learning - *Assessment*.

CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY 1 – THE TEACHER IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into the assessment procedure

(Rowntree, 1987, p.1)

The first Case Study (within the broader research) comprises a two-phase research process. The first Phase (2008-2011) is based on an audit of academic staff's perceptions of their assessment practices, which was carried out by questionnaire. The outcomes focus on the views of the principles and concepts of assessment as well as the practical aspects of the use of assessment instruments. Phase two updates the data by taking a snapshot of the current situation in DCU after the AFI process has been introduced in the university. This Phase presents the findings of a second series of surveys conducted in DCU (2011-2012), which looked at current Assessment and Feedback practices and how these relate to a dialogical process through the assessment of learning outcomes. The first part of the chapter deals with issues regarding assessment itself and how this may relate to the theoretical concepts of shallow and deep learning. These issues were explored in the second Case Study in the next chapter (Ch.8). In order to answer the broader question of the impact of the Bologna Process through curriculum reform, to a student-centered model of teaching and learning as advocated by DCU's AFI process, it is important again to focus the questions on the assessment process and feedback mechanisms that relate to this. This Case Study is relevant as it forms another pillar of data in the form of a self-contained case study. It uses a purposeful sampling method to gain another perspective on the research question. The vignette is from the perspective of the lecturers and teaching staff within the DCU community. The Case fits into the larger researcher study as a method within a method, and has the function of maximizing information, and not necessarily facilitating generalisation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The Case Study uses the data generated in 2008 to 2012 gathered from questionnaires sent out to all DCUs academic staff. In Phase 1, 137 out of the 200 surveys were completed (68% response rate), and Phase 2 had 131 out of the 200 surveys answered (65.5% response rate). This was followed up with qualitative answers regarding assessment methods employed with their practices and a further survey relating to *assessment feedback* was administered in 2012. The data was coupled with the literature to converge the findings and these are presented in the

form of tables, figures and qualitative statements. Figure 7.1 below outlines the structure of the Case Study and demonstrates the process involved. The Case study is conducted in two phases. The first Phase involved questionnaires with all the staff and focused on the perceptions, practices and views on assessment and learning outcomes. These questionnaires were administered from late 2008, early 2009 onwards. Phase two of this case study is based again on the practices and views of teaching staff in relation to assessment methods and how these may relate to assessment feedback as a result of the AFI process which was based on a learner centred philosophy. The quantitative data generated from the surveys offered an insight into the trends that required further probing through the qualitative elements of the case study. These qualitative elements were analysed using a framework analysis tool coupled with the Miles and Huberman (1994) data flow approach.

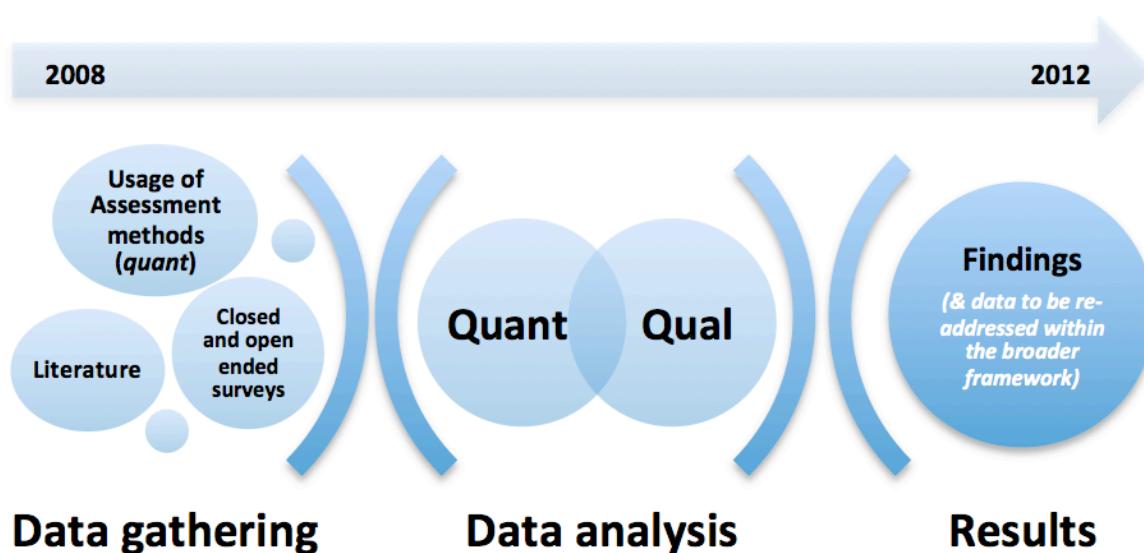


Figure 7.1: Case Study 1: Case Design Approach

7.2 ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH

As outlined within Chapter 6: *Higher Education Reform in Ireland*, DCU's involvement with the Bologna Declaration related to several aspects of the *Action Lines* set out within the Bologna Process itself. Many of these action lines are implemented through referencing Learning Outcomes at programmatic and modular level through the Irish National Qualification Framework (NFQ) and its description of generic learning outcomes. The various issues relating to the use of learning outcomes have been discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review. In 2001, DCU had already begun to plan for educational and curriculum change through pedagogical approaches. In reference to the theme of '*education and learning*' the 2001-2005 Strategic Plan said, 'this theme addresses technological and pedagogical development, particularly in

higher education (DCU, 2001, p.3). Building upon this strategy in 2005 the next strategic plan (2006-2008) entitled, *Leadership through Foresight*, undertook to review and redesign the entire DCU portfolio. In relation to DCU's *Strategic Objective No.3*, the Strategy stated that, 'DCU will continually reinvent the education portfolio to ensure that it is innovative and radical and responds to student needs and strategic national priorities', (DCU, 2005, p.7). Under this strategic objective the document went on to say:

Professional quality standards of excellence in teaching and learning will be developed. Excellence in teaching will be a more formal and visible criterion for promotion

(ibid, sec.5.1)

Specifically in relation to Assessment the Plan (2005) stated that:

- All programmes will include both formative and summative assessment techniques that test both understanding and knowledge.
- There will be increasing emphasis on assessment of higher-level competencies (sic) such as synthesis, analysis and application.
- Assessment styles will be informed by the research-led nature of DCU and to complement the techniques identified in 1.1.above.

(ibid, sec.3.4).

The strongest influence on the need to examine this area was not only the parallel research being conducted with my own students, through the four-year Case Study outlined in the following chapter, it was also driven by the introduction of the AFI process itself. The data and findings generated from this Case may usefully provide valuable data that can be used at an institutional level for the development and execution of a Learning Outcome based system, which is aligned with curriculum and teaching and learning (Biggs, 1999). A secondary function of the research aimed to raise the level of awareness within DCU's academic community of roles and responsibilities for Bologna compliance.

7.3 FINDINGS: CASE STUDY 2 - PHASE 1: 2008-2011

The initial results from Phase 1 are drawn from a survey conducted with academic staff (population 200/ Responses N = 137) within DCU, representing a 68% response rate.

Using quantitative and qualitative methods ensured scope as well as depth to the research. The survey focused on attitudes and perceptions of assessment practices as well as examining actual practice within the university. This was a non-parametric survey. The quantitative

aspects of the surveys aimed at identifying trends. Figure 7.2 shows the main categories of the staff involved in the first survey

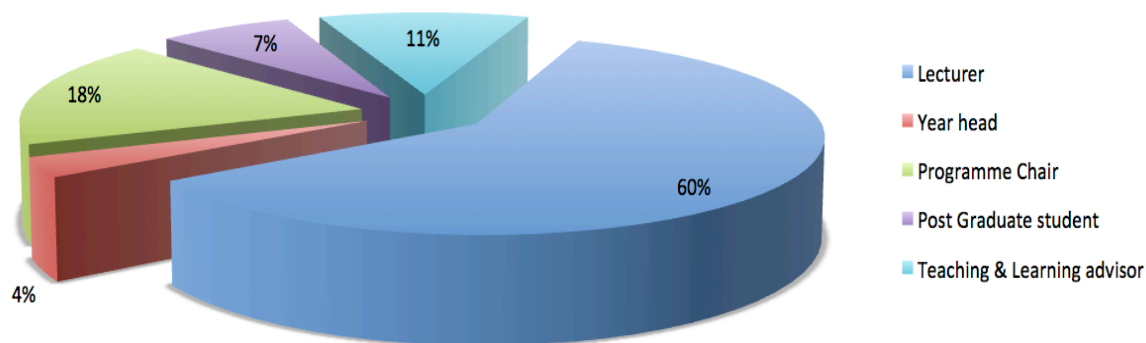


Figure 7.2: Phase 1- Population

Phase one of the Case Study took place at the beginning of the AFI process of curriculum reform in DCU. The findings are drawn from a range of teaching stakeholders before the process of curriculum alignment had been fully introduced. However discussions at School and Faculty level had begun to look at areas of assessment and the ability to use formative approaches instead of the normal summative method. The relationship between learning and assessment was being discussed at School Teaching and Learning Committees but not all staff was involved in the AFI process by 2008-2009.

7.3.1 THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

When asked about the purpose of assessment in the University respondents' replies are represented in Figure 7.3 overleaf:

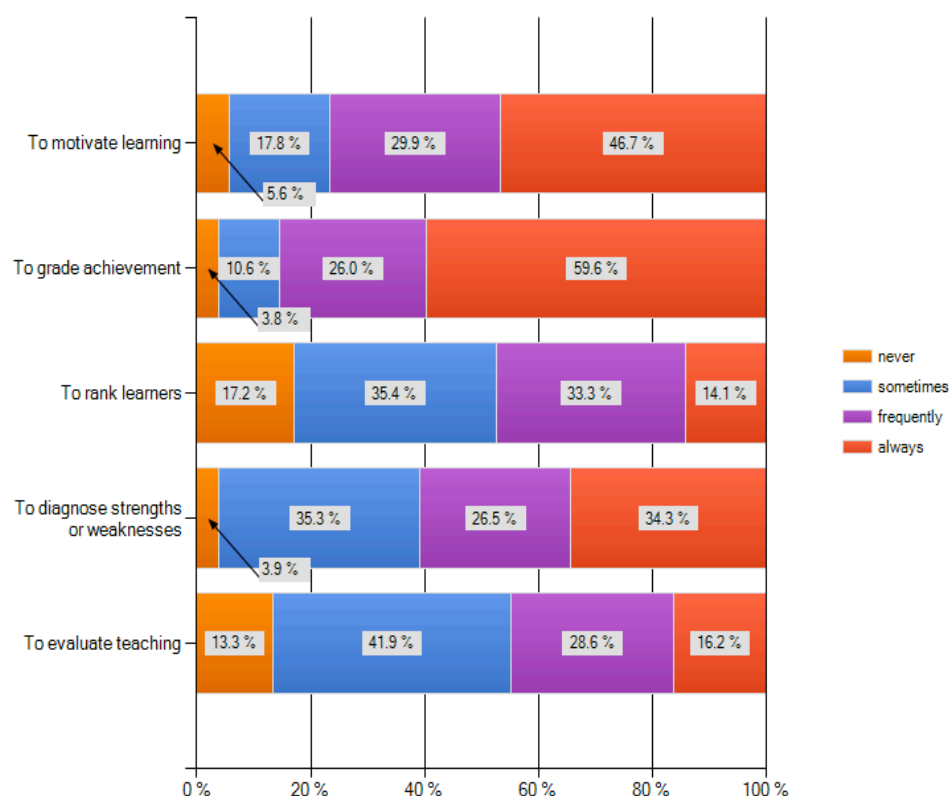


Figure 7.3: Views on the purpose of Assessment in DCU

Table 7.1 lists the qualitative comments relating to the question. Two respondents mentioned the link to learning outcomes and three about external account ability. Only 2 respondents mentioned the link to student learning.

Table 7.1: Phase 1: Qualitative responses: Purpose of assessment

QUALITATIVE COMMENTS RELATING THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT
<i>'To determine if the learning outcome of a module are achieved'</i> <i>'I also see assessment as a method of exploring students' level of critical thinking relating to a certain topic/idea'</i> <i>'To aid learning by timely feedback'</i> <i>'Often not too sure why we assess'</i> <i>'I'm not sure that I can speak on behalf of DCU in stating its purpose'</i> <i>'To assist in the learning process, by giving students a task during which they will gather, analyze and synthesize new ideas and information'</i> <i>'To make programmes conform to externally devised norms'</i> <i>'To satisfy award descriptors and requirements of external bodies'</i> <i>'To evaluate learning'</i> <i>'To evaluate learning and provide direction for future learning'</i>

The findings of the research showed that the majority (59.6%) of academic staff involved in assessment perceived assessment to have the purpose of grading student achievement. This in

itself is not surprising as it is the university that has to demonstrate to employers and society at large that there are measurable standards associated with their programmes. However, the formative processes associated with assessment reform in higher education were rated highly by the respondents. For example, almost 47% of the respondents said that the purpose of assessment is to motivate learners. Secondary issues such as the evaluation of teaching and to diagnose learner's strengths and weakness featured heavily. Two interesting quotes from the findings were '*Often not too sure why we assess*' and, '*I'm not sure that I can speak on behalf of DCU in stating its purpose*' (CS1: Phase 1: Qualitative Responses, 2009: See APPENDIX B.2 for full qualitative responses).

7.3.2 THE ROLE OF HIGHER ORDER LEARNING

In order to connect the question with the literature categories and the convergent sub-categories from Case Study 2, it was important to link the question to knowledge and the types of knowledge that assessment may be able to relate to. This is relevant as the NFQ, which was the one of the Bologna Tools, describes Learning Outcomes in terms of Knowledge, Skills and Competence. Figure 7.4 represents these findings:

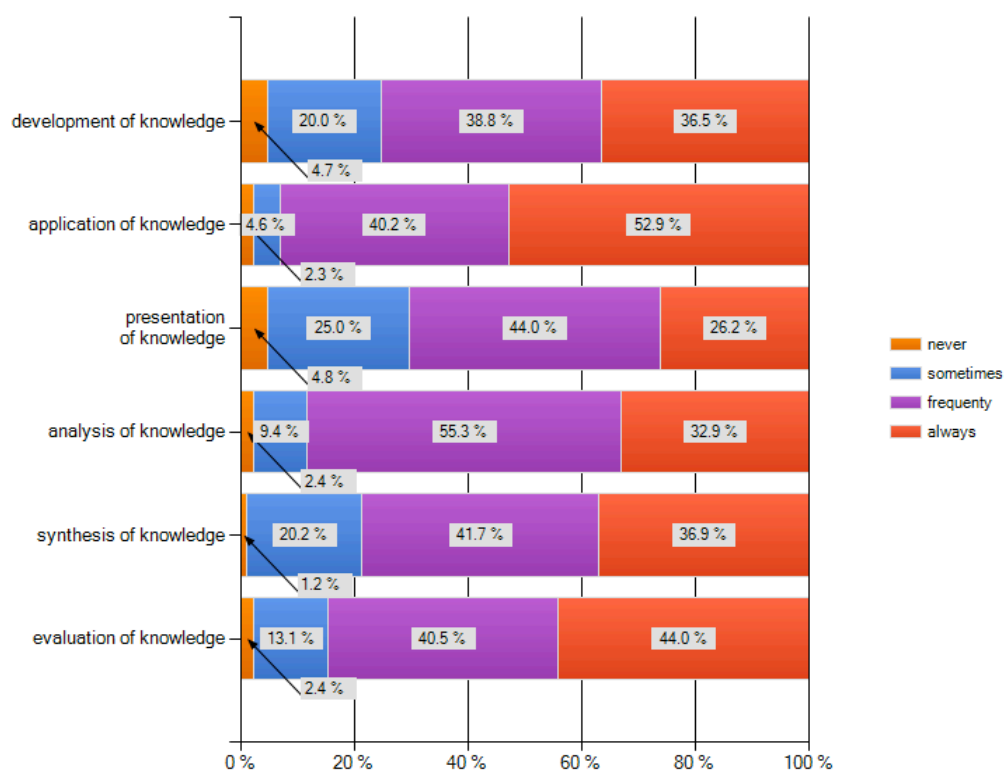


Figure 7.4: Assessment & 'Knowledge'

These findings show that assessment was often viewed primarily as a measurement tool for judging the application of knowledge and to a lesser degree the presentation and development of knowledge. This is an important point as these three areas of cognitive development focus primarily on the lower order thinking skills normally associated with second level education and sometimes Year One of undergraduate degrees. However these elements are part of a hierarchy of cognitive development, which are an essential base line for higher order processes that concentrate on Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation, which also rated highly within the survey (Bloom et al., 1956).

These outcomes demonstrate that there is a relatively good understanding amongst staff of the levels of knowledge development and knowledge kind. This parallels Gardner's (2004) association of *know-how*, with *tacit knowledge* and know-that with *propositional knowledge*. Gagne's (1962) model of hierarchical knowledge fits with this approach, identifying the knowledge set necessary for understanding, learning and performing well on a criterion task. In all domains there is some logic that the acquisition and comprehension of new knowledge demands facilitating cognitive prerequisites and specific knowledge and skills.

However the research showed that an understanding of the progression of knowledge into skills is not as highly rated. Given this interaction between knowledge and skills, their separation in a typology is not entirely unproblematic. I would argue that higher competency levels are characterised by the increasing proceduralisation of knowledge, so at higher levels, knowledge is converted to skills and in turn competences. The findings here showed a *dominance of assessment within the cognitive domain* often ignoring the psychomotor and affective domains of learning.

The next stage of the Case Study focused on the issues of assessment in regard to its relationship with knowledge, skills and competence, as this is what the NFQ system of learning outcomes is based upon. Respondents were asked how many of them considered *the learning outcomes* of the module to be a key aspect of assessment design. 62% said that they always considered this, though more surprisingly almost 19% almost never, or sometimes, only considered learning outcomes as part of assessment.

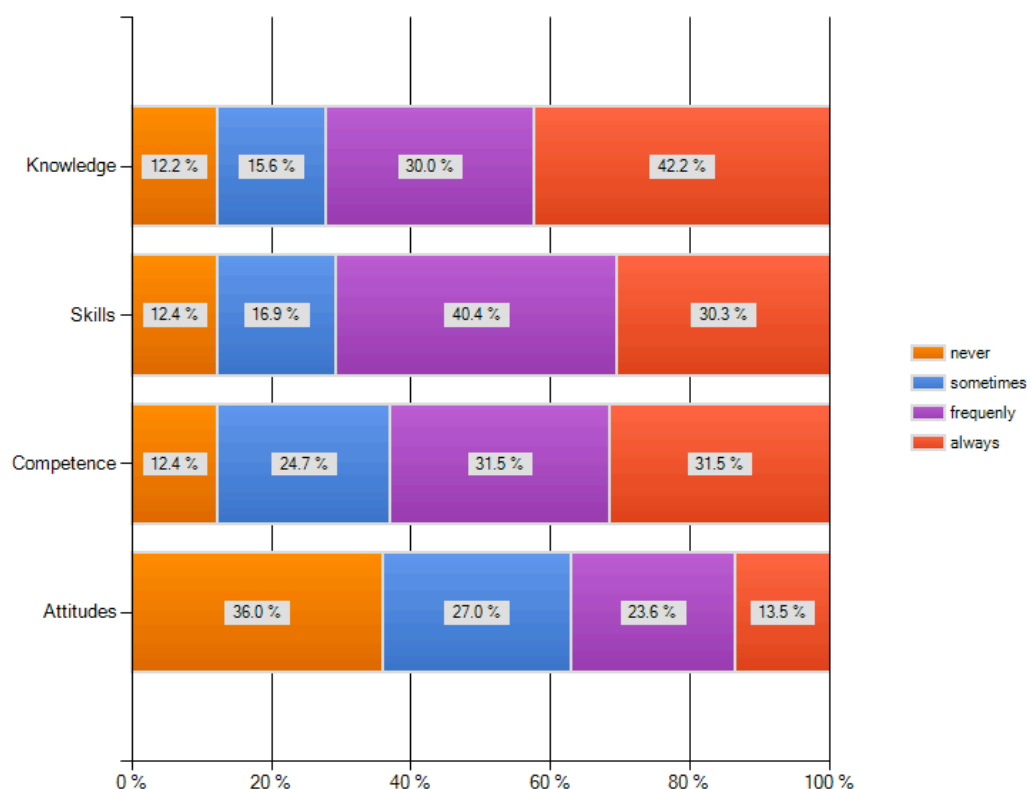


Figure 7.5: Assessment: Knowledge, Skills and Competence

7.3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT & COMPETENCE

The questions within the surveys are drawn from the literature and the other extant data related to learning outcomes and assessment (i.e., Ch.2, 5 & 6). In Higher Education and specifically with reference to the NQF in Ireland, learning outcomes are defined in the context of knowledge, know-how and skill and competence (NQAI, 2003). There may be a danger in ignoring the other domains of learning as defined by Bloom et al (1956). Within Bloom's domains of learning he discusses Attitudes within the Affective domain. Attitude can be defined as a, 'learned tendency to act in a consistent way to a particular object or situation' (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitudes have affective, cognitive and behavioural intention components. A competent person must have the capacity to sense and recognise a situation, the tendency to act in a controlled and predictable manner and an ability to be consistent in acting in a manner relevant to the situation. Although measuring the cognitive processes are important because they have the potential to be generalisable to learning situations in reality (Messick, 1995), they may in their nature ignore the multifaceted layers of deep learning. The

outlined in Chapter 2 and the Case Study results also show that 'deep' and 'surface' approaches to learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976; Marton et al., 1984) can be directly related to the type of assessment methods and assessment framework (including feedback) applied.

Although there was a perception that assessments encouraged the concept of deep learning by through respondents rating higher order skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, highly. However the extent to which these assessments genuinely focused on the learners' ability to transform and evaluate knowledge may be questionable based on the types assessment instruments described. It would be possible for vocationally related programmes to devise similar systems in most subjects but this could be a very time-consuming exercise.

Table 7.2: Phase 1: Assessment methods used

9. Assessment is through;						
	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
seminar contributions	51.2% (44)	30.2% (26)	14.0% (12)	4.7% (4)	1.72	86
individual presentations to peers	31.4% (27)	38.4% (33)	27.9% (24)	2.3% (2)	2.01	86
group presentations to peers	17.4% (15)	40.7% (35)	34.9% (30)	7.0% (6)	2.31	86
essay / paper	9.3% (8)	23.3% (20)	48.8% (42)	18.6% (16)	2.77	86
multiple-choice questions	46.5% (40)	34.9% (30)	16.3% (14)	2.3% (2)	1.74	86
short answer questions	34.9% (30)	38.4% (33)	24.4% (21)	2.3% (2)	1.94	86
case studies	33.7% (29)	37.2% (32)	24.4% (21)	4.7% (4)	2.00	86
reflective logs / diaries	41.9% (36)	32.6% (28)	19.8% (17)	5.8% (5)	1.90	86
portfolio of work	44.2% (38)	23.3% (20)	26.7% (23)	5.8% (5)	1.94	86
lab participation	53.5% (46)	24.4% (21)	16.3% (14)	5.8% (5)	1.74	86
audio / video recordings	76.7% (66)	9.3% (8)	10.5% (9)	3.5% (3)	1.41	86
1 to 1 dialogue	69.8% (60)	16.3% (14)	10.5% (9)	3.5% (3)	1.48	86
written exams	20.9% (18)	20.9% (18)	41.9% (36)	16.3% (14)	2.53	86
computer assisted questions	59.3% (51)	23.3% (20)	16.3% (14)	1.2% (1)	1.59	86
peer marking	61.6% (53)	27.9% (24)	5.8% (5)	4.7% (4)	1.53	86
observations	51.2% (44)	25.6% (22)	20.9% (18)	2.3% (2)	1.74	86
Other assessment modes (please specify)						9
answered question						86
skipped question						49

The findings from the survey often demonstrated some interesting contradictions. Although respondents valued such things as critical thinking they often did not use assessment tools appropriate to the demonstration of such concepts. When asked about what marking is for over 80% responded by saying to *assess critical thinking*.

The findings showed that the dominant mode of assessment was still the 'essay' mode (48.8%) and the 'written exam' (41.9%).

Though some of the responses from the qualitative data (Table 7.3) showed that some teaching staff were also employing innovative assessment methods, no one specifically mentioned the use of portfolio as an assessment instrument. Only 5.8% said that they always used a portfolio method for assessing their students' achievements.

Table 7.3: Phase 1: Qualitative responses: Other Assessment Modes

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES: OTHER ASSESSMENT MODES
'Poster presentation'
'Peer critiques'
'Pre-lab quizzes/ post lab questions on Moodle'
'Contributions to discussions; constructing assessment questions'
'Poster, report, market research evaluation'
'Two essays and one final written exam'
'Group Presentation to Peers'
'Groups project 2-3 students per group'
'Questions in class'
Source: CS1: Phase 2, 2012, Qualitative Responses (see APPENDIX B.2.)

Within the DCU the AFI process *Programme Descriptors* were firstly drafted in the form of knowledge, know-how and skill and competence, which again were broken down into eight subcategories as outlined in Chapter 6. AFI regarded a Learning outcomes approach as the most appropriate tool for describing what should be expected of students through their assessments on *Modular* basis. The findings within this Case Study (Case 2: Phase 1) show that assessment was often viewed primarily as a *measurement tool for judging the application of knowledge* and to a lesser degree the presentation and development of knowledge. In order to assess higher order (deep learning) skills and outcomes we need to adopt appropriate assessment responses to these. In responding to the question: Can such things as Know-How & Skills: Range, Selectivity and Competence: Context, Learning to Learn, Role & Insight (NFQ, 2003), be measured using methods such as Essays? 48.8% answered 'Frequently' through Written Examinations 41.9% answered 'Always'. As this Case Study looks at Assessment from the Teacher's perspective, it should be noted that the data was gathered during the early stages of the implementation of the AFI process in DCU 2008-2009, this being the case the exclusive use of assessing Learning Outcomes against explicit criteria and standards was not a universal practice across the university during this Phase (1) of the Case (2). Only 43% stated that they used explicit criteria whilst marking assessments.

7.3.4 ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

The literature on assessment makes it quite clear that assessment shapes and drives learning in powerful, though not always helpful, ways (Ramsden, 1997). The findings from Case Study 1 concur with this hypothesis suggesting that if students perceive a need to understand the material in order to negotiate the assessment task successfully, they will engage in deep learning, but if they perceive the assessment instrument to require regurgitation of information particularly if the assessment is presented at the end of a unit of learning in a summative context, they will be unlikely to engage with the higher level outcomes which are usually an intention of the assessor.

The findings from the parallel Case study (Case Study 2: The Learner and Assessment: Ch.8) suggested that a formative approach to assessment has a greater impact on student learning. The timing of when assessments occur offers greater opportunity for the learner to engage with the material and understand the assessment criteria. Figure 7.6 outlines the findings from the Phase 1 survey showing the frequencies related to the *formative nature of assessments* in 2008-09 Phase.

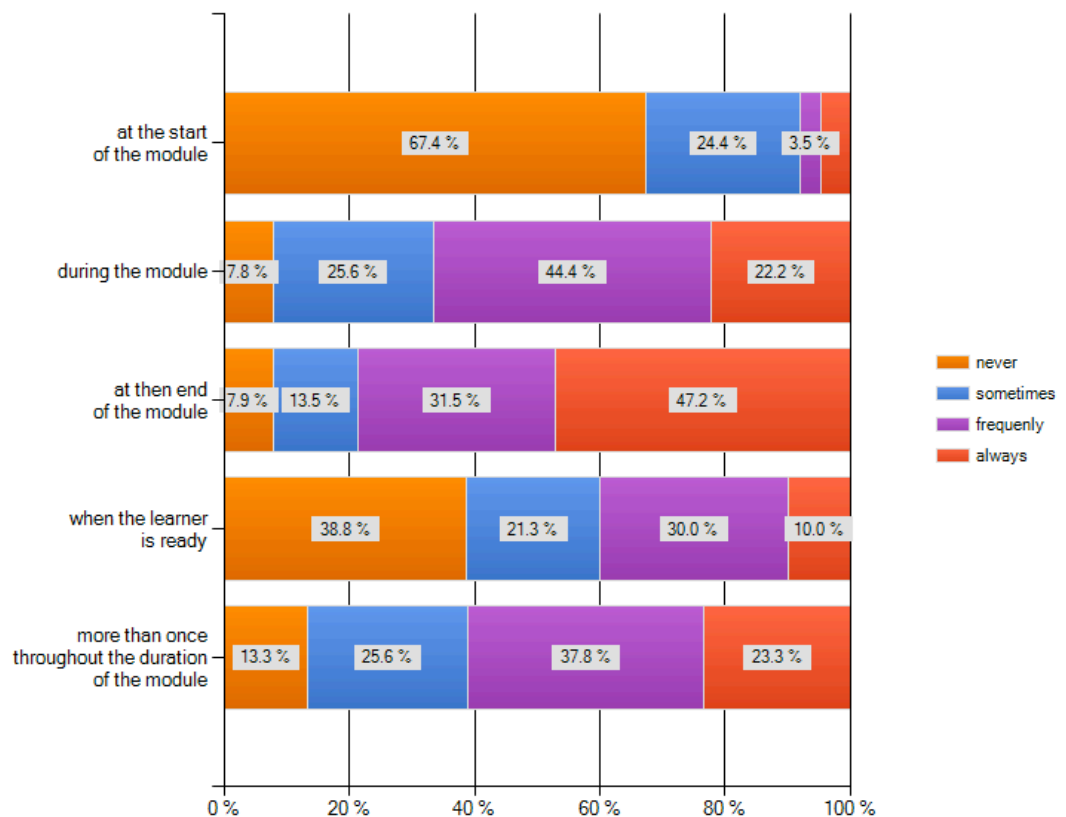


Figure 7.6: Formative nature of assessment (Timing)

During Phase 1 of this Case Study (2008-09) almost 50% of DCU academic staff reported that they offered one to one personalised feedback on student's assessment. Figure 7.7 below shows the response relating to the feedback process.

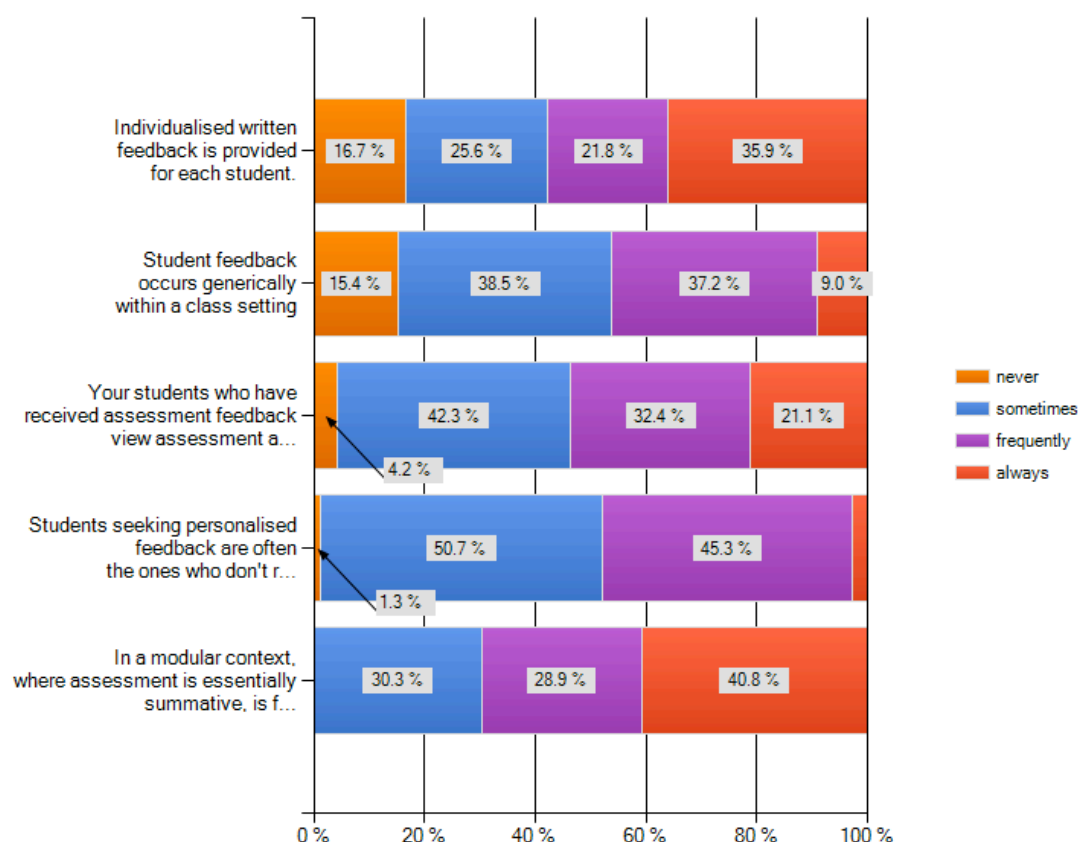


Figure 7.7: Issues relating to the Feedback Process.

The DCU teaching staff was further asked to answer questions relating to the take up by students in relation to the provision of feedback whether this was face-to-face or generic.

Worryingly however, the results also showed that very few students actually sought one to one assessment feedback from their markers. Almost 80% said that less than 25% seek any sort of feedback. The findings also interestingly pointed out that almost 17% never gave personalised feedback.

7.3.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE – VALIDITY

Two of the most important aspects of designing and implementing curriculum assessment are the concepts of validity and reliability. Validity is a form of 'truth-seeking'. It is often described as the match between 'what is intended to be measured, and what is actually measured' (Brown, Bull & Pendlebury, 2005). The area of validity and assessment can often result in

confusion due to the range of validity issues which all refer to different aspects of assessment. In the case of DCU and assessment the issue of consequential validity (Shephard, 1997; Messick, 1993) arises. This form of validity is concerned with the nature and load of assessment upon teaching and learning and other aspects of the system such as administration and research. Phase 1 of the Case Study also sought answers to this question. One tried and tested way of checking for validity and reliability is the process of piloting assessments. This also has a dual effect of checking feasibility, cost-effectiveness and opportunities for feedback in the process. The DCU survey (Figure 7.8) showed that only 6% of staff surveyed actually ever carried out a pilot. Only 29% and 28% of staff respectively were concerned about Validity and Reliability in the assessment design. These findings bring up further questions about training for staff in assessment design.

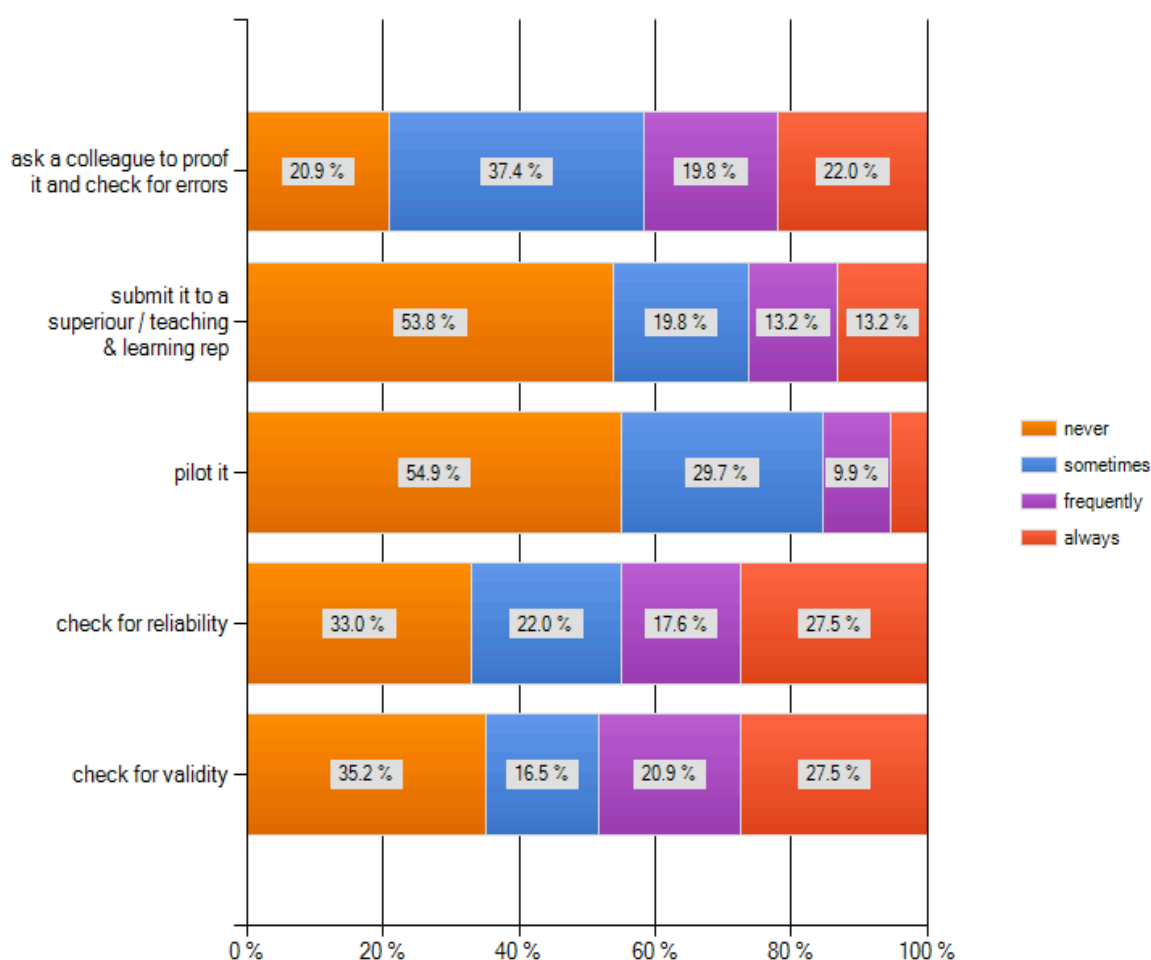


Figure 7.8: Ensuring reliability and Validity within the Assessment instrument

7.3.6 CASE STUDY 1 – PHASE 1 – SUMMARY FINDINGS

Overall the study presented a lot of interesting issues relating to the perceptions, views and practices of the DCU teaching staff in relation to assessment feedback. It should be noted that the AFI process was only in its genesis during this Phase of the research and the concept of student-centred learning through the exclusive use of learning outcomes was not a widely discussed topic amongst the academic teaching community in the University.

Re-framing an assessment framework in the context of constructive alignment is at the heart of this research. The relationship between Knowledge, Domain Skills and Competences was highlighted within the research and the attention to the measurement of knowledge seemed to dominate assessment practices. Little was made of assessment relating to the *Affective Domain*. Only 13.9% used assessments within the *Attitudinal* (Bloom et al., 1956) spectrum of assessment setting.

Again relating back to the literature, the relationship of Competence and Skills to Learning Outcomes was also emphasised. Approaches to competency are based upon criteria-referenced assessment. Commonly competency is usually measured using observable performance and readily inferred performance (Brown, Bull & Pendlebury 2005). The problem with trying to assess competency is that when one tries to measure competence on a set of high-level tasks that demand greater understanding and knowledge the question of pass-fail becomes quite complex. This again draws on the literature (highlighted in Chapter 2: Sec 2.2.3) regarding *Threshold* and *Typical* concepts (Wolf, 1995; Entwistle, 2004) assessing learning outcomes. This complexity comes from the lack of prescribed standards. In the context of assessment, issues of reliability and validity arise due to the value judgments being made by the assessor. Based on developments within DCU, the AFI process could highlight these complexities and encourage Programme Boards and Programme Chairs to look at the standards related to the competences required for their courses, though just to revert to a competence based model is not the answer. The findings also pointed out one of the key issues with assessment during this period in DCU which can be traced back to poorly written learning outcomes, is that they do not embrace the broad range of learning domains: the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning (Bloom et al., 1956).

Although many of DCUs teaching staff did refer to the desire to help improve their students' critical thinking skills and abilities to think creatively the perception relating to assessment were different than the practices. The findings from Case Study 1 converged with this Phase of the research, and also triangulated with the other data pillars (i.e.: the extant data relating to

the EU & HE context: Ch.5 & Ch.6) all suggest that assessment should be placed at the forefront of the teaching and learning experience. This ensures that learning will occur as well as the other important purposes of assessment as outlined by the respondents at the beginning of this Chapter. I view assessment as the most important aspect of my module. One of the significant findings was the statistic that only 5.3% of the teaching staff within DCU during this period said that *Assessment was the most Important aspect of their Module*.

7.4 FINDINGS: CASE STUDY 1 - PHASE 2: 2011-2012

The Case progressed and, paralleled to the other Case Study (Case Study 2: Assessment & the Learner), the focus of the research examined the uses of formative assessment as a method. A secondary aspect of this phase of the Study was to ascertain the level of Assessment Feedback that teaching staff provided and how this was implemented. The rationale was to triangulate this data with the Case Study 1 findings in relation to the *assessment model having a dialogical aspect* to it. The second phase of this Case Study involved questionnaires again though this time the focus was on formative assessment.

In Phase 2, 131 Staff Teaching staff members completed the survey. They were drawn from across the whole University. The total population was 200 with a final response rate of 65.5%. The breakdown by faculty is outlined below in Figure. 7.9.

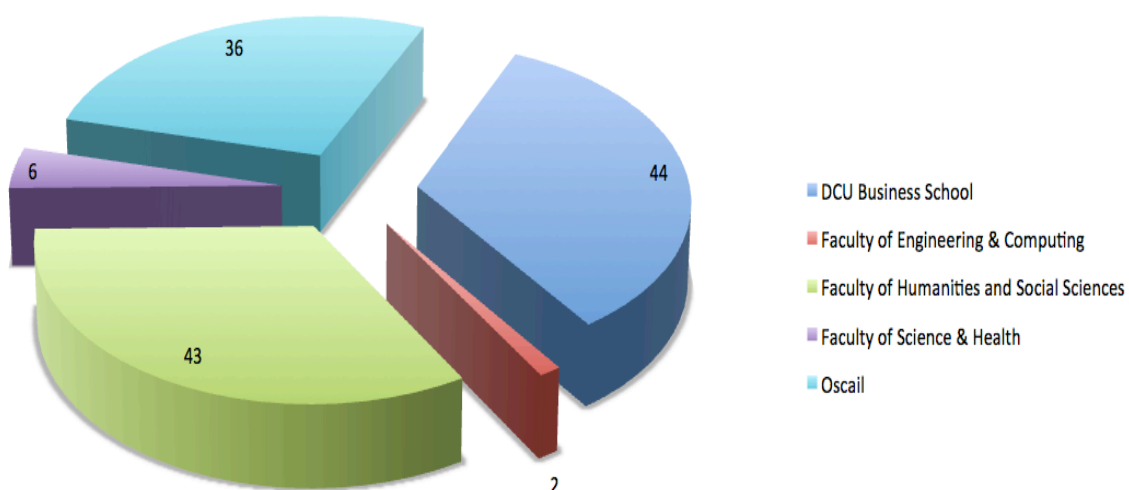


Figure. 7.9: Phase 2 - Population by Faculty

7.4.1 ASSESSMENT METHODS

Respondents were asked to outline the different types of continuous assessment methods used from a bank of 26 choices. The percentage of usage is outlined in Figure 7.10

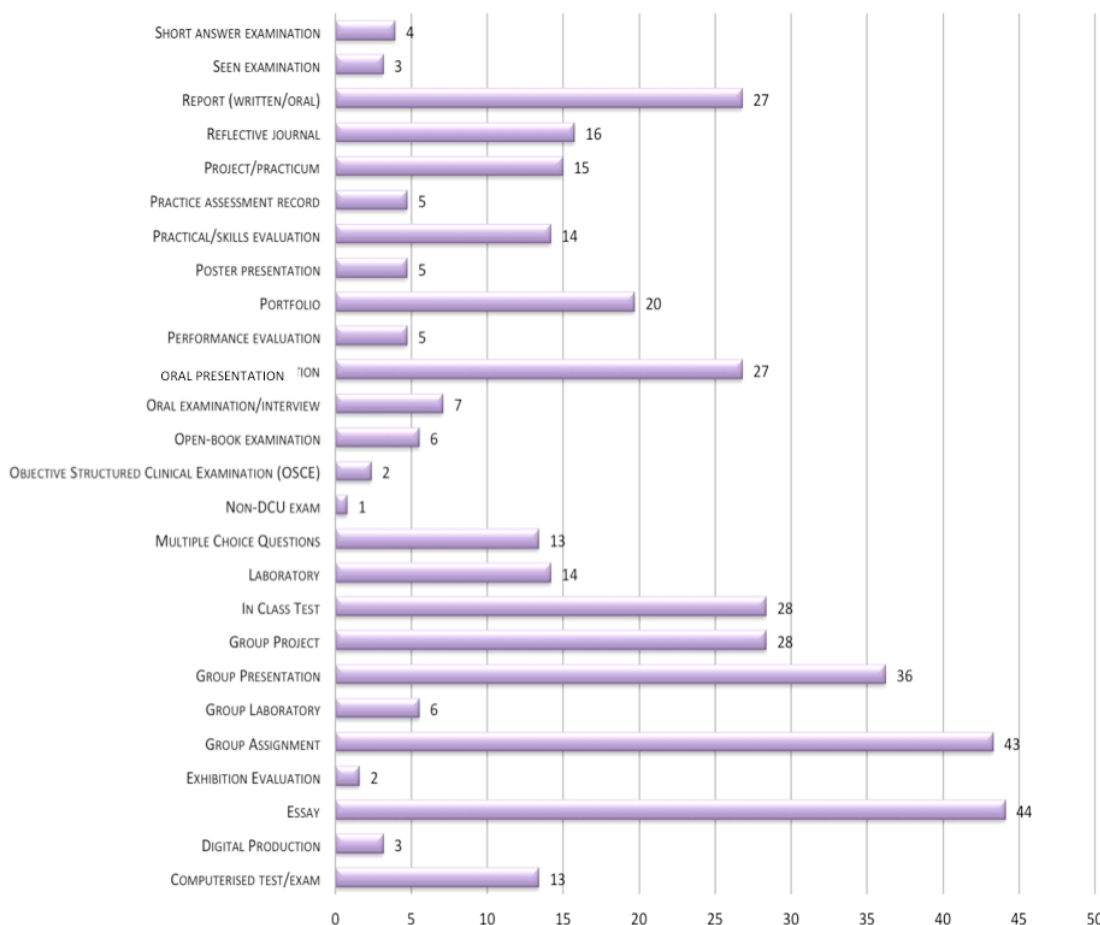


Figure 7.10: Phase 2- Structure of Continuous Assessment elements

The findings show that Essay (N=56) was the most popular choice of continuous elements concurring with the previous Phase 1 Findings. The increase in the use of Group Assessments (Group Assignments (N=55) 43%, Group Presentations (N=46) 36%, also outlines the progress made since 2008-09. Oral Presentations (N=34) and Written Reports (N=34) were used by 27% of the respondents.

The most significant finding from this Phase was the difference in usage of Portfolios as an assessment method. The results showed that that this had increased from 5.8% in 2008-09 to 20% in 2012.

When asked about the function of the Continuous assessment elements of their assessment in regard to the formative or summative nature of the assessment Figure 7.11 shows the breakdown of these results.

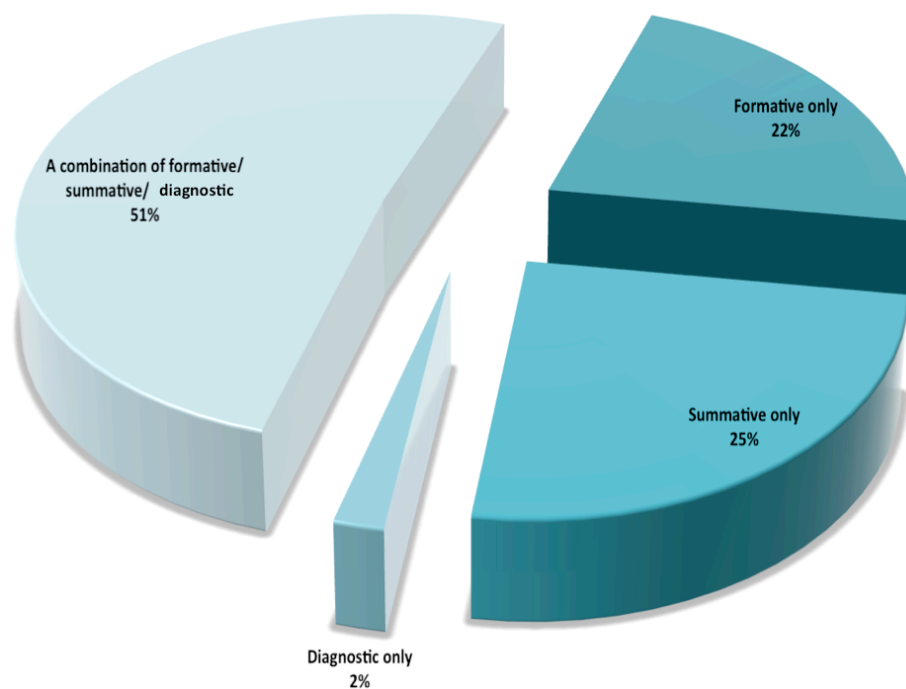


Figure. 7.11: Phase 2: Formative / Summative breakdown of Continuous Assessment

Interestingly 51% (N=81) chose 'combination of both summative and formative' assessment. Only 2% (N=3) used Continuous Assessment as a Diagnostic tool.

7.4.2 ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

The focus of the Phase 2 survey paid particular attention to the issues of Feedback within Assessment. The Teaching Staff were asked about what type of Feedback they supply to their learners. Figure 7.12 shows these percentages:

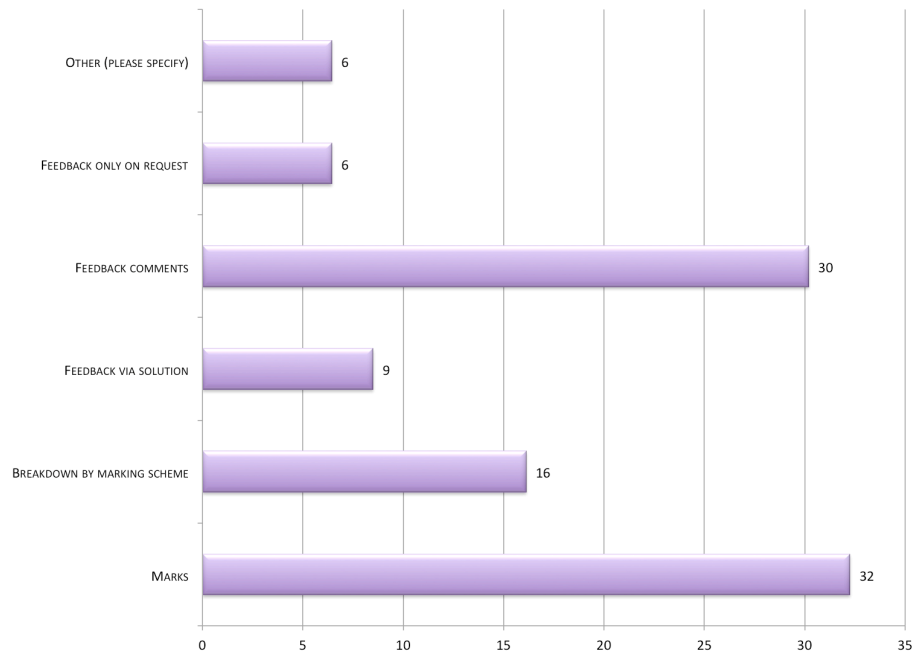


Figure 7.12: Phase 2: Type of Feedback provided

The findings from this question showed that the majority (32%, N=110) of respondents still believed that *feedback of the grades through the marking breakdown* was a type of feedback, though some 30% (N=103) of those asked did say that they provide *Feedback Comments* to students. The timing of feedback varied. The majority (36%, N=46) of Teaching Staff provided Feedback within 2-4 Weeks. 31% (N=39) of Staff provided Feedback within 1-2 Weeks, and 2% (N=3) provided immediate Feedback. Feedback within 1 week was recorded at 13% (N=17). 15% (N=19) of respondents provided feedback after 4 Weeks or more. When asked about the ‘turn-around-time’ for this Feedback to be given to the students, respondent answers are outlined in Figure 7.13 below:

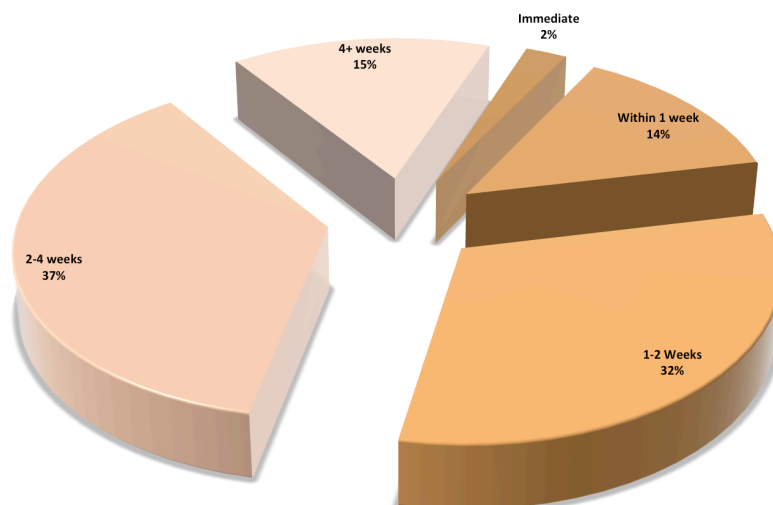


Figure 7.13: Phase 2: Feedback: ‘Timing’

Staff was asked how they disseminate Feedback to students. The results are presented in Figure 7.14.

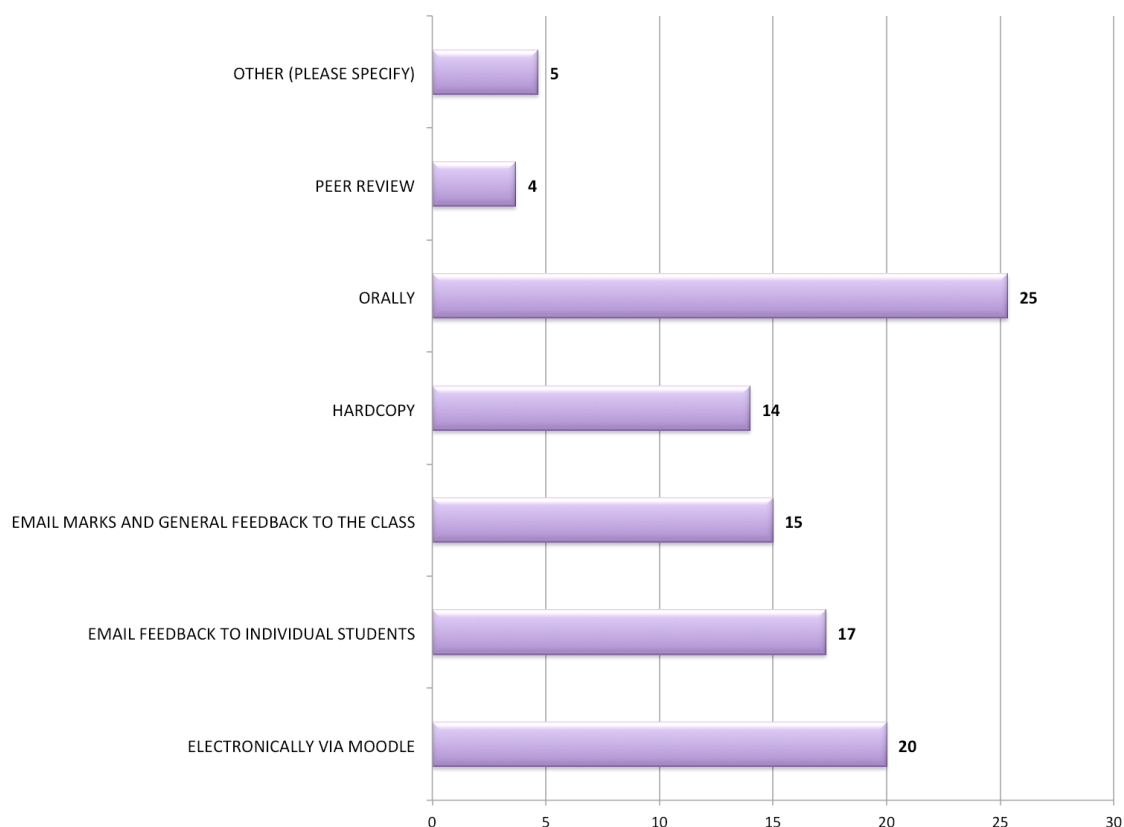


Figure 7.14: Phase 2: Assessment Feedback Dissemination

25% (N=60) of the Teaching provided their students with Feedback orally. 14% (N=42) provided them with a hard copy of the Feedback. One of the most significant Findings in Phase 2 was that the use of Moodle was commonplace and Staff now used the platform for students to submit Assignment through and also to provide feedback. 20% (N=60) use Moodle to provide Assessment Feedback. In relation to the effectiveness of the Feedback mechanisms already described the Survey also asked the respondents to comment on aspects of the Feedback that they believed were particularly effective.

The main factors relating to assessment were described qualitatively by many of the respondents. These have been categorised into 2 Tables (Table 7.4 & 7.5) listing the comments drawn from the findings. One of the main negative factors related to Feedback from DCU Teaching Staff was the issue of *workload, time and resources* when preparing, providing and disseminating feedback to students. Table 7.4 overleaf outlines the comments in the qualitative format:

Table 7.4: Assessment Feedback: Timing, workload and resources.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK : TIMING, WORKLOAD AND RESOURCES
<i>'Time constraints-with the total number of students I deal with and the nature of what I teach- feedback is imperative but to meet every student takes up more time than I have available and I've had to look at ways of giving general feedback and then 1:1 is they ask for it.'</i>
<i>'Large modules with 400 students prevents effective feedback being given to all students. Not sure there are any means of overcoming this.'</i>
<i>'Timing, if you give one on one feedback to everybody, which is the idea, it is extremely time consuming'</i>
<i>'It is a very time consuming exercise, one piece of work can take me 3 hours to assess and report upon. I believe that the assessment and feedback is a vital element of the module, so help on speeding this part of the process up would be of huge benefit to me. '</i>
<i>'Perhaps it is difficult to give feedback in an already crowded term. I think feedback time should be allowed for in the module descriptor and in the workload model.'</i>
<i>'It is very important to provide feedback as soon as possible, but it is time consuming, particularly individual feedback.'</i>
<i>'The length of time it takes to grade the assignment. Assistance with grading would speed up the process.'</i>
<i>'Giving one to one feedback is very difficult and time consuming in large classes.'</i>
<i>'Giving individual feedback to large classes is labour intensive.'</i>
<i>Length of time to provide individual feedback - At present I am only providing this when requested but would like the time to provide it to all students.'</i>
<i>'Time management - less teaching'</i>
<i>'Quite a bit of effort is needed to organise this, and dealing with resulting queries from students can be time-consuming. It would also be very easy for marks to be mis-recorded.'</i>
<i>'Reviewing each students work is very time consuming.'</i>
<i>in addition, time constraint may limit the feedback to little more than a mark.'</i>
<i>'turn-around time is an issue. For an undergraduate module with a number of smaller assignments, this can be done relatively quickly (about 1 week). For masters modules with one or two large assignments (and larger class numbers) the time is much longer.'</i>
<i>'Very time consuming for me.'</i>
<i>'Emailing each student individually is very time-consuming. There is probably no real way around this 'though!'</i>
<i>'Time difficulties - trying to get on with new material while needing to give feedback etc...'</i>
<i>'Time consuming.'</i>
<i>'Time is a challenge in giving detailed formative feedback.'</i>
<i>'Number of students and turn around time mean it can be difficult to have the feedback ready in time'</i>
<i>More time needed in order to give detailed, constructive feedback. '</i>
<i>'The time it takes! I would need to get paid for the extra hours I spend giving feedback. Currently, I spend time doing it, but I feel I am not getting any thanks for it, as a colleague who does not bother with feedback can go on Christmas holidays a week before I do!'</i>
<i>'Electronically provided feedback is laborious (sic) as detailed commentary is provided in written form and needs to</i>

<i>be uploaded individually'</i>
<i>'On very large modules it is difficult to provide individual feedback promptly'</i>
<i>'It is extremely time-consuming. There's no obvious solution'</i>
<i>'Very large class sizes make individual feedback, either written or verbal, more difficult.'</i>
<i>'Time pressure. In smaller classes I can give feedback on the day of submission or within 24 hours. Most classes I need to block off the necessary hours to get the feedback turned round in less than a week'</i>
<i>'Preparing and disseminating feedback is very time consuming (especially for large groups)'</i>
<i>'Time in grading, administration and return of assessments. Provision of resources.'</i>
<i>'Just time consuming and this can't be overcome'</i>
<i>'Lack of participation by students in the feedback process; time constraints for returning around homework assignments and in-class tests'</i>
<i>Time!</i>
<i>'Very time consuming.'</i>
<i>'It can be quite time consuming.'</i>
<i>'We need a greater level of resources in the form of properly qualified tutors (with the emphasis on properly qualified) who can work in small groups.'</i>
<i>Emailing individual marking sheets can be quite time consuming for larger (>30) class groups.'</i>
<i>'The only difficulty is the time it takes to provide helpful feedback to the weaker students'</i>
<i>'The second problem with feedback is the workload involved for many lectures / markers. Often a marker can be dealing with over 800 pieces of a word to be assessed and fed-back upon. The administrative load on this process is too much'</i>
Source: CS1: Phase 2, 2012, Qual Responses

From the qualitative responses a second theme that emerged was issues relating to the responsibility of the student (assessee) in the feedback process. Many respondents commented on the lack of take-up in the offer of personalised one-to-one feedback and others simply did not turn up to collect the written feedback. Considering the first theme (Timing & Workload) this could cause greater difficulties in motivating staff to provide feedback. The following table (Table 7.5) outlines the student issues relating to feedback.

Table 7.5: Assessment Feedback: Student Issues

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK : STUDENT ISSUES
'On one or two occasions students find it difficult to hear negative feedback but giving them the opportunity to reflect on it and revert back to me afterwards has helped somewhat here. Perhaps I would benefit from some training on the dissemination of negative feedback.'
'A student not showing up on the set days is also very difficult to manage. Solution, not allow students to miss those days (unless ill).'
'Finally, there is the issue of those students who don't collect the feedback when you've put time into comments; these are often the ones who need it most.'
' Students who submit work late and get graded separately and feed back arrives back late with them.'
' Students not taking opportunity to avail of one-to-one feedback.'
'Often it is the high achieving students who seek feedback, those most in need of it, don't avail of opportunities to meet with lecturer.'
' Unrealistic expectations on the part of a lot of students about the quality of their work.'
'Some students see the process as an opportunity to argue that they should have got higher marks. 'Students need to be made aware of the purpose of feedback'
'My school would be extremely supportive of students but there are limits.'
' Students need to attend class to get the feedback'
'Some students do not avail of the drop-in facility in order to receive feedback or attend feedback sessions.'
'Once students obtain their marks they tend not to be interested in more detailed comments. This is particularly noticeable among undergraduate students regardless of their original marks.'
'I require students to collect feedback personally. Sometimes students do not do so '
The students requiring corrective or diagnostic feedback the most are often less likely to seek this advice '
'Sometimes student feel that they have right to a certain mark and want me as the lecturer to justify why they did not obtain it. '
'They can be quite arrogant and last year I actually had to keep my office door open during 'consultations for this very reason'
'Many students do not elect to come for feedback.'
' Students not showing up or not making appointments for feedback. '
'I offer students to make appointments at their own convenience which some students take advantage of. '
'The specific set days for student feedback don't work for nursing students, as they are often on placement during these days and need to come on an alternative date.'
'Main difficulty is students failing to attend for feedback. Mechanism and structure of feedback is good but it cannot account for those students who do not bother to avail of it.'
'Lack of student take up for 1-1 feedback, also this is labour intensive'
' They do not turn up '
' Failure by students to collect marked group assignments with feedback comments on them'
Source: CS1: Phase 2, 2012, Qual Responses (see APPENDIX B.2)

Text analysis software was used to generate Word Clouds to highlight the relevant aspects of the qualitative comments. The 'Word Cloud' shown below in Figure 7.15 shows the frequency and highlights the main used words or phrases group within context. In this case the theme

was the ‘timing, workload, and resources’ associated with providing feedback. This at-a-glance analysis helps gives a broad pattern for the analysis process before filtering down deeper and triangulating the results with the quantitative findings.



Figure 7.15: Phase 2: Feedback: Timing, workload, and resources.

Once again text analysis software was used to generate Word Clouds to highlight the relevant aspects of the qualitative comments. This helped distill the comments into frequencies from the respondents. The ‘feedback: student issues’ Word Cloud is shown below in Figure 7.16.



Figure 7.16: Phase 2: Feedback Student issues

Staff had various views on the nature of feedback and the pros and cons of each method. There was general agreement that face-to-face feedback was an effective but time consuming mechanism.

Table 7.5: Phase 2: Feedback: Face to Face

FACE TO FACE FEEDBACK
<i>'The face-to-face 1:1 feedback is without a doubt the most effective as it enables them to truly understand not just what to improve but "HOW" e.g. writing skills and analysis'</i>
<i>'Direct oral feedback with students is most beneficial for both parties'</i>
<i>'Face to face feedback is always the most affective but this is not possible when you have 7 modules to teach some of which are made up of large classes'</i>
<i>Orally going over the assignment with the student is what I find to be most constructive.</i>
<i>'I think the combination of comments and oral feedback works best as I can point out to the student specifically how to improve etc and it also gives them time to ask specific questions re style structure etc.'</i>
<i>'You can get to the heart of a student's understanding very quickly face to face.</i>
<i>'One-to-one feedback (orally). Encouraging students to 're-do' elements which they found difficult and/ or to focus pro-actively on these difficulties in the weeks that follow'</i>
<i>'One-to-one discussion with students; careful and thorough commenting on written work; immediate feedback through solutions to in-class tests'</i>
<i>Source: CS1: Phase 2, 2012. Qual Responses</i>

Again text analysis was used to generate a Word Cloud, which helped identify trends in the framework analysis process. Figure 7.17 shows the findings from this question in a Word Cloud format.

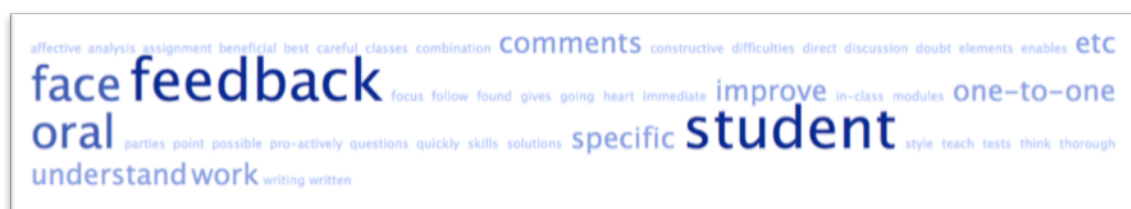


Figure 7.17: Face-to-Face Feedback

7.4.3 PHASE 2: SUMMARY

Phase two focused the research on the continuous assessment practices of DCU teaching staff. The survey was conducted in 2012 and N=131 respondents took part. Staff was asked about the assessment methods employed and how these related to the Formative and Summative Assessment. Quantitative data generated results that gave a broad overview of the key areas and the frequencies of what type of assessment instruments were used and how this related to the feedback process.

The latter part of the survey asked questions in relation to the feedback. The intention of the questions was to find out what kind of Feedback mechanism were being implemented in DCU and how the Staff believed these related to assessment. Respondents were also asked to give their opinions and details of their practices in relation to positive and negative aspects of the Feedback process.

The results showed that the assessment methods within the continuous assessment domain were wide and varied. Feedback was deemed to be an important part of the assessment process though many did not provide any feedback at all. The qualitative findings showed that this was mainly down to the practical processes involved as well as the lack of take-up by some students.

7.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This Chapter presents a Case Study within the broader research, which was broken into two Phases. Phase 1 (2008-2010) is based on an audit of academic staff's perceptions of their assessment practices, which was carried out by questionnaire. The outcomes focus on the views on the principles and concepts of assessment as well as the practical aspects of the use of assessment instruments. Phase 2 (2011-2012) of the Case Study presents the findings of a second series of surveys conducted in DCU (2012), which looked at current Feedback practices and how these relate to a dialogical process through the assessment and learning outcomes.

In order to answer the broader question of the impact of the Bologna Process through curriculum reform, to a student-centered model of teaching and learning as advocated by DCUs AFI process, it is important again to focus the questions on the assessment process and feedback mechanism that relate to this. This Case Study is relevant as it forms another pillar of data in the form of a self-contained case study. Phase 2 focused on Continuous Assessment methods and delved further into the Assessment Feedback process. The results are presented through Tables, description, word clouds and figures.

Again using a Concurrent Triangulation (Creswell, 2003) approach the results were triangulated with Case Study 2 to find current themes and categories.

The final conclusions are that, although some Teaching Staff acknowledged that a dual process of providing assessment feedback on providing corrective advice was important, very few actually engaged in such a practice. Many of the respondents still admitted to carrying out feedback at the end of the Unit of Learning. Based on the findings of Case 2 this leaves no room for a dialogical process to occur. Therefore the assessment seems still to be seen as a

linear process where assessment still comes at the end of learning. There was no reference made to the Assessment for Learning within both Phases of this Case Study.

One of the biggest issues with providing feedback to students was with the time it takes to design, provide and disseminate good corrective, and relevant feedback to individuals. This is a worrying point as class sizes continue to rise in DCU, it would seem that this practice might be even more limited in the future.

Finally, little reference was made to the AFI process and how the adoption of a learner-centred approach to curriculum design had any bearing on the assessment of learning outcomes, though the AFI process did seem to have an impact as the level of portfolio assessment had increased from by almost 15% (5.8% in Phase 1 to 20% in Phase 2).

The two Case Studies aim to examine aspects of the research question in relation to practice 'on-the-ground' in DCU. They offer a vignette through a micro perspective of the problems, issues, and benefits of an aligned assessment framework. They are presented as Case Studies as the framework of each is situated within its own context. The larger context brings in other processes, contextual reference and future hypotheses all relating to assessment and feedback through learner-centred approaches. This is discussed in greater detail in the next Chapter, which is again presented through Case Study but relates to the assessment practices through the use of learning outcomes and to the learner as a primary stakeholder.

The next Chapter describes the secondary level within the 'micro' aspect of the larger study. The focus on the Learner is core to the research question though the process itself (also conducted over four years) had an evaluative function also. The parallel Case Study (Case Study 2: The Learner & Assessment) outlined how a development process of research helped configure a sustainable (assessment) model that did embrace the use of Learning outcomes and also encouraged the learning into a deeper form of reflective learning. Phase one research showed that although many teachers/lectures employed what they believed to be student-centred assessment models they did not connect the issues relating to the type of learning outcomes that the AFI and NFQ wished them to deliver through their modular structure. The emphasis of the assessment methods still remained within the cognitive domain and little attention was given over to the higher-order areas within the Affective Domain of learning. This being the case the process presented findings on a Phase-by-Phase basis where an assessment model was adapted and changed based on the findings, which focused on, the student voice within the research process.

CHAPTER 8

CASE STUDY 2 – THE LEARNER IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a powerful driving force behind many forms of learning. Because of its power over learning it is crucial to ensure that assessment promotes rather than hinders learning. Furthermore, learning should continue beyond assessment and it should meet the needs of the present while preparing students to meet their own future learning needs (Boud, 2000, p.151). Chris Rust (2002) suggests that there has been a paradigm shift in the espoused rhetoric of higher education, from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. However, he also warns, that in relation to Europe, *‘there does appear to be a significant lag in the connection between changes in teaching methods and changes in assessment’* (p.2).

This second Case Study further probed the research question by again adopting a Case Study methodology embedded within the larger study. This Case varies slightly from the previous one as it had a dual function. The first function was to conduct research about student-centred assessment through aligned learning outcomes. The second function had an evaluative purpose, which involved the learner as a co-equal partner rather than a respondent in this process of change, adaptation and integration of an assessment model.

Phases 1 & 2 (2008-2010) of this Case Study (Case Study 2) outline how the research aimed at determining whether or not the module (Curriculum Assessment) did what was required of it at an instructional level (validity). With reference to the literature on innovative practice in relation to assessment in higher education the research looked at using constructive alignment to utilise the ideologies of the Bologna process through DCU’s AFI strategy, in terms of the use of learning outcomes and assessment. Phase 3 (2010-2011) aimed to show if and how this module could be transferred and generalised within non-pedagogical teacher training modules. As the research progressed it showed how the process of assessment hinges fundamentally on relationships. The findings show that a holistic approach to assessment can align the curriculum, and curriculum reform is thus possible in the context of the AFI process and the renewed focus in Universities towards learning outcomes and output based results. Feedback should be seen as part of the learning process and helps students to move from surface to deep learning. The Case Study brings together the policies relating to Bologna, NQF and AFI and examines how and if these can be ‘lived’ in a practical and meaningful way

echoing the concerns of others throughout the Bologna Process such as Scattergood (2010), Kinsella (2010), Deca, (2010), Adam, (2007) and summed up neatly by Bairbre Redmond's words at the Dublin Bologna meeting in 2010,

'Ireland's successful focus on learning outcomes had helped shift the emphasis towards student-centred learning and recognition of prior learning. The experience of developing a robust national qualification framework offers a clear, coherent starting point for ongoing developments in the Bologna Process, and Irish Institutions now understand that quality control is everybody's responsibility'

(HEA, 2010, p.9)

Each Phase within this Case Study had a particular focus on the assessment and student centred-learning. Their reference to Learning Outcomes was implicit in their very relation to them. The timeline is outlined below in Figure 8.1.



Figure 8.1: Case Study 2 Timeline (showing research focus within each phase)

8.2 CASE STUDY 2 : 2008-2012 – THE LEARNER & ASSESSMENT

This Chapter outlines the findings of a four-year research process that related to the development of assessment models that used the principles of constructivist learning through dialogical processes. The research plays a central role within the broader study in that the research focused on the new approach to learning initialised within DCU through the AFI (Academic Framework of Innovation). This approach is based on the concept of curriculum alignment and student centered learning and discussed throughout this study in relation to their development through the Bologna Process. The research set out to approach the assessment component of measuring student achievement through learning outcomes, through an iterative phased process, which could ultimately lead to a sustainable assessment

framework, which embraced the AFI approach as well as striking a balance between administrative functions, quality assurance and sustainability.

The Case Study process was fluid and responsive with evaluative and developmental elements built into the enquiry. As the research progressed the data was used to make adjustments to the Assessment model from phase to phase. The students themselves played an important role in the research process and they were invited to contribute to the process even after their involvement in the study was over. Results were regularly fed back to the students over the years to outline how research can inform practice and how practice can inform research. This also acted as a method of *member checking* to ensure reliability within the Case. In order to choose a considered population sample to ensure reliability of the findings, the design used a *Purposeful Sampling* approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This was an important component of the Case's iterative design. Throughout the Case study process I collected and analysed data, identified new data needed to clarify the emerging understanding and began the cycle again. Purposeful sampling is characteristic of qualitative inquiry and is based on, 'informational, not statistical, considerations...Its purpose is to maximize information, not facilitate generalization (sic)' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.202). As Phase 3 of the Case study progressed, the research question sought to test the transferability of the assessment model and a second researcher (Francesca Lorenzi) was introduced to the research and was also equally instrumental in developing the later assessment design models.

The theoretical model used is outlined in Chapter 2 and again in Figure 8.2 below.

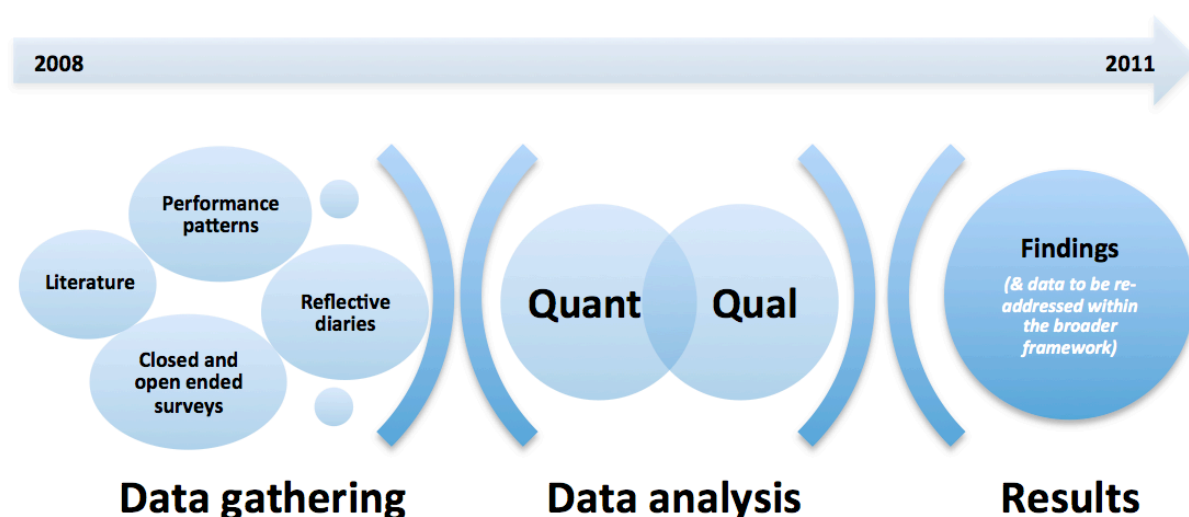


Figure 8.2: Case Study Case Design approach

8.3 ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH

An important factor that must be highlighted at this point is that the students who took part in the research are all students aiming to gain employment in the education sector. Many of them intend to become teachers and some already have significant teaching experience mainly within the vocational, further and continuing education sectors.

In Phase 1 & 2 of the Case Study all the respondents were students attending full-time and part-time BSc Education & Training Degrees. The focus of the study was the students' relationship with one module, Curriculum Assessment (later to become Assessment & Feedback), which is a 2nd year module relating to the assessment within a curriculum context. Some of the data is presented through differentiating the full and part time cohorts only if the question was relevant to this differentiation in relation to experience of assessment design or teaching. Other than this the results are presented together, phase-by-phase. Phase 3 set about developing the assessment model further and making refinements based on the emerging theme and the research data. The respondents in this part of the study were studying within other programmes such as Science Education Teacher Training, Physical Education Teacher Training, and Post-Graduate Diploma in Education. The research was conducted within a number of different types of modules to test the 'transferability' and generalisability aspect of the model and not particularly a reference to Assessment itself. The rationale for the research through a reflective 4 year process was based on the models and theories outlined in the literature review as well as the basis and intentions of the AFI process (and implicitly the NFQ and Bologna). Therefore, one of the initial research questions was: how can my students understand the module content through progressive pedagogies that encourage deep learning (Marton & Säljö, 1976) and utilise this knowledge in their future workplaces as teachers and trainers? Can the AFI alignment process, and a focus on learning outcomes, use the concept of constructive alignment to create a dialogic relationship between the learner and the teacher? An additional question that evolved was, how do teaching, intended learning outcomes and the assessment relate and align to each other? This is a crucial aspect of this study, which highlights the adoption of a learning outcomes approach by DCU without the full alignment process being adhered to.

If students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner, then the teacher's fundamental task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in their achieving those outcomes ...It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does

(Shuell, 1986, p.429)

This relatively ordinary statement by Shuell (1986) helped provide the framework for the development of a revised assessment process. Using AFI as the template for constructive alignment the research first set out by understanding the desired outcomes (through the module descriptors now written in an outcomes based mode using the NFQ guidelines). Subsequently, learning objectives were planned, along with designing the assessment tasks, which align to the teaching models, giving students an opportunity to show that they are achieving those outcomes through a mutually equal dialogical process.

The hypothesis being: to get students to *engage in learning activities appropriate to the objectives, this can be achieved by prioritizing the assessment*. Shuell's (ibid) statement highlights that the curriculum components constitute a whole system, whose elements are interrelated and mutually supportive, and must form an integrated whole.

In the context of this research, in setting up an aligned system, it is important to specify the desired outcomes of my teaching, in terms not only of topic content or modular learning outcomes (based on the Bologna related qualification frameworks - discussed in detail in Chapter 5), but rather in the *level of understanding* I wanted students to achieve. Secondly, it is important to set up an environment that maximizes the probability that students will engage in the activities designed to achieve the intended outcomes.

8.4 CASE STUDY 2: OVERALL RESEARCH POPULATION

Throughout the four year Case Study relating to the learners and the assessment of learning outcomes over 300 students took part in the research. Phase 1 & 2 included students only within the BSc in Education and Training all studying within the 'Curriculum Assessment' Module and these totalled 210 research participants. Phase 3 added a further 90 students for the 'transferability (generalisability)' phase.

The idea of conducting research within this module was not only driven by the AFI process being rolled out within the University, but also because the module had previously been assessed using a summative written exam. So this module was ideally placed to contribute to the research. In 2008 the module was entitled Curriculum Assessment (ES202/ES222) which was an NFQ level 8 module (EQF Lv.6)³⁵, and was situated in Year 2 of the aforementioned degree programme. The research was triggered by DCU's curriculum reform process (AFI), which in turn was driven by European policy influences, namely the Bologna Process (1999).

³⁵ The Irish National Qualification Framework (NFQ) was referenced to the European Qualification Framework for Life Long Learning (EQF/ EQFLL) in 2009 by the NQAI

This process was timely as it allowed me to make the decision as module coordinator and Programme Chair to introduce a *portfolio–assessment approach* that was aimed at helping students to demonstrate their knowledge as they progressed through the module. Phase 2 was carried out during the academic year 2009-2010 and focused on a second cohort of 2nd-Year students undertaking the revised assessment model. In Phase 3 (2010-2012) the findings of the previous two years’ research demonstrated that in practice and principle the model was sound and robust, and that indeed learning had been accelerated. These results were demonstrated through the performance indicators and the reflective diaries. The students also helped through a dialogical process to smooth out some of the practical assessment issues. Phase 3 (2010-12) concentrated on piloting the new revised assessment model in other modules. This case study outlines the steps, transitions and decisions made through each of the research Phases with a strong focus on the final year of the process. Further details about the research participants can be found in Table below 8.1 below

Table 8.1: Summary of research population characteristics

YEAR	MODULE	GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS	NO. OF STUDENTS
1	Curriculum assessment (ES204)	BSc Ed. & Training (full-time - ET2)	Large group Mixed groups of students(mature and traditional undergraduate) NQT status little experience	77
1	Curriculum assessment (ES222)	BSc Ed. & Training (part-time - BET2)	up Mature students nal experience (training)	27
2	Curriculum assessment (ES204)	Bsc Ed. & Training (full-time- ET2)	Large group Mixed groups of students(mature and traditional undergraduate) NQT status little experience	78
2	Curriculum assessment (ES222)	BSc Ed. & Training (part-time - BET2)	up Mature students nal experience (training)	28
3	Philosophical perspectives... (ES402)	BSc Ed. & Training (part-time - BET3)	up Mature students nal experience (training)	27
3	Philosophy of Education (ES556)	Graduate Dip. Ed. (part-time - GDED2)	Large group HDip Post-Primary Teachers Mature students Part-time All second level teachers	63

8.5 PHASE 1 & 2 - 2008-10: ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Phase 1 & 2 are described together in this section as they both were concerned with the development of an assessment framework that utilised the AFI and was based on the core theoretical thrust relating to assessment literature. The aims of the research in Phase 3 was to test the model in other Modules within other programmes and with different cohorts of learners. The specific aims of Phases 1 & 2 of the research were:

- Revise an assessment framework for an existing Teacher Trainer module on Curriculum Assessment
- Encourage the learning through constructive approaches
- Use experiential learning as a key feature of the process: authentic experiences: 'practice shock'
- Increase the opportunities for establishing a mutual relationship between teachers and students and between teaching and learning
- Encourage student teachers to place a 'learning' value on assessment and view assessment as a progressive pedagogy in itself.

8.5.1 PHASE 1 & 2: RESEARCH POPULATION

The analysis from Phase 1 & 2 is based on several layers of data. A key sources was the performance patterns in terms of student grades. A further layer was the quantitative and qualitative data based on the views, experiences, opinions and feelings of the respondents by using online questionnaires. In Phases 1 & 2 these were administered at the beginning and end of the module(s) in both years of presentation.

In order to gain a more accurate picture of the results both cohorts were filtered separately in order to ascertain if there were differences in the responses based on their previous experience (if any) as trainers of teachers. The majority had little or no experience. Therefore the results expectedly showed that in 2008-2009 the level of professional teaching experience was greater with the part-time cohort (38%) who stated that they were currently full-time teachers as opposed to 4% who responded this way out of the full-time group. These statistics though captured at this stage did not seem to have any future relevance in relation to the development of the Assessment model or the research as it progressed.

Examining this difference further was possible through asking more detailed questions about the students' previous experience (if any) of assessment within their professional capacity as trainers/teachers, or if their only experience of Assessment until this point had been as recipients of assessment. 14% of the part time group had experience of setting and designing assessments and 4.8% had responsibility for overseeing assessment procedures.) Within the fulltime group 0% had any experience of overseeing assessment procedures, and only 4% had

any experience of designing and setting assessments. Table 8.2 presents the main experiential difference of the combined Phase 1 & 2 research cohorts.

Table. 8.2: Comparative assessment experience table

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE TABLE		
Phase 1-2	2008- 2009 %	2009- 2010 %
Experience only as a student / trainee undergoing an assessment	47.8%	40.8%
Experience of designing assessments	8.7%	8.2%
No experience of assessment in education & training	23.9%	24.5%
Marking / grading assessments	15.2%	16.3%
Implementing / overseeing assessments	2.2%	6.1%
Other (please specify)	2.2%	4.1%

It can be concluded that while the 2009-2010 cohort of respondents were younger and less experienced there are no considerable differences between the two cohorts in terms of experience of designing and marking assessment.

8.5.2 INTRODUCING THE PORTFOLIO MODEL

The intervention that this research focused on in Phase 1 was that of a portfolio model of assessment. The theoretical rationale for the use of this builds on the broader theoretical foundations outlined in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) and pays attention to the need for progressive, reflection-led processes that help students to attach meaning and derive sustainable learning from the educational activity in which they have been engaged. The portfolio aims to foster a dialogical relationship between teaching and learning and progressive transfer of responsibility for learning from lecturers to students. The specific reasons for portfolio use in the Case Study draws their rationale utilisation from a range of educationalists (Popper, 2005). Popper explained that portfolios should include a variety of samples of student work. Chun's (2002) portfolio model requires students to collect, assemble, and reflect on samples that represent the culmination of their learning. Cooper (1999)

identified six considerations of the portfolio building process: identification of skill areas, design of measurable outcomes, identification of learning strategies, identification of performance indicators, collection of evidence, and assessment. This reflection-on-action (Schön, 1984) is a key feature of the portfolio assessment approach. Furthermore portfolio usage in teacher education is seen as central to developing professional competence of teachers working in or intending to work in educational settings.

For assessments to be valid and embrace a broader rationale than simply testing what is known, the assessment should be a 'purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress or achievement in a given area' (Arter & Spandell 1992, p.36).

The original portfolio format presented in 2008-2009 consisted of four tasks as shown by Figure 8.3. The model was designed to experience different elements of assessment from the perspective of the teacher as well as that of the student. An Assessment Workbook (Guidelines and methods) made up of context, guidelines and task instructions was given out to each learner and also placed electronically to a Moodle³⁶ site (see **APPENDIX C: VOLUME 2**).

The key to the assessment model was a dialogical cycle between assessment design and improvement of the design via responding to the feedback received thus informing the design of the portfolio model. The response to feedback is a reflective exercise that encourages the student to critically consider his/her strengths and weaknesses and consider the options for improvement.

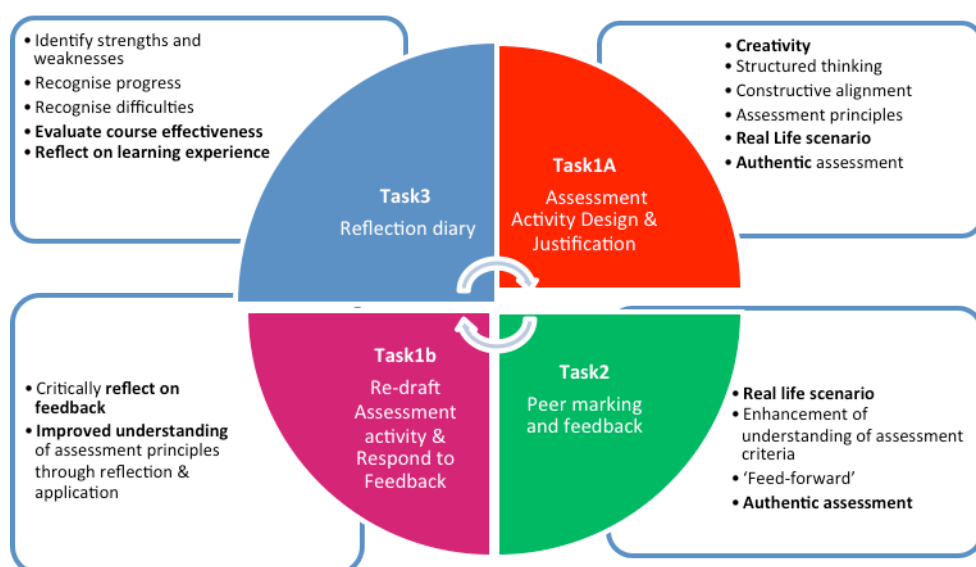


Figure 8.3: Case Study 2: 2008-2009 Assessment Portfolio format

³⁶ Moodle is an online environment that allows DCU staff to provide students with access to electronic teaching and learning materials (such as lecture notes and links to useful websites) and activities (such as discussion forums, group assignments, reflective journals and quizzes).

Task 1 is subdivided into two tasks, Task 1a and Task 1b. Task 1a is the first task students complete and consists of the design of an assessment activity for a syllabus and a potential group of students identified by the students themselves. The task simulates a real life scenario and allows students to express their creativity. It also raises students' awareness of key assessment concepts such as transparency, clarity and fairness and also constructive alignment and validity. Task 1b is a re-drafting activity in response to the feedback received from peers as part of Task 2. The redrafting of the assessment activity required students to react constructively to the feedback received and to reflect on the advice in order to decide what changes should be made to improve the quality of the original assessment design. For Task 2 students marked and provided feedback to peers on their Task 1a. Students bore the responsibility for giving useful advice and ensuring that their evaluation was fair and transparent. This task enables students to assume a dual role at once: that of teacher and of student. Students also needed to be mindful of the wellbeing of their peers while at the same time ensuring reliability of marking³⁷. Students receiving feedback advising them on how to redraft their assessment activity are not simply asked to implement the recommendations received, but to first make a decision on the pedagogical soundness of the advice received from peers and then to implement what, on reflection, they consider appropriate. The structure is *intrinsically dialogical*, as it requires *active engagement* and a *critical response to feedback*.

Task 2 involved the learners marking (and grading) anonymously one of their peers (Task 1a) tasks. Within the larger full-time group this was done through a *group assessment task*, and on an individual basis for the smaller part-time cohort. This task helped encourage the learners to view assessment from an assessor's perspectives and highlighted the theoretical concepts associated with assessment and feedback. Students were also asked to provide feedback to the students in order to help them with the Task B assignment. Workshops were provided on giving and receiving feedback. This aspect of the *Portfolio design* was developed more in Phase 2 & 3 of the research. The task helped outline to students aspects of assessment that looked towards good models of practice in the literature such as *enhancement of understanding of assessment criteria* (Rust, Price & O'Donovan, 2003; Carless, 2006), *feedback* and *feed-forward*, (Nicol, Macfarlane-Dick D, 2006; Brown, 2007). As well as this the processes involved an *authentic assessment* (Wiggins, 1989; 1990; Torrance, 1995)

Finally, Task 3 was a *reflection diary* in which students are asked to record after the completion of each task their thoughts on what they have learnt from the specific task, what difficulties

³⁷ In order to ensure marking inter-reliability and fairness lecturers moderate marking and only in cases where the mark is deemed to be inappropriate, it is replaced by a mark given by the lecturer.

they have encountered and what aspects of the tasks they felt should be improved for further presentations. It is important to stress that the students involved in the research related to the module were encouraged to contribute to *the development of the model*. Listening to the students' voice is also one of the crucial elements of a dialogical educational model as it fosters a two-way communication between teachers and students.

In 2009-2010 the reflective diary was removed from the students' assessment tasks, but incorporated again within the research cycle through the open and closed questions of the post-experience surveys. This took added pressure off the students and separated the evaluative elements out of the assessment task itself. Figure 8.4 shows the revised assessment model for Phase 2 (2009-2010).

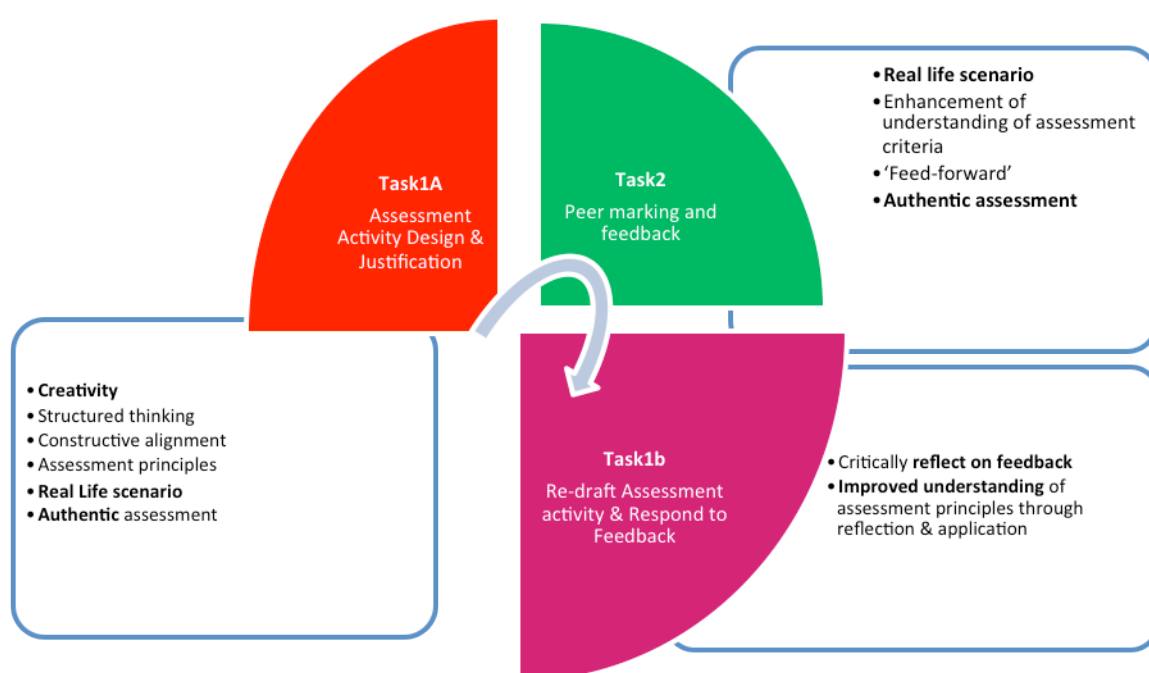


Figure 8.4: Case Study 2: 2009-2010: Revised Assessment Portfolio format

8.5.3 PHASE 1 & 2 : RESEARCH FINDINGS

This Case study also outlines the quantitative data which shows how the marks and grades differed between the tasks based on the feedback and feedforward process. The key findings within the data sources of Phase 1 & 2 are outlined in the following tables and figures. The following Figures 8.5 & 8.6 show the student improvement and grade distribution rates. Highlighted specifically is the difference in performance between Task 1 and Task 2 after the feed-forward had been introduced in between the tasks.

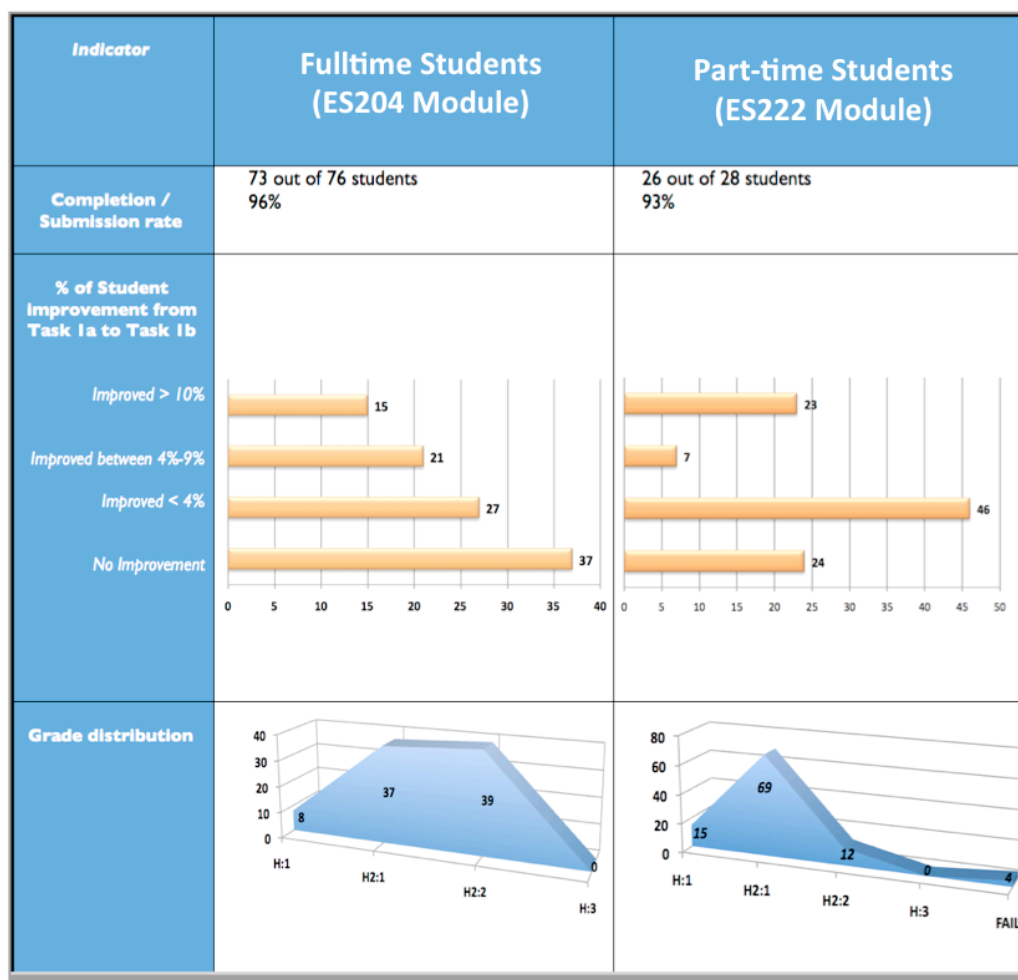


Figure 8.5: Case Study 2: Student Improvement & Grade distribution 2008-2009

Figure 8.5 shows high completion rates across both groups. This may be due to the formative nature of the assessment model. Attendance rates as well as completion rates were high when the portfolio assessment model was introduced in 2008. The model insists that students need to engage with the assessment in an active rather than a passive vein. This ensures active participation rather than the assessment focused learning that Brown (1997) warns about in his book *Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education*. The above figure also shows that there was moderate improvement rates in the 10%+ categories with good improvements rates in the under the 4% categories. The evaluative nature of the data also highlighted issues about the non-improvement rates which needed to be addressed in Phase 2. It is interesting to examine the student improvement rates and grade distribution in Phase 2 within the Case Study after the amendments, (such as elimination of the Reflection Journal) to the assessment model (see Figure. 8.6) have been introduced.

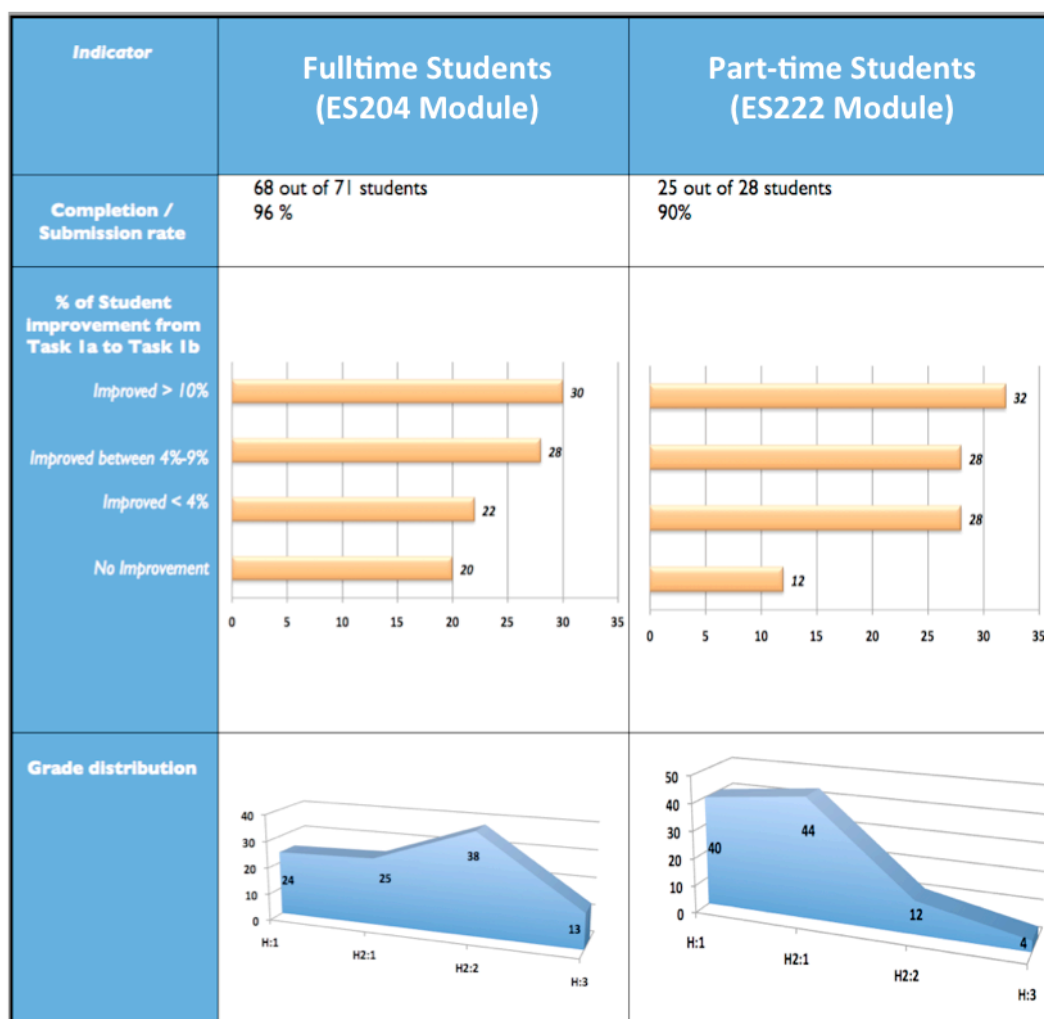


Figure 8.6: Case Study 2: Student Improvement & Grade distribution 2009-2010

The representations in Figure 8.6 shows a distinct enhancement in the task improvement rates, especially those in the greater than 10% category between Phase 1 to Phase 2. This is evidence that the assessment model was beginning to work more effectively.

During Phase 1 of the Case Study and as part of the assessment portfolio for module ES204 (full-time)/ES222 (part-time) students were required to complete a reflection diary. After each task students were asked to reflect on the difficulties they had encountered, on their strengths and on what they had learned from preparing the specific task. At the end of the module they were also asked to reflect on the module as a whole and to offer advice on improving its structure and design.

Much of the qualitative data analysed through framework analysis was used in the formation of the next phase of the research. The overall picture that emerged from the reflective diaries of both groups is that of an honest, albeit mostly emotional, response to a challenging learning process. On the whole the data collected from reflection diaries, which represented the opinions of student respondents, reconfirmed the positive view expressed in relation to the

learning experience in the online questionnaire. The first stage analysis process within the framework analysis model is printed here (through 'wordclouds' Figures 8.7-8.12) under the themes that emerged in the analysis stages. The comments were thematically grouped and coded under six thematic areas that represent the core focus of the reflections; the wordcloud analysis gave a broad overview of the comments.

These themes were: Relevance to Professional practice, Linking theory and practice, Reflection on learning outcomes, Reflection on feedback, Personal development, Reflection on roles & attitudinal changes.



Figure 8.7: Relevance to Professional practice



Figure 8.8: Linking theory and practice



Figure 8.9: Reflection on learning outcomes

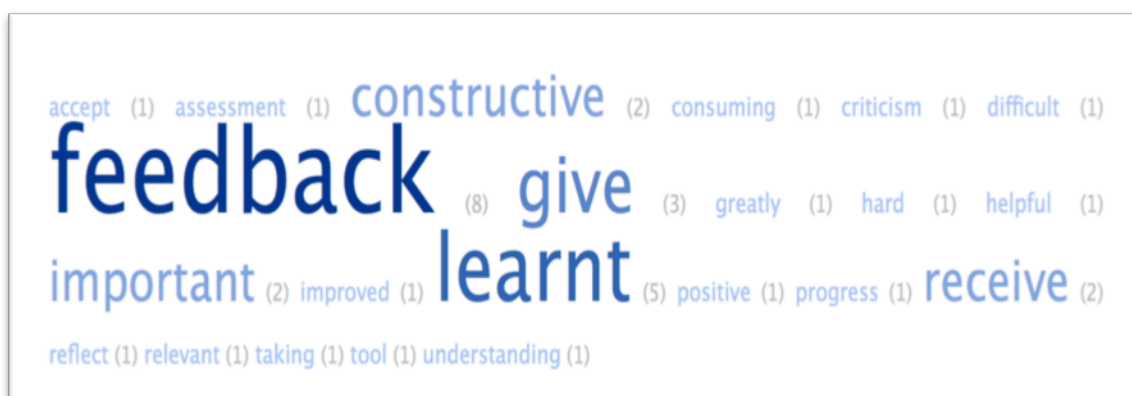


Figure 8.10: Reflection on feedback



Figure 8.11: Personal development



Figure 8.12: Reflection on roles & attitudinal changes

Not surprisingly only part-time students have made comments linking their professional practice with the outcomes of the module. The comments on this theme emphasise the transferability and applicability of the knowledge they have acquired to their professional contexts. In relation to comments linking theory and practice full-time students focus on the

cross-curricular relevance of this module but their comments are very generic in terms of explaining how establishment of a link between theory and practice has been achieved in this module. Part-time students use the learning theories they have been presented with at lectures to explain how they have experienced the link between theory and practice and emphasise their improved ability to design assessment activities. Feedback seems to elicit very similar reflections from both groups. Comments highlight an enhanced understanding of the value of feedback but also an appreciation of the difficulty in giving and receiving criticism. Personal development appears to be a stronger feature of comments by part-time students. All students in this group were adults returning to education, in some cases, after a long absence from formal learning environments. The confidence-building and empowering dimension of the learning experience appeared to be a valuable aspect of the module for these students.

Finally, perhaps the most significant outcome drawn from the reflection-diaries was the emergence of an attitudinal change in both groups. The portfolio tasks required students to embrace the teacher and student roles at the same time and the comments seem to confirm that engagement with both roles did occur and create a shift in attitudinal thinking. The terminal surveys after the students completed the module also provided qualitative data that was useful for triangulation of the quantitative elements of the Case as well as using the findings to converge with the results of the previous Case Study (CS1) and the other data pillars in the larger study. These trend-identifying results are again presented in wordcloud (Figure 8.13) form to help the visual interpretation of the findings. Table 8.3 on the following page shows the initial qualitative analysis after Phase 1 of the process within case study 2. These core themes in turn were converged with the emergent data from the other data pillars through Creswell's (2003) concurrent triangulation method.

Table 8.3: Phase 1, Case Study 2 Qualitative analysis results linking to emergent themes.

CORE THEMES & CODES		
PHASE 1		
FULL- TIME STUDENTS (ES204)		PART-TIME STUDENTS (ES222)
Relevance to Professional practice		<i>'I have found this module very relevant to my work'.</i> <i>'I am going to change my work practice'</i> <i>'It reinforced my professional practice'</i> <i>'I am going to use my assessment activity in my work context'</i> <i>'I could apply what I had learnt at lectures'</i>
Linking theory and practice	<i>'I have learned to link theory to practice'.</i> <i>'I learned how to create an assessment'.</i> <i>'I learned to apply other elements of my learning from other modules into this assignment'.</i> <i>'I learned how to give clearer instructions in assessment design'.</i>	<i>'I had the opportunity to apply what I had learnt from lectures'.</i> <i>'I have experienced Kolb's cycle'</i> <i>'With this module I have experienced Bloom's higher levels'</i> <i>'This module was a case of experiential learning'</i> <i>'I have gained practical experience in designing assessment'.</i> <i>'I am in a better position to design assessment'.</i>
Reflection on learning outcomes	<i>'Even though the language of SLOs is simplistic, the work behind devising these objectives is very complex'.</i>	<i>'The learning outcomes for this module were fully met'.</i> <i>'I have learnt the value of learning objectives'.</i>
Reflection on feedback	<i>'My understanding of assessment and feedback are greatly improved'.</i> <i>'It is hard to give relevant and helpful feedback'.</i> <i>'I have learnt how important it is to give/receive feedback'.</i> <i>'Taking feedback (even if constructive) is difficult'.</i> <i>'It is time consuming to give feedback'.</i>	<i>'I have learnt that feedback is great tool to progress'.</i> <i>'I have learnt that feedback can be positive'.</i> <i>'I have learnt that it is important to reflect on feedback received'.</i> <i>'I have learnt to accept constructive criticism'.</i>
Personal development	<i>'I have learnt to critically evaluate'.</i> <i>'I found peer and self assessment difficult but for what I gained I would not change it'.</i>	<i>'I gained confidence in myself'.</i> <i>'This module was an empowering experience'.</i> <i>'This module has provided me with deep personal learning'.</i>
Reflection on roles & attitudinal changes	<i>'I have learned about how much time goes into designing assessment'.</i> <i>'I have learned how to take feedback' .(good or bad). It gives an insight into how others see your work'.</i> <i>'I found it difficult to be both a teacher and a student'.</i> <i>'The assignment pushed me out of my comfort zone'.</i> <i>'By seeing other people's mistakes I have learned to improve my own work'.</i> <i>'The portfolio made me more aware of the need to plan'.</i> <i>'I feel that even with the same assessment criteria everyone grades differently'.</i> <i>'I focus more on learning criteria now'.</i> <i>'Learning how to be an accurate marker is key to being a good teacher'.</i>	<i>'I have realised that my perception of assessment was narrow and traditional'.</i> <i>'It made me realise how important assessment is for our students'.</i> <i>'It made me think about how other people may interpret the feedback I give them'.</i> <i>'I have learnt the importance of writing instructions for students' benefit'.</i>



The students highlighted the need for becoming an empathetic teacher who designs instructions for the benefit of students and is careful about how feedback comments are received and interpreted as a consideration. However it was expressed, there did appear to be complexity that could have resulted in a great level of unpredictability and confusion for both students and lecturer, which can often occur (Biggs, 1999), though this did not prevent the majority of students (94.7% of full-time students and 89.2% of part-time students) from successfully completing all the portfolio activities. The difficulties encountered however seem to indicate that students have engaged with the tasks and experienced a ‘practice shock’ normally witnessed in authentic work environments. The anxiety caused by being asked to let go of the student role is expressed in comments emphasising the lack of experience or being “unqualified” for taking on a professional role. This expressed ‘difficulty’ seems to arise with being asked to take a dual role as teacher and student and being faced with a considerably new learning experience and assessment format (Tisani, 2008). Ball (1993) argues that teaching is made up of many paradoxes with which the teacher (and student) must grapple.

The portfolio assessment for this module represented a challenge for both the students and the lecturers in both of the initial Phases of the research. Portfolio assessment is work-intensive for both parties, but it also represents a departure from more traditional forms of

assessment such as essays and exams. This departure requires the lecturer not only to support students on how to approach and complete the portfolio activities but also to develop an appreciation of the learning value of this form of assessment.

8.5.4 SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1 & 2 (2008-2010)

As with the previous presentation of the module, students from the 2008-2010 cohorts were also asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions in order to ensure both breadth and depth of information collected. The analysis of the information from the 2008-2010 questionnaires is presented comparatively and in relation to the outcomes of the previous presentation. The full questionnaire can be read in APPENDIX D: Volume 2. The part-time students are mainly already teacher practitioners and while many of them had never experienced setting assessment, they felt much more at ease with a task that required them to apply theoretical knowledge. Nevertheless both groups experienced a sort of 'creativity block'. The parameters for setting an assessment activity were intentionally left very open. Students could choose the syllabus of the module for which they wished to set an assessment activity, the context for which it was designed and decide the assessment method. Furthermore they were required to apply their professional judgement to ensure that the assessment activity they designed was appropriate for the syllabus they had chosen, in terms of scope, method, fairness, transparency, reliability and validity.

In general the questionnaires show consistent patterns of satisfaction and advancement of knowledge across different years of presentation, in response to different teaching approaches and despite modifications dictated by external constraints. Therefore the outcomes emerging from the questionnaires appear to offer evidence of the sustainability of the pedagogical soundness of the assessment model devised for this module, albeit with some clearly identified areas in need of improvement. The key findings that supported the emergence of new themes can be seen in the following Table: 8.3.

Table 8.4: Phase 1 and 2, Case Study 2 Qualitative analysis: recommendations for emergent themes based on the initial themes from the first and second stage framework analysis.

Phase	THEMES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS BROUGHT INTO NEW CODES FOR EMERGENT THEMES
Phase 1 2008-2009	Module ES204 & ES222 Curriculum Assessment	<i>Can a revised assessment framework</i> - Promote the development of professional competence of pre-service teachers / trainers? - Foster professional development of post-experience teachers / trainers?	- Transferability and applicability of the knowledge in professional contexts. - Focus on the cross-curricular relevance - Improved link between theory and practice. - Improved ability to design assessment activities. - Enhanced understanding of the value of feedback. - Appreciation of the difficulty in giving and receiving criticism. - Greater awareness of the complexity of the teacher's role as planner, assessor and mentor providing constructive criticism and support. - Questioning beliefs in relation to the role of assessment.	- Develop and improve the assessment framework taking on board student feedback. - Explore the issue of competence beyond competencies. - Explore the teacher – student relationship in greater detail.
		<i>Can a revised assessment framework:</i> - Promote an attitudinal change and initiate the transition from student to teacher? - Develop the role of the teacher / student relationship (dialogical discourse)?	- Students had an improved focus on diverse needs within assessment models. - Students rated the value of empowerment and motivation through feedback very highly. - Deeper value on constructive alignment. - Becoming an empathetic teacher. - Relationships are developed through dialogue, which requires a symmetrical relationship between teacher and student and between teaching and learning.	- Can this model be transferred to other modules within the School? - How do I improve the delivery of this model from an administrative and pedagogical perspective without increasing student or assessor/lecturer workloads? - Explore the role of dialogical feedback in relation the student-teacher relationship. - Small group peer feedback to ease peer feedback anxiety (feed-forward).
Phase 2 2009-2010	Module ES204 & ES222 Curriculum Assessment	- Revise an assessment framework for an existing Teacher Trainer module on Curriculum Assessment - Encourage the learning through constructive approaches. - Use experiential learning as a key feature of the process: authentic experiences: 'practice shock' - Increase the opportunities for establish a mutual relationship between teachers and students and between teaching and learning. - Encourage student teachers to place a 'learning' value on assessment and view assessment as a progressive pedagogy in itself.		

On the whole the questionnaire shows comparable levels of satisfaction with the module and a positive reaction to the assessment structure and delivery of the content. As shown by Figures

8.16 & 8.17 the students' responses at the end of both years of presentation indicate that the module format has succeeded - in comparable terms- in changing students' perception of assessment. The case study embedded within the mixed mode provided a structure for action to occur and changes to be made to the assessment design.

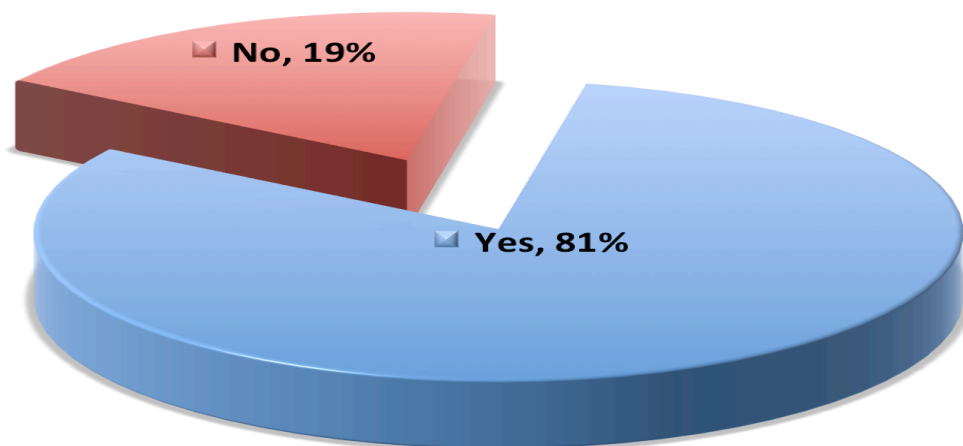


Figure 8.14: 2008-2009 Cohort-Perception of the role of assessment

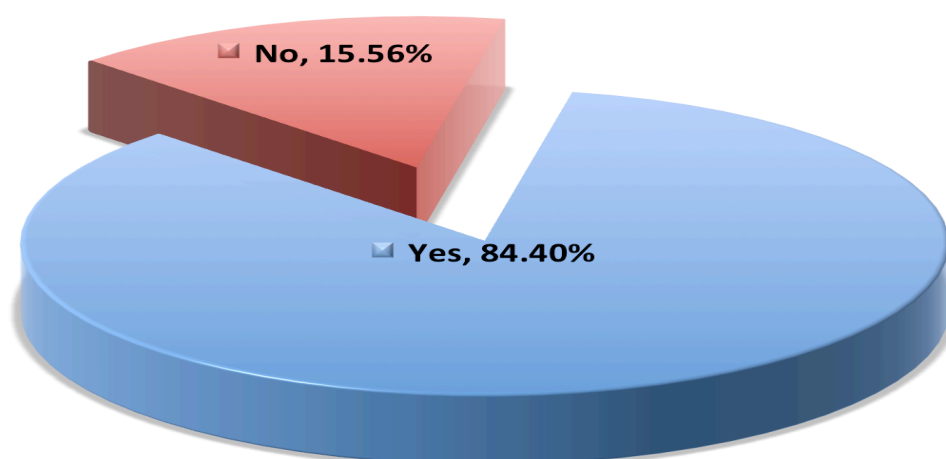


Figure 8.15: 2009-2010 Cohort-Perception of the role of assessment

The change in perception of assessment is one of the key objectives of the research. The module aims to foster greater awareness of the formative value of assessment and encourage course participants to design and implement learner-centred approaches. The importance of the role of the learner in the assessment process appears to have been understood and captured by students as it emerges from the answers summarised in the table (Table 8.4).

Table 8.5: Phase 1 & 2: Perspectives on the role of the learner in assessment

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNER IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS - <i>CHANGES AS A RESULT OF UNDERTAKING THE MODULE?</i>	2009-2010 %	2008-2009 %
Through feedback learners have more control and motivation	29.17	11.77
More focus on diverse learners' needs & views	29.17	41.18
Clearer assessment criteria empower learners	8.33	5.88
Greater communication and empathy between assessor and learner	4.17	11.76
Learners should be enabled to showcase their learning	8.33	17.65
No answer	20.83	11.76
Total answers	100	100

Table 8.5 shows a consistent pattern in terms of values expressed by the students who rate the focus on diverse needs and empowerment and motivation through feedback among the most important aspects of assessment for learners.

While the open-ended questions reconfirm the overall consistency of the pattern, they also highlight some differences worth noting. The two lecturers³⁸ who delivered the content placed their emphasis on different aspects of assessment. This could be down to the diversity of their specific research interests on their teaching or simply based on different perceptions of subject importance. The answers provided by students seem to indicate that the different emphasis has had a noticeable impact on their behaviour and responses. In 2008-2009 greater emphasis was placed on the value of formative feedback and fair and transparent communication on assessment matters with the students. In 2009-2010, greater emphasis was placed on the theory and practice of learning outcomes and assessment design. Table 8.6 shows evidence of the influence of the *teaching approach on students' perceptions and contribution to the learning experience*. Notably, students acknowledge greater emphasis on *feedback theory and practice* in 2008-2009 and the importance of design and marking guidelines emerges from the answers of students from the 2009-2010 cohort.

³⁸ In Phase 2-3 of the research a second lecturer was brought into the process and agreed to participate in the process. This second lecturer also acted as a co-researcher in the design and implementation of the final assessment model.

Table 8.6: Phase 1 & 2: Contribution to the learning experience

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASSESSMENT : AS A RESULT OF UNDERTAKING THIS MODULE?	2009- 2010 %	2008- 2009 %
Better understanding of the importance of formative assessment	3.45	0
Importance of clear guidelines and marking criteria	13.79	5
I appreciate and understand more the importance of assessment	41.38	10
I can be more creative in designing assessment	3.45	5
I understand the effect that assessment has on learning	10.34	20
I have learnt about constructive feedback	0	20
I have realised the amount of work and responsibility that teachers have to put in assessment	10.34	15
I am no longer scared of assessment	0	5
Importance of constructive alignment	0	20
I understand the terminology better	3.45	0
It has given me practical experience to design assessment	6.9	0
It has had an impact on my practice	3.45	0
No answer (<i>invalid</i>)	3.45	0
Total answers	100	100

The link between the emphasis on different assessment topics and students' perceptions is further exemplified by findings that summarise the level of students who rated the usefulness of the portfolio's individual tasks. While the majority (72.3%) of students in 2008-2009 considered Task 2 either extremely useful or very useful a similar (72%) level of satisfaction was recorded for Task 1 in 2009-2010.

One of the most interesting factors was the student views on the Assessment method employed. These views are divergent from the findings from the previous Case Study (Case Study 1: The Teacher and Assessment). This illustrates that teachers and students have very different experiences and opinions of the value of different assessment modes. For the implementation of the AFI process in DCU this raises some very relevant issues regarding the process of curriculum alignment, and the rollout of a student-centred approach to learning outcomes.

Figures 8.16 and 8.17 both show that students tend to be influenced by their personal experience to make decisions on choice of assessment, particularly if they have had a positive experience. While both cohorts express a preference for portfolio assessment, 'smaller written assignments' scored much higher in the 2009-2010 students' responses.

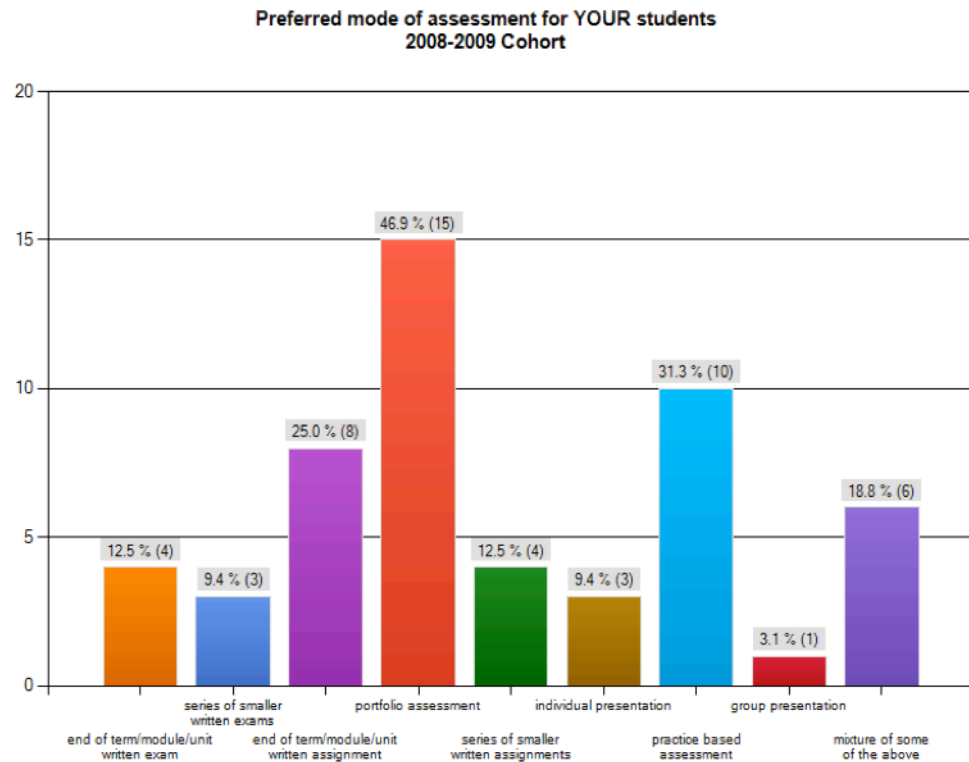


Figure 8.16: 2008-2009 Cohort-Preferred mode of assessment with your students

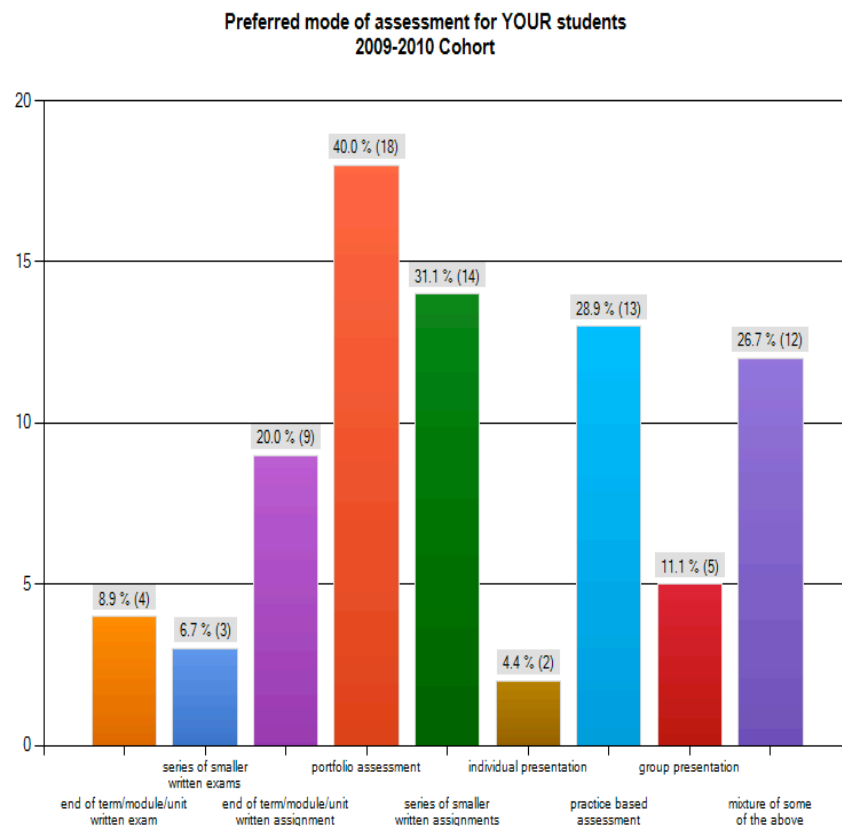


Figure 8.17: 2009-2010 Cohort-Preferred mode of assessment with your students

Finally students were asked to identify aspects of the assessment format in need of improvement. This was the evaluative aspect of the Case Study and had an important bearing on the development of Phase three (the Transferability Phase). While on the whole the level of satisfaction with the format has increased (from 18.18% in 2009-2010 to 25% in 2009-2010). The Case Study outlined how the research could develop through the 3 Phases. The first two phases outlined above showed that significant progress had been made in developing the assessment method to embrace a learner-centred approach to assessment. The focus on constructive alignment also proved to be a success in terms of student performance as well as student engagement. The key findings from Phase 2 are highlighted below in Table 8.5. The process itself acted as a tool to build a co-equal relationship between the lecturer (teacher) and the student (learner). The relationship was researched further by looking at increasing the emphasis on peer and teacher feedback. The feedback mechanism acted as a dialogical instrument to help encourage students to understand the model content at a deeper level.

Table 8.7: Findings from Phase 1-2 (2008-2010)

KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1-2 OF CASE STUDY 2
Transferability and applicability of the knowledge in professional contexts.
Focus on the cross-curricular relevance
Improved link between theory and practice.
Improved ability to design assessment activities.
Enhanced understanding of the value of feedback.
Appreciation of the difficulty in giving and receiving criticism.
Greater awareness of the complexity of the teacher's role as planner, assessor and mentor providing constructive criticism and support.
Questioning beliefs in relation to the role of assessment.
Students had an improved focus on diverse needs within assessment models.
Students rated the value of empowerment and motivation through feedback very highly.
Deeper value on constructive alignment.
Becoming an empathetic teacher.
Relationships are developed through dialogue, which requires a symmetrical relationship between teacher and student and between teaching and learning.

8.6 PHASE 3 : 2010-11 : REVISED ASSESSMENT MODEL

Phase 3 (2010-2012) aimed to show if and how this module could be transferred and generalised within non-pedagogical teacher training modules. As the research progressed it

showed how the process of assessment hinges fundamentally on relationships. The findings show that a holistic approach to assessment can align the curriculum, and curriculum reform is thus possible in context of the AFI process and the renewed focus in Universities towards learning outcomes and output based results. Feedback should be seen as part of the learning process and helps students to move from surface to deep learning. Phases 1 & 2 of the Case Study shows how the research aimed at determining whether or not the module (Curriculum Assessment) did what was required of it at instructional level (validity). It looked at using constructive alignment to utilise the ideologies of the Bologna process through DCUs AFI strategy in terms of the use of learning outcomes and assessment. Phase 3 of the research as outlined in the Case Study context was to test if the assessment model, taken out of the context of a pedagogical module, could be transferred within other teacher training modules. The specific aims of Phase 3 of the research was;

- Focus on the process of learning (rather than exclusively on the end product)
- Foster engagement with the course content
- Make assessment criteria more transparent, thus empowering students
- Increase the opportunities for establishing a mutual relationship between teachers and students and between teaching and learning
- Foster sustainable learning beyond the module.

The two pilot groups for the transferability and sustainability Phase are outlined in the following Figure 8.18 on the next page.

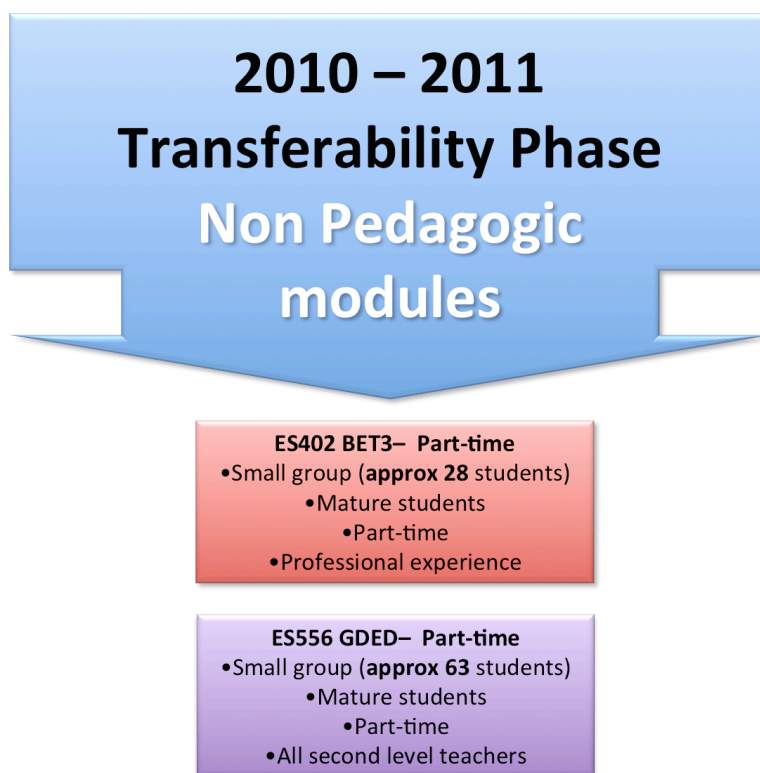


Figure 8.18: Phase 3: Pilot research groups

The new assessment model of the portfolio retains some of the core characteristics of the original while at the same time presenting modifications to suit different subject content. Figures 8.19 & 8.20 summarise the Phase 3 assessment model:

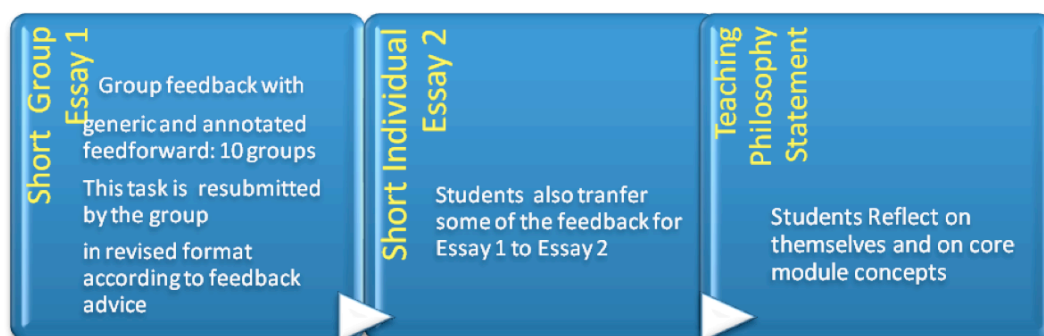


Figure 8.19: GDED2 Portfolio assessment for module ES556: Philosophy of Education

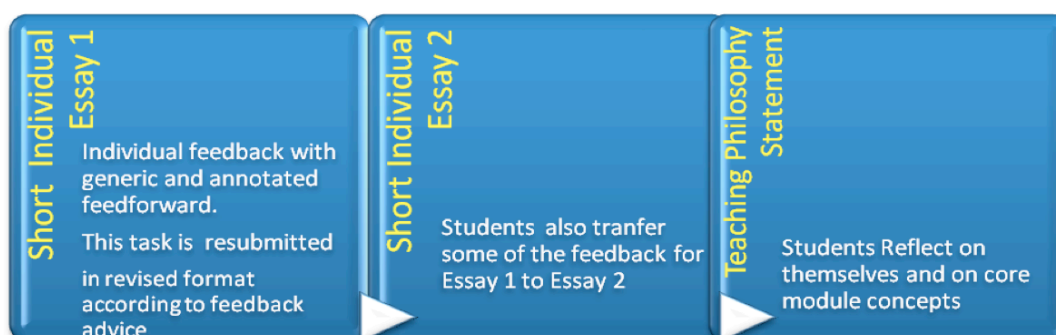


Figure 8.20: BET3 Portfolio assessment for ES402: Philosophical Perspectives on Education

8.6.1 PHASE 3 : RESEARCH FINDINGS

Phase 3 research findings show how this module can be transferred and generalised within non-pedagogical teacher training modules and context. Figure 8.21 shows Student Improvement & Grade distribution of the respondents in Phase 3 of the research during the transferability phase. Highlighted specifically is the difference in performance between task 1 and Task 2 after feedback (feed-forward) had been provided and introduced between tasks. Knight and Yorke (2003, p.135) explain the role of feedback:

Formative assessment can clearly be said to have ‘worked’ if the student demonstrates having learned as a result of the feedback provided. This requires that the student has a concept of learning that allows them to take in what the assessor has sought to convey and they then act on the basis of this developed understanding

(p.135)

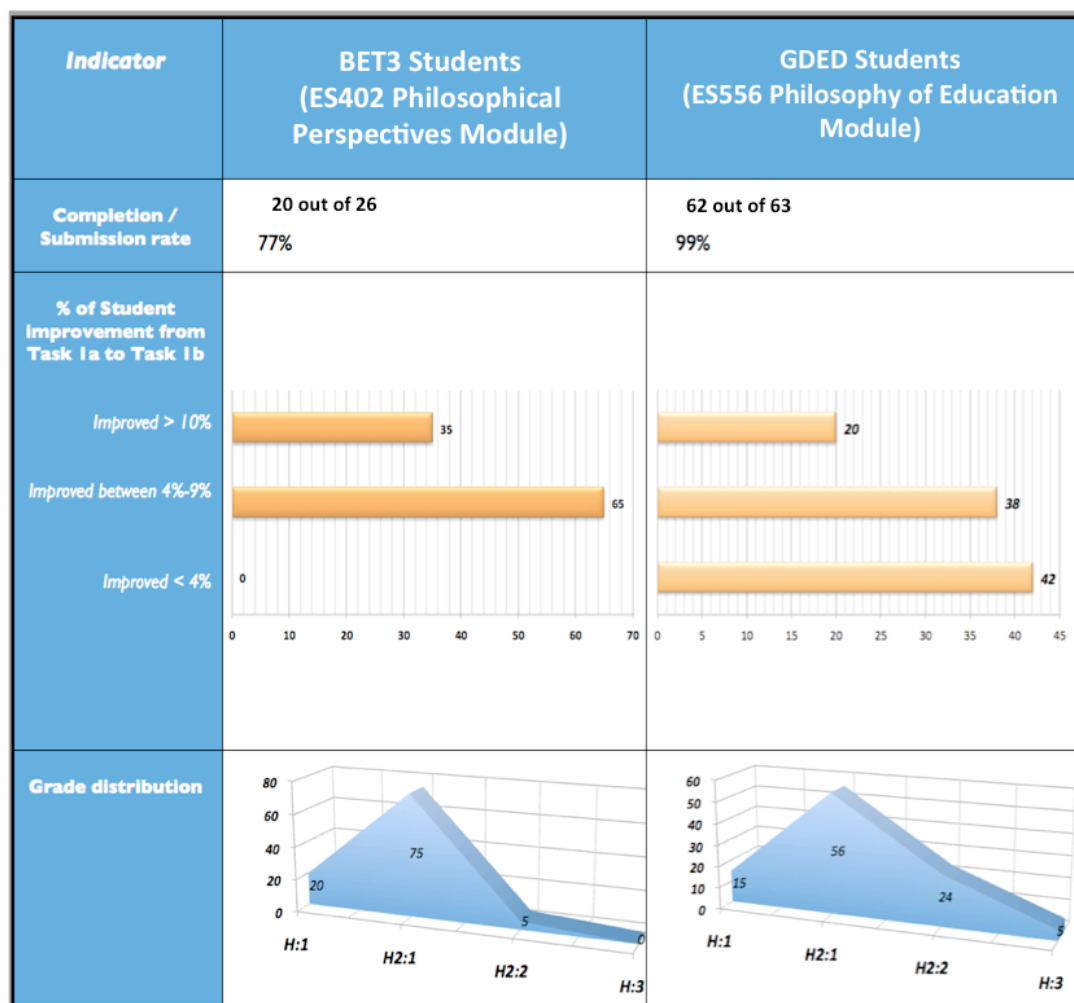


Figure 8.21: Phase 3: Student Improvement & Grade distribution 2010-2011

The representations in Figure 8.21 shows a distinct enhancement from Phase 1 & 2 in the task improvement rates, particularly with the BET 3 trainee-teacher cohort. Surprisingly this figure also shows that there was only 42% of the GDED cohort that improved between tasks. There are two reasons why this might be the case. Firstly the feedback offered to both groups was presented differently for each cohort. As the BET3 cohort are a relatively small group, individualised feedback was provided for each student. However the GDED cohort, a much larger group (63 students), received their feedback based on a group essay.

These findings are significant in relation to the broader study in that the assessment in small groups or on an individualised basis was valued more by learners. The previous Case Study (1) showed that this was not a common practice with DCU teaching staff though the benefits were acknowledged. Some people simply do not have the confidence in themselves to translate feedback. Bandura (1997) argues:

The less individuals believe in themselves, the more they need explicit, proximal, and frequent feedback of progress that provides repeated affirmations of their growing capabilities.

(p.217)

One of the most significant arguments that could be made in relation to the workload vs. quality feedback quandaries is that students may be able to transfer the advice and feedback in a generic sense to other parts of the learning experience outside of the prescribed learning outcomes and the unit of learning. This has a significant relevance for the workload argument posed by Teaching Staff (Case Study 1: Ch.7). This is highlighted in the findings shown in Table 8.7 that the majority of students from both classes were able to transfer feedback advice from Task 1 to Task 2 hence demonstrating the transferability of advice and sustainability of learning.

Table 8.8: Phase 3: Transfer of feedback advice from Task 1 to Task 2

	BET3 TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 15		GDED2 TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 15	
	%	N	%	N
All of it	46.7	7	24	6
50% or more	53.3	8	53.3	8
Less than 50%	0	0	6.7	1
None	0	0	0	0

Students from both GDED2 and BET3 classes were asked to evaluate the assessment format and feedback through reacting to a series of statements³⁹. On the whole there is an agreement that the assessment facilitated engagement with the course content, albeit with stronger levels of agreement with the BET3 respondents. 50% of the GDED2 students and the majority of BET3 students agree that the assessment format was also helping to build a teaching and learning relationship with the lecturer. Figure 8.22 overleaf outlines

³⁹ BET3 and GDED2 students were asked to react to two similar but not exactly identical sets of statements, hence comparison is only possible on some of the statements. The differentiation was deemed necessary to capture more specifically the characteristics of each class. For instance, it was particularly important to determine whether- even with a group based assessment element- GDED2 student were able to progress with their thinking on an individual basis (see Appendix C.1 for the relevant questionnaire posed).

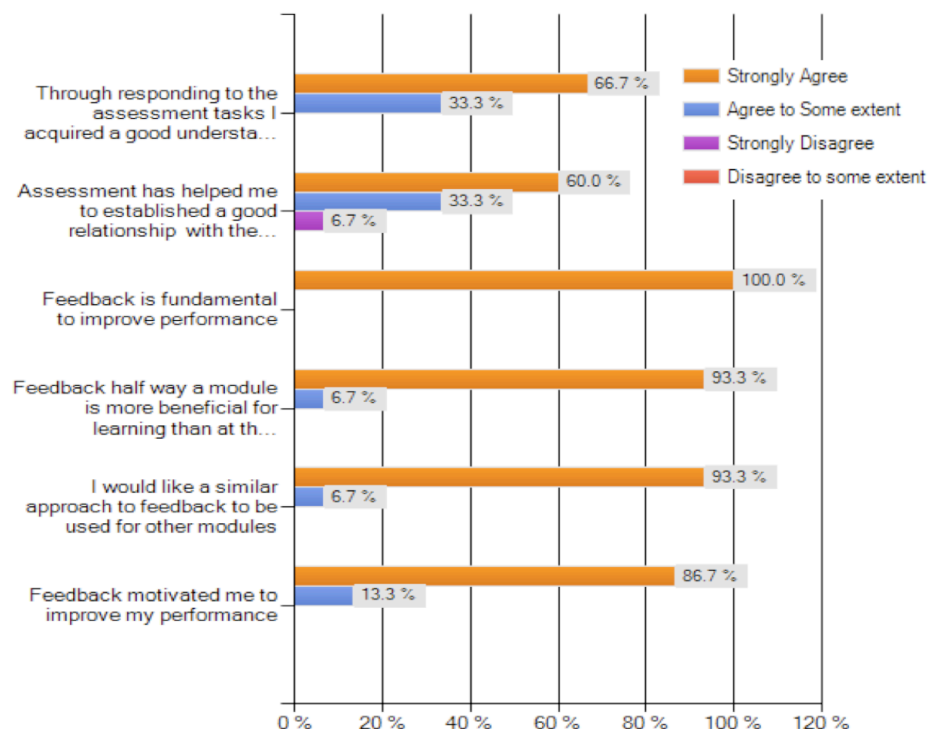


Figure 8.22: Phase 3: BET3 evaluation of assessment format & feedback

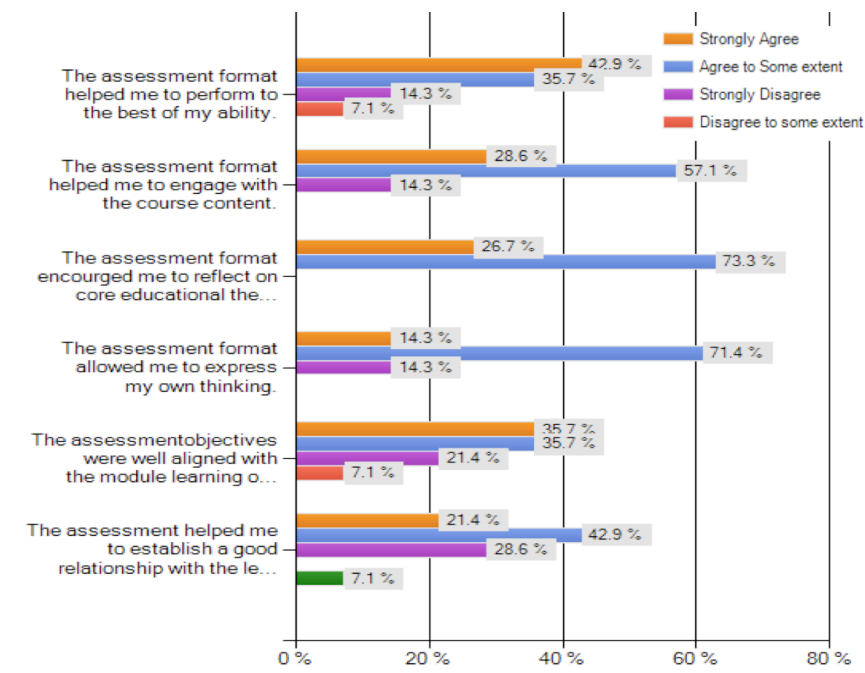


Figure 8.23: Phase 3: GDED2 evaluation of assessment format and feedback

This emerging scenario is further reinforced by comments made by students in response to the open ended questions of the online questionnaire. These are analysed through clustering and aggregation and represented below visually through wordclouds. The comments have been organised according to recurrent themes previously identified. In relation to the helpfulness of the Feedback process (for re-drafting), understanding of the assessment criteria, facilitating understanding of subject-specific requirements, and motivational aspects of the Assessment

Model: these are represented in Figures 8.24-8.27. The wordclouds show that while feedback helped in a general sense with redrafting of the essay it also had a motivational impact for some students and one BET3 student mentioned that it helped to clarify for the very first time the correct use of referencing conventions. The feedback also appears to have helped with clarifying the specifics of philosophical argumentation. Interestingly one GDED2 student also comments on how the group had used the questions raised in the feedback comments as the basis for group discussion, hence helping the group to progress with their understanding of the course content⁴⁰.



Figure 8.24: Phase 3: Helpfulness of the Feedback process for re-drafting



Figure 8.25: Phase 3: Facilitating understanding of the subject-specific requirements

⁴⁰ It should be noted that feedback was given in the context of two Philosophy of Education modules. One of the aims of the module was to promote independent thinking. For this reason in many instances feedback comments relating to conceptual and analytical issues were formulated as questions prompting students to 'dig deeper' in their understanding.



Figure 8.26: Phase 3: Understanding assessment criteria



Figure 8.27: Phase 3: Motivational/ confirming understanding

The comments suggest that the students felt that the format supported their learning and that they would welcome a similar format in other modules in their courses. Interestingly one GDED2 and one BET3 student saw the type of feedback provided as an act of care and saw in such care a stimulus to engage with the module content.

On the whole it can be concluded that the assessment format worked well for both BET3 and GDED2 students, but that the BET3 students derived greater benefit due to the personalised and individual format of the feedback they received. GDED2 assessment format raised some concern in relation to the group task. The data highlighted a *need for a more structured approach to the group task and for the formation of smaller groups*, giving all group members more opportunities for active engagement. However the feedback received appears to have helped in terms of clarification of expectations and assessment requirements, relationship building with the lecturer, engagement with the course content and sustainability of learning within and beyond the module. Again these findings contrast with the perception and

practices of the Teaching Staff as outlined in case Study 1. Though they suggest that the power of feedback cannot be underrated, the way this is provided is highly contested. The key findings from the final phase of case Study 2 are outlined in Table 8.7 below.

Table 8.9: Key Findings from Phase 3 of Case Study 2

KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 3 OF CASE STUDY 2
The (assessment & feedback) model, in a modified format, successfully transferred to the two other modules, highlighting the possibility of transferability to a range of subject domains and other modular contexts.
Viability of the model with both small and large groups.
Transparency in the application of assessing learning outcomes results in student empowerment.
Engagement with both feedback and course content for redrafting of formative activity.
Transferability of feedback advice beyond the specific activity for which it was provided.
Relationships are developed through feedback as dialogue, which requires a symmetrical relationship between teacher and student and between teaching and learning.

8.7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This four-year Case Study produced a significant amount of data, which was used to help develop and improve a model of assessment using constructivist ideals through the use of portfolios. As the Case progressed the issues relating to learning outcomes were addressed through *constructive alignment* (Biggs, 1999) and further enhanced through using peer and lecturers feedback to improve student understanding of assessment and the expected outcomes. The last phase of the research produced findings relating to the *significance of the teacher/student relationship* and how this can be developed through a *dialogical process thus creating a co-equal relationship*. Each section in this Chapter presents the findings and the recommendation for further implementation. The Final Phase perfected the Assessment Model and offers the rationale for its proposed adoption throughout the university curriculum.

The final result from the four-year process highlights the need for a revised assessment framework that had a recursive cycle or 'feedback loop', which closes the gap (Sadler, 1989) through the sequence *draft – comment – revise – resubmit*. The idea here is to add a sustainability element, which can be transferred to other learning and academic contexts. The Case presented in this chapter shows that a constructivist approach to both teaching and learning is essential. The end result is a dialogical model that brings into play the theories of

feedback and feed-forward. Coupled with the competency beyond competencies model, aligned with the reflective elements as advocated by Gibbs, (1998), and Schön (1983) a model begins to emerge.

Using framework analysis to generate themes and develop further research questions phase 1 and 2 of the case study used themes generated from the literature and these were revisited in phase three and triangulated with the emergent results from the expert interviews and the extant data pillars. A summary of the key findings is shown in table 8.10.

Table. 8.10: Case Study 2 Qualitative analysis (all phases): development of emergent themes, key recommendations and decisions.

Phase 1 2008-2009	ES204 & ES222 Curriculum Assessment		<i>Can a revised assessment framework</i> • promote the development of professional competence of pre-service teachers / trainers? • foster professional development of post-experience teachers / trainers?	• Transferability and applicability of the knowledge in professional contexts. • Focus on the cross-curricular relevance • Improved link between theory and practice • Improved ability to design assessment activities. • Enhanced understanding of the value of feedback • Appreciation of the difficulty in giving and receiving criticism. • Greater awareness of the complexity of the teacher's role as planner, assessor and mentor providing constructive criticism and support. • Questioning beliefs in relation to the role of assessment	• develop and improve the assessment framework taking on board student feedback. • explore the issue of competence beyond competencies. • explore the teacher – student relationship in greater detail.
Phase 2 2009-2010	ES204 & ES222 Curriculum Assessment		<i>Can a revised assessment framework:</i> • promote an attitudinal change and initiate the transition from student to teacher. • develop the role of the teacher / student relationship (dialogical discourse).	• Students had an improved focus on diverse needs within assessment models • Students rated the value of empowerment and motivation through feedback very highly • Deepen value on constructive alignment • Becoming an empathetic teacher • Relationships are developed through dialogue which requires a symmetrical relationship between teacher and student and between teaching and learning	• Can this model be transferred to other modules within the School? • How do we improve the delivery of this model from an administrative and pedagogical perspective without increasing student or assessor/lecturer workloads

					• explore the role of dialogical feedback in relation the student-teacher relationship • small group peer feedback to ease peer feedback anxiety (feed-forward)
Phase 3 2010-2012	ES402 Philosophical Perspectives on Education & ES556 Philosophy of Education	• focus on the process of learning (rather than exclusively on the end product), • foster engagement with the course content, • make assessment criteria more transparent, thus empowering students • increase the opportunities for establish a mutual relationship between teachers and students and between teaching and learning. • foster sustainable learning beyond the module	<i>Can a revised assessment framework:</i> • Can the model be transferred to other modules not specifically on assessment? • Can an engagement with both course content and feedback be fostered through dialogical feedback for a module not specifically focusing on assessment?	• The model, in modified format, successfully transferred to other two modules considerably different from the original one (highlighting the possibility of transferability to a range of subject domains) • Viability of the model with both small and large groups. Practical judgment is necessary to ensure that while learning happens assessor burn out does not. • Transparency in the application of assessment criteria resulting in student empowerment • Engagement with both feedback and course content for redrafting of formative activity • Transferability of feedback advice beyond the specific activity for which it was provided. • Relationships are developed through feedback as dialogue which requires a symmetrical relationship between teacher and student and between teaching and learning	• transfer assessment framework to a range/to all modules within Programme/s. • convince colleagues to adopt similar approaches outlining of principles informing the model and relevant training devised. • ensure greater fairness and learning also in group based formative activities (peer assessment of individual contributions to group activities incorporated in the group activity mark) • devise other assessment formats based on the principle of dialogical assessment

8.8 CONCLUSIONS

In recent years there has been a change in the way student learning is viewed. Increasingly the focus has moved from teaching to learning, with the emphasis shifting from what is taught, to *what* has been *learned* and more importantly *how it is learned*. I have argued that a further step needs to be taken in order to ensure that learning, once initiated, becomes sustainable. A transformation needs to happen among assessment stakeholders. It is not sufficient to modify assessment formats. Attitudes need to shift and assessment roles need to be reconceived. As a

teacher trainer I have a responsibility to myself and my students to foster change and improve my practice. It is therefore essential that our own practices foster sustainable learning and models future practice in a wider educational context. Student feedback should be seen as part of the learning process and should help students move from surface to deep learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976; Ramsden, 1992; Biggs, 1987; 1993; Entwistle, 1981). In DCU assessment can have a greater purpose other than measuring and validating.

Freire (1993) suggests that the starting point in 'education for liberation' is dialogue, as opposed to the hierarchical 'banking education'. He goes on to suggest that dialogue begins with the experiences of learners. Experiential learning (Kolb 1984; Knowles 1968) means investigating our thinking and asking why I think the way I do. In this case I have outlined how dialogue within an assessment model requires a co-equal relationship between teacher and student, in which knowledge is not a commodity to be passed down but is something to be negotiated. Assessment is not just a means to an end, or a method to measure competencies and learning outcomes. Central to the assessment model is the transformation of teacher-student relationships and the way I think about knowledge.

The Case showed that the model was transferable across modules and from the students' perspective the learning process itself through feedback was also transferable across subjects, modules and higher order processes. The model demonstrates that it is possible to move students beyond surface learning to the higher domains of deeper learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976). A theoretical model can be generated joining the two interlinked elements of assessment relating to student centred learning and the use of learning outcomes. The first is a dialogical assessment model (Figure 8.28) and the second is a dialogical feedback model (Figure 8.29).

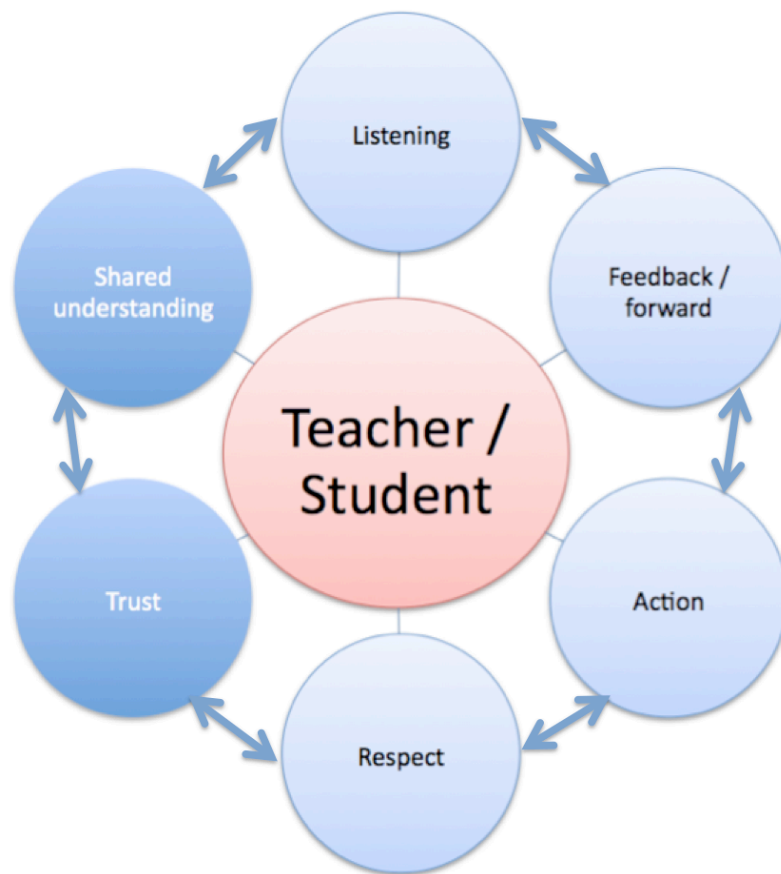


Figure 8.28 Dialogical Assessment Model

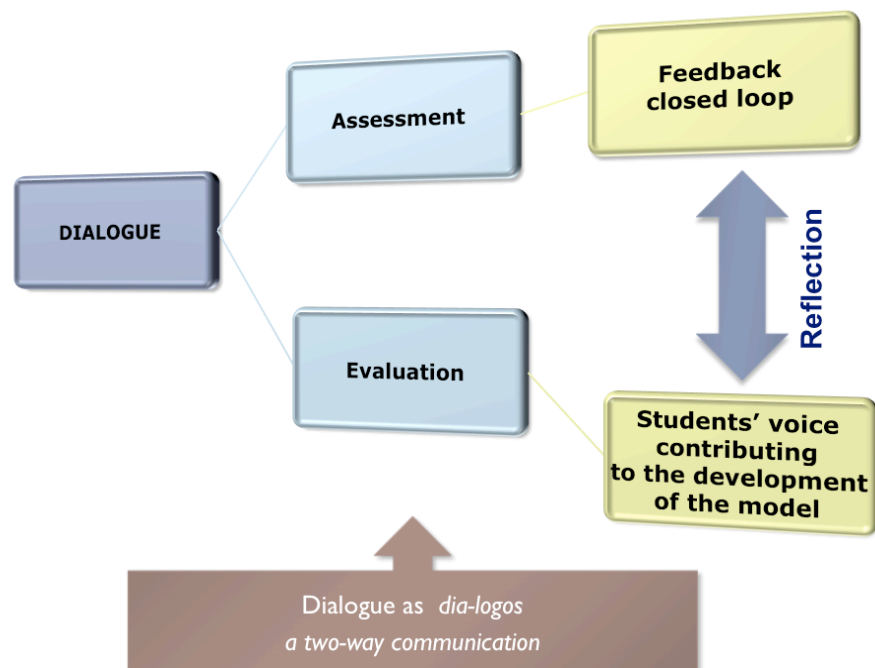


Figure 8.29: Dialogical feedback model

The findings from Case Study 1 showed that Assessment and Feedback in DCU could be seen as a continuum. This continuum includes multiple viewpoints and perceptions. The Findings of this Chapter show that students' view and value assessment is a very different way to teaching staff. Though there is shared common understanding of the practical nature of assessment design, the two cases converge to suggest that a model for DCU could be further developed. This model could embrace the AFI precepts, through an overarching link to the student-centred, learning outcome approach (as pursued by the development of the EHEA through the Bologna Process). Though philosophically it could also be argued that the introduction of a learning outcomes approach was not really about student-centred learning but rather a tool for European Higher Education harmonisation driven by a vocational agenda. Furthermore a learning outcomes model can drive assessment and teaching and learning can suffer as a result. The approach to expressing achievement through AFI is mapped to the NFQ in Ireland. This research shows that this could be interpreted as a behaviourist model of measuring achievement, and does not take into account the learning needs of the student or the pastoral relationships between the institution, teacher and the learner. A new way of approaching assessment can embrace the needs of the learner, the adherence to a learning outcomes approach and provide the learner with the required transferable attributes they may require from a vocational as well as a life-long learning perspective.

The following Chapter outlines a qualitative perspective of the use of learning outcomes. It uses multiple perspectives through interviews within the educational and policy development community to provide an insight into the value placed on the introduction of Bologna, AFI and the move to a learning outcomes approach. This approach is presented through Expert Interviews.

CHAPTER 9

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes (sic) the social situatedness of research data

(Kvale, 1996 p. 14)

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Interviewing is a way to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. Within the multiple-methods (mixed) approach Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007) suggest that the interview, 'helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone' (p.9). During this phase, the researcher must make *meaning* out of what was just uncovered and compile the data into sections or groups of information, also known as themes or codes (Creswell, 2003; 2007). These themes or codes are consistent phrases, expressions, or ideas that were common among research participants (Kvale, 2007). Within this study the interviews were a way that other stakeholders could get involved and talk about their views in relation to the macro, meso and micro issues relating to the Bologna Process and how this translates into student-centred learning through the use of assessing learning outcomes. The interviewees were given the opportunity to discuss their perceptions and views of certain issues that relate to their own or their institutions' role in this process. It was a chance for these stakeholders to go beyond the facts and express their points of views, which are entangled with emotions, history and personal experience. The purpose of the interview was primarily to determine the utility of the data, but also to discover how these issues relate to each other. There are many types of interviews and interview techniques. Patton (2002), Lee and Fielding (1996); Punch, (2009), all distinguish between three main types of interviews. The model adopted here draws upon these through the main classification method adopted by Minichiello et al.'s (1990) model (described in Figure 2.9 in Chapter 2). Within the multiple-method design the interviews form one of the pillars of data and therefore the function is to add additional meaning and perspective on the research questions. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), said about the interview, 'the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable', (p.

267). The interview approach for this study therefore used a point between unstructured and structured.

9.2 SELECTING INTERVIEWEES

Creswell (2007) suggests the importance of finding participants who will be willing to openly and honestly share information or 'their story' (p.133). Given (2008) suggests that 'stakeholder sampling' may be useful in the context of policy analysis and from historical perspectives.

This strategy involves identifying who the major stakeholders are who are involved in designing, giving and receiving, or administering the program (sic) or service being evaluated, and who might other wise be affected by it

(Given, 2008, Vol.2, p.697)

The four interviewees used within this study were carefully selected to represent key elements of the study. These stakeholders were chosen based on their range of knowledge and experience of the concept and because they all met the criterion of the study. In the interest of anonymity and protection of the respondent's identity the interviewees' names have been removed to protect their current and future professional roles.

9.3 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Miles and Huberman (1984, p.23) present a flow model of presenting and reducing data, which is a simple and helpful tool for the process taken within interview analysis. This model was previously represented in Figure: 3.5 (Chapter 3). The main components relate to the process of the data analysis: i.e. data collection (DC), data reduction (DR) and data display (DD) (simultaneously), linking back to DR and DD and adding a verification and conclusions stage (this stage again links back to the DR and DD stages).

The stages of the Interview analysis broadly followed Miles & Huberman's *flow model* (1998), but utilised Creswell's, (2003; 2007) approach to analysing qualitative data by categorising, and/or grouping themes, sub-themes and coding the data from all four interviews. Each interview was firstly visually represented with *line numbering* and *timestamps*. The interview as a whole was *described, classified and fed-back* into the ongoing empirical studies (Case Studies). After the completion of the Case Studies the interviews were re-analysed using *clustering methods* at first. Themes from the concurrent case Studies began to emerge and these were *catergorised* within the interview narratives and given a *code* relating to *emergent themes* from the *Literature, Policy and Historical* Chapters (Ch.2, 5, & 6).

Using a framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read, 2005) approach the third phase of analysis began to draw out new *sub-themes*, and these were again fed-back into the *literature* and *added through meaning-making* to the main themes, which had already emerged. Using Creswell's concurrent triangulation it was possible to generate generalised findings from each interview as well as situate the interviewees within a broader context of the research question. Figure 9.2 overleaf outlines how these interviews were processed and analysed:

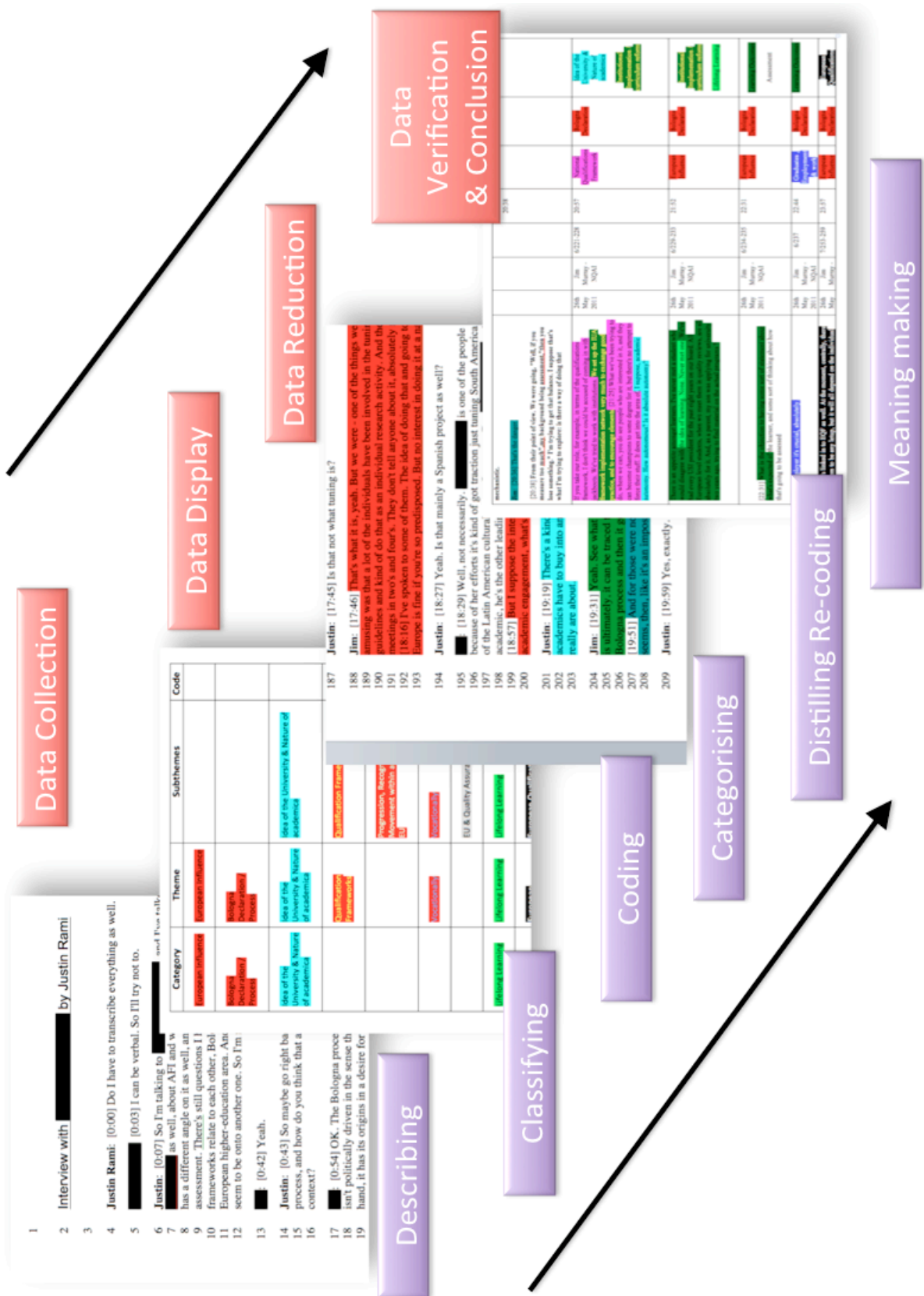


Figure 9.1: Analysis process (adapted from Creswell and Miles & Huberman)

To gain a sense of the patterns and clusters emerging the colour codes were used to aggregate findings and convergent and divergent aspects of each interview as well as how they relate to the other data and each other if at all. The framework analysis model allowed for the final *clustering and grouping of themes, coding-narratives* and *categories and sub-categories*. This was also used as part of the concurrent triangulation process and the data was traceable through the page/line numbering, time-stamping and interviewee reference column as represented in Figure 9.3 below. This process added the ‘*meaning making*’, phases to the process and ensured that each interview was analysed within its own context. .

THEME: AFI – Curriculum reform (SC/ Bologna) (S/C Learning Outcomes)

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Page/Line	Timestamp	Category /	Theme	subthemes
So I think from the university sector's point of view, it was, as many things were, it was kind of light touch, so you were encouraged and hoped that you would, but it wasn't mandated. I mean, you kind of, ultimately you were going to have to, but that's not what they were saying.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/50-53	3:09	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform / AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
[3:27] So, I mean, a very good example of that is that when UCD did the Horizons program and moved to learning outcomes, they used the Dublin descriptors, not the framework.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/54-56	3:27	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform / AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
[3:37] And the Dublin descriptors are only supposed to be for aligning frameworks with each other, so they're supposed to be at the meta-level, but they were never designed to be used at the program level or the org level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	2/57-59	3:37	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform / AFI	Bologna Declaration Process	
Some people thought of it as a module description like you'd have up on the Web. Some of them thought of it as the course overview you're given your first class.	18th May 2011	Interview with Interviewee 'A'	11/390-391	25:21			
Well, I suppose the fundamental thing around this is the use of learning outcomes. It's a contested area as you well know. Part of the problem is that as it's being implemented, I suppose for some higher-education institutions or individual academics, they see it as an external thing being imposed upon them. [15:51] The idea really originated in an educational environment. It was never a case that someone in the department of education all over the world, "Let's impose."	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	4-5/164-169	15:17	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
Part of it has to do with, this has been going on in Europe, from an academic perspective with tuning which is very much owned by academics.	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	5/175-176	16:35	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
And the other thing, outcomes are very old thing. So that's a process of reform, if you want to use that term, coming from the institutions.	26th May 2011	Interviewee 'C'	5/177-179	17:00	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform

Figure 9.2: Clustering and grouping themes, codes and categories, final stage of analysis.

General categories were developed through the themes outlined in the Literature Chapter (Ch.2) and what emerged from the Case Studies. These themes were described as categories and given a colour code. As each Interview was conducted, transcribed and analysed, a further analysis phase was brought into play which additionally reduced the data and developed subcategories coded for visual representation and a third analysis phase. These categories relating to the themes and the emergent sub-subcategories can be seen in Table 9.2 overleaf.

Table 9.1: Categories (Stage 2) and Subcategories (Stage 3)

COLOUR CODED CATEGORIES	(DATA REDUCTION)	SUB CATEGORIES
European Influence, Bologna Declaration / Process		Qualification Frameworks
Idea of the University & Nature of academia		Progression, Recognition / Movement within and outside of EU
Lifelong Learning		Learning Outcomes
European Qualification Frameworks		Vocationality
Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI		Assessment
Learning Outcomes		EU & Quality Assurance (EU & QA)
National Qualifications Framework		Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI
Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work		
Assessment		

9.4 TRIANGULATING THE FINDINGS WITH THE LARGER STUDY

The codes generated for the interviews are represented and explained in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Interview Analysis: Code Descriptions and & Key

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: CODE DESCRIPTIONS AND & KEY				
DESCRIPTION	CODE	CAT.	SUB. CAT	EXPLANATION
European Influence, Bologna Declaration / Process	Red background and black typeface	Red background and black typeface	☐	This category relates to issues regarding the implementation, policies and development of the EHEA and/or the Bologna Process
Qualification Frameworks	Red background and Yellow typeface	Red background and Yellow typeface	☐	This theme relates to anything to do with the development of European qualification framework (in relation to an outcomes approach to describing learning)
Idea of the University & Nature of	Turquoise background and black	Turquoise background and black	☐	This theme relates to the tensions and politics related to the concept of Bologna and Learning Outcomes from the academic perspective.

academia	typeface	typeface			Issues in relation to vocationalisation and liberal education as well as academic freedom are covered here.
Lifelong Learning	Lime Green background and black typeface	Lime Green background and black typeface	☐		This themes relates to two concepts of lifelong learning one: within the Bologna Action Lines of LLL and two: LLL as a philosophy within Ireland and DCU
Progression, Recognition / Movement within and outside of EU	Red background and Mint Green typeface	Red background and Mint Green typeface		☐	A key feature of the Bologna Process was to create the EHEA by 2010. This theme relates to all aspect for mobility, progression and transfer within HE and to the world of work in Europe and the rest of the word.
European Qualification Frameworks	Black background and white typeface	Black background and white typeface	☐		This theme references the development and issues relation to the European Qualifications Framework for Life long Learning (EQFLLL)
Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Dark Green background and Yellow typeface	Dark Green background and Yellow typeface	☐	☐	This theme relates issues regarding the localised implementation of the Bologna Declaration and the associated Action Lines.
Learning Outcomes	Dark Green background and black typeface	Dark Green background and black typeface	☐	☐	This theme directly links to issues regarding the notion, approach and development to learning outcomes, both in principle and practice.
Vocationality	Red background and Blue typeface	Red background and Blue typeface		☐	This theme refers to the vocational nature of universities, DCU, learning outcomes and the Bologna Process.
National Qualifications Framework	Pink background and black typeface	Pink background and black typeface	☐		This theme is connected with the development, implementation and link between the Bologna Process and the Irish National Framework of Qualifications and also how this links to DCUs AFI Project.
Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	Blue background and white typeface	Blue background and white typeface	☐		This theme relates to the link between learning outcome and graduates. It references graduate attributes and proficiencies as well as the vocational nature of graduates from DCU and their preparation for the world of work.
EU & Quality Assurance (EU & QA)	Grey background and Black typeface	Grey background and Black typeface		☐	This theme connects the EU policy development included the EQF, Bologna with ENQA, IUQB and either Quality Assurance structures; it also links this to the role of assessment in Learning outcomes.
Assessment	White background and Black typeface	White background and Black typeface	☐	☐	The main theme of the research is represented in black and white and refers to anything to do with assessment systems, curriculum assessment and assessment as a

The codes are representations of categories and subcategories. These categories are drawn from the two paralleled embedded case studies. For example 'Learning Outcomes relating to Assessment' is a sub-category, this is drawn from the category 'Learning Outcomes'. Also within the other data pillars and research methods within this study other themes contributed to the development of the categories extracted from the interviews. This concurrent triangulation (Creswell, 2003) method ensures that themes and categories are mirrored and discussed within all the methods: i.e. Case study, EU Bologna Chapter, NFQ & AFI Chapter and the Literature Chapter. As the mixed model format of the research approach is based upon concurrent triangulation the findings are relative to each other. Some converge and some diverge. These are discussed within each chapter.

9.5 INTERVIEW 1: RESPONDENT 'A'

Respondent 'A's full transcript and responses have been removed on recommendation from the viva voce board. The major categories emerging from his interview are listed in tabular format above in Table 9.1. The 3rd stage of analysis can be viewed in Appendix E. After further data reduction subcategories were identified and coded using colour codes (Table 9.1).

The findings articulate a clear understanding of where the thrust of the Bologna process emerged. Respondent 'A' confirms the notion that the Bologna Process is much more than a drive to promote an EHEA by 2010. It refers to the process as a political process where some countries involvement was motivated by national agendas rather than for the greater good of the members of the Bologna Process.

Respondent 'A' goes on to describe how Bologna related to the NFQ and how instrumental the NQAI were in the development and implementation of the Framework in the State. They said that the universities embraced this process much slower than the Institutes of Technologies (IoT), who had begun the implementation of the NFQ much earlier. This required bringing in an additional measure to ensure that all the universities could progress at the same rate and bring in the required curriculum changes proposed by the Bologna Process. The main mechanism for this was the formation of the Framework Implementation Network (FIN).

In trying to bring about these reforms with the help of the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) there was also friction within the universities between the imposition of the process and the academic integrity of academics and the institutional reform process.

"...in terms of the qualifications framework, I don't think we could be accused of coming in with jackboots. We've tried to work with institutions. We set up the IUA framework implementation network very much to exchange good practice, and to encourage elements.... What we've been trying to do, where we can, you do see people who are interested in it, and they can become champions to some degree for it, but there's no attempt to force their stuff. It does get into the area of, I suppose, academic autonomy. How autonomous? Is it absolute autonomy?"

(ibid, 6/221-228)

In relation to the 'Tuning Process' and when the emphasis of learning outcomes first emerged, Respondent 'A' stated that 'Tuning' was essentially an institutional project and there was never a true connection to the broader issues of learning outcomes within this structure.

Respondent 'A' suggests that the introduction of the learning outcomes process through the referencing to the NFQ (and thus Bologna) was primarily about the freedom of movement. The universities seemed to rally against this imposition at first though the learners themselves through the student voices such as USI etc. welcomed the development.

"There is an appetite amongst learners. I've never met a student who would disagree with the idea of learning. None. Never met one. We've had every USI president for the past eight years on our board. All European level students, when we meet them in quality reviews, are all absolutely for it"

(Respondent 'A', Interview, 20116/229-233)

Respondent 'A' went on to articulate the increasing emphasis of the European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning (EQF-LLL) and how this is beginning to superimpose itself on top of the Bologna Framework. This again highlights the link between a learning outcomes approach described through Knowledge, Skills and Competences and the precepts and action lines of the Bologna Declaration.

"Now interestingly, I could be wrong, but looking at the way things are panning out, EQF is an EU initiative, so it doesn't cover the entire European Higher Education Area. That's 47 countries. The EQF is the EU members of states, 27 plus the accession countries. EQF is politically driven, and it's arguable that it might be getting more traction. National frameworks, now, are being developed, lifelong learning frameworks across most of the member states"

(ibid, 3/121-126)

"What the commission had been trying to push through EQF, greater permeability between systems, this is having a huge impact and debate in Europe: in countries like Germany, Austria, where they have the dual system, a VET and then a firm dividing line between higher ed..... From the off, conceptually, it wanted not to be something that would not be compatible with Bologna, so it was. When the recommendation

came out of the European Parliament and Council, it was declared that the three cycles of Bologna were compatible with six, seven, eight, three upper levels of the EQF"

(ibid,3/113-120)

Respondent 'A' expanded on this link between Bologna and the EQF and their future relationship:

"We were involved; we wrote a lot of EQF, actually. While we're absolutely, fully supportive of the Bologna process I would predict, I could be wrong, that EQF, ultimately, will take over. But the Bologna thinking, that's in the Bologna framework, will be very much part of EQF, the higher education values and so forth. Notions will be embedded within it"

(ibid, 4/127-132).

They went on to suggest that the Bologna Process is even more significant in relation to the increasing negative economic outlook in Ireland and the issues of mobility and is intrinsically connected to the future graduates migrating in large numbers throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

"They're now coming to us now 10 years after they actually came to Ireland with their qualifications. So this stuff isn't going to go away, recognition and mobility. And as you say, for Irish graduates of whatever type of education and training they've gone under, with migration outward increasing it's critical"

(ibid, p.8/ln.296-299)

Respondent 'A's interview raised a range of issues some of which connected to the role of Bologna and many pointed towards the link between it and the implementation of the NFQ in universities. They ultimately believe that the process was a positive one in terms of '*describing what students should be able to do or know*', by the end of their studies. Though they also stated that the future of the process was very unpredictable, as the Process itself was steeped in politics related not only to the European agenda but that of academic freedom versus the perceived vocationality of the Bologna ideals.

"I suppose a lot of this is unpredictable. I'm an historian by training, and historians always look backwards, in hindsight, and you can analyse what was unpredictable in hindsight. But looking forward I think a lot of it is unpredictable. But I'm an optimist by nature and I think there's a lot of good stuff in the Bologna process. I think it's very, very imperfectly realised both within individual countries and across Europe"

(ibid, p.7/ln.260-265)

In relation to how some of the Irish universities see the process Respondent 'A' said:

"I was in talking to one of the schools in [REDACTED] and they were asking, "Why should we do all this?" And this was the strongest argument. I said, "You might think that you're well-known in this parish or you might think that you're world-renowned, but you're not necessarily. It's a big world and your students leave your institution and they don't all work in Ireland"

(ibid, p.7/ln.279-288)

9.6 INTERVIEW 2: RESPONDENT 'B'

The full transcription and analysis of Respondent 'B's responses and the analysis stages in relation to coding and categorisation have been removed on recommendation from the viva voce board.

Again, general categories were developed through the themes outlined in the Literature and what emerged from the Case Studies. These themes were described as categories and given a code. As the Interview was conducted, transcribed and analysed, a further analysis phase was introduced which further reduced the data and developed subcategories which again were presented with several codes for visual representation and further analysis.

During the latter stages of the AFI process in DCU, Respondent 'B' was senior staff member with overall responsibility for teaching and learning in DCU and responsible for much of the decisions regarding implementation of DCU strategic '*Enhancement of Learning*' aims through the learning outcomes approach in the DCU. The interview followed the same structured questions as the others and the responses were used to delve deeper and further refine and clarify the data.

Respondent 'B's responses focused on the link between the AFI process and a further iteration of the process, which has been introduced by the incoming DCU President (Prof. Brian McCraith) relating to DCU's graduate attributes. Respondent 'B' saw the link between a learning-outcomes approach and graduate attributes as a natural step in the evolution of the AFI process. They viewed the ongoing process of curriculum reform in DCU as a balance between complying with the Bologna Declaration through the HEA funding mechanisms and the desire of the university to move to a student centred model of learning.

"there's a need to make people generally aware within the system about the importance of that, on the compliance and the need for it. And I think, if you look at the European context, it's absolutely essential"

(Respondent 'B', Interview 2011, p.1/ln.21-24)

"I think what we have to be very, I suppose, smart about is ensuring that we're compliant, but also that we have flexibility within that system to develop some of our own ideas. So it's balancing that that's important"

(ibid, p.1/ln.25-27)

Respondent 'B' believes that the process in DCU through the AFI project is a shift in mind set. They suggested that the content model utilised within the University was not an effective mechanism that encouraged student learning.

"I think the whole idea of learning outcomes is very different from what people had before"

(ibid, p.2/ln.70-71)

"People before looked on modules and their assessment, not so much in learning outcomes - although you could couch them in that area - but more in terms of content and seeing if people understood it and knew it"

(ibid, p.2/ln.72-74)

They went on to say that clear understanding from the curriculum developers and course assessors was essential and the link between assessment and learning outcomes should not be overlooked.

"We would have said that they (students) had a good, basic knowledge of the academic basis of whatever the course was. We would have said that they were analytical in their approach and those other elements. And we've brought some of those. Not all of them. We've brought some of them into the new learning outcomes of our system"

(ibid, p.3/ln.101-104)

Respondent 'B's main emphasis on learning outcomes through the interview was the link between the learning outcomes at modular level through programme outcomes and into graduate attributes. He describe the value of this approach to learning outcomes as not necessarily within the 'learning experience' itself but on the final outcomes and the attributes the student could say they possess at the end of the learning experience. Respondent 'B' did not seem to be able to differentiate the curriculum alignment aspect of learning outcomes to the alignment process of the overall AFI to Graduate Attributes aspect.

"The key thing is to ensure, to align, I would say, the program with the graduate attributes on an overall basis"

(ibid, p.3/ln.89-90)

"I think the alignment of the outcomes of the overall program is going to be key, and they must be aligned with the credentialed attributes. Otherwise, what does it mean to be a DCU graduate?"

(ibid, p.3/ln.95-97)

“We have also, all of the modules realigned with the various elements of learning outcomes. The key thing then would be to align those together and that’s a work in progress”

(ibid,p.6/ln.192-194)

Respondent ‘B’ admitted the link between the SIF funding provided by the HEA as an enabler to enhance learning in universities. He suggested that this funding contributed significantly to DCU’s AFI process in terms of resources, staffing and dissemination. *“The Academic Framework for Innovation, ...because you know, there’s about 2,500 modules had to be rewritten and the outcomes had to be done. So that’s cost”* (ibid, p.5/ln.144-146). *“But I would say, in a sense, that the SIF funding, in particular, gave us a mechanism to achieve that”* (ibid, p.5/ln.154-157). They also stated that this was an ongoing process and by no means is the process over. They admitted that the final aspect of AFI was not implemented, *“That’s still an ongoing process because Course Builder still has to prove itself in every sense first, because there are some issues there. That is still ongoing”* (ibid, p.5/ln.169-172).

“But I think the good thing now is that we have a very clear view and it’s gone through all the various mechanisms in the university. It’s been looked at by executives. It’s been looked at by Academic Council, by heads, by all the academics and by academic council”

(ibid, p.6/ln.185-188)

“Really now there’s pretty well, although there’s still it’s being refined a little bit more”

(ibid, p.6/ln.189-191)

Respondent ‘B’ made particular reference to the need for learners to be equipped for the world after their studies, *“and that reflects back on producing within our programs people who won’t be expecting to be given a job or to fit into a system that’s there, but they can generate their own, and that they won’t be afraid to do so”* (ibid, p.4/ln.114-116). They described this on two levels, the first being through the development of the learners life long learning, and the second through a clear describable set of competences and skills that could be presented to employers.

“But I suppose it goes right back to the first thing that you said, the realisation that this is lifelong learning and that whatever you’re doing, there’s a set of tools that could help you and inform you as to how to do it as best as possible”

(ibid, p.9/ln.301-303)

“So I think its a bigger level of empowerment. I mean, having given people a set of attributes that allowed them to get a job was richly empowering those individuals, and it allowed us to bring in all the multinationals and to develop out that end”

(ibid, p.4/ln.117-119)

This, they stated, was linked to the Bologna Process through the notion of freedom of movement, migration and mobility. He linked this process into the economic agenda set by the Irish Government as well as the drive from the European Commission to make Europe a more competitive marketplace.

“And this is where the graduate attributes picks up, because we’re seeing, for example, for DCU, you could have a set of attributes, or for a particular program you have a set of graduate attributes”

(ibid, p.3/ln.79-81)

“And that reflects back on producing within our programs people who won’t be expecting to be given a job or to fit into a system that’s there, but they can generate their own, and that they won’t be afraid to do so”

(ibid, p.4/ln.114-116)

“So you were harnessing people to go into jobs that were available, or should be available, to make the economy work. That’s changed, because, A, the types of jobs have changed much more”

(ibid, p.4/ln.108-110)

Respondent ‘B’s interview did not generate a great deal of new findings. The responses were those one would have expected from someone representing their position within the university. Their reference to the AFI process was linked mainly to the development of graduate attributes and why learners would require these in the future. There is probably a great deal of truth in these statements though one wonders if the actual process of the AFI was driven purely at an institutional level by their parameters and not by the overall original aim of the Bologna Declaration which aims to put the student at the centre of the learning experience and not the employers.

9.7 INTERVIEW 3: RESPONDENT ‘C’

The full transcription and analysis of Respondent ‘C’s responses and the 1st and 2nd stage analysis have been removed on recommendation from the viva voce board. However an example of the framework analysis process can be viewed through the 3rd stage of analysis in Appendix E (separate volume). Respondent ‘C’s main role within the DCU team involved the

implementation of the AFI process as a senior member of the teaching and learning support unit (LIU) across the university. In relation to the origins of the AFI process through Bologna Respondent 'C' stated that:

"Because the Bologna compliance elements that a university had to buy into, some of that was quite easy in terms of structures. We had them already there, and the credits and modules were there, so that part was relatively easy. So then, if I'm right, AFI was a vehicle to help some of that compliance happen, but also bringing in other things..."

(Respondent 'C', Interview 2011, p.3/ln.114-118)

"We were glad to do it under Bologna. We had chosen to package that up with AFI, which, of course, is a much bigger curriculum-reform, change-management process in DCU. So from the layperson's perspective, I don't necessarily think that what we wanted to do was that well-articulated, and it's not surprising, I think, that there may be confusion"

(ibid, p.3/ln.106-133)

Respondent 'C' also hinted that the other intentions of the Bologna Process in relation to student centred learning (another precept of AFI) was beginning to lose momentum. *"I really couldn't say that definitively, but it seems to be that sort of feeling. There are other pressures that are overtaking this, other directives and so on. Particularly in Ireland, we're focusing, I think, more at a national level as well"* (ibid, p.5/ln.180-183).

When questioned about the impact of the AFI process on assessment in DCU Respondent 'C' states: *"It's certainly had an impact, in terms of making people rethink their teaching practice. So. The very fact that we ask them to articulate their modules in terms of learning outcomes, and then align that with assessment"* (ibid, p.1/ln.34-36). Their view was that the Process itself had caused a shift in mind-set. The very fact that the Process was being implemented meant academic staff had to engage. *"But making those explicit. And forcing people to make those, put those down in paper. And again, it's moving into the public realm, as well"* (ibid, p.1/ln.44-47), *"that's out there now. And can be viewed by colleagues. So, again, there's an option of... an option, too, for reflection there, and for colleagues to look, to come together, to think about curriculum now, as a team"*, (ibid, p.1/ln.49-52).

Respondent 'C' said their role was to *"convince (their) department that this [AFI] was a good thing"* and (they) said that this, *"was an easy sell"* (ibid, p.2/ln.68-71). They said that in the pedagogic departments such as Education this was much easier. Though there was resistance to this by certain faculties. *"They'd find that quite difficult to... and I don't think it was concept of learning outcomes themselves. But... it was more that... they were being told what to do with their... with what they teach"*, (ibid, p.2/ln.79-83), some viewed AFI as a *"threat to their own autonomies"* (ibid, p.2/ln.91-92). Respondent 'C' views AFI as a very important process for

the university, “[some] other colleagues don’t necessarily have the time nor, they don’t see it as a priority, and we have to make it a priority if it is a priority for DCU” (ibid, p.6/ln.234-235).

“So we need to ensure that there are structures at the program level that support that, to ensure that that happens, because, yes, there’ll always be people like yourself who are interested in what we have”

(ibid, p.6/ln.230-232)

“So this continual, cyclical thinking about teaching, learning and assessment has to become embedded, both in individuals’ practice, but also in curriculum design at the program level as well”

(ibid, p.6/ln.230-232)

“I see AFI as a project in time, and AFI will end, but what we hope to achieve in terms of AFI has to be embedded”

(ibid, p.6/ln.223-224).

Finally Respondent ‘C’ suggests the AFI should be seen as an embedded process, cyclical in nature. In order to measure its impact DCU need to conduct further research on the impact of assessment and learning outcomes.

“Yeah. Going back to your question, I would be looking for some tangible evidence. So, this is the way I used to do things, and this is how I do them now, or this is how I plan to do them in the future. This is the type of assessment I had, and this is why, I’ve changed my learning outcomes, perhaps, or I’ve realised that the type of assessment wasn’t aligned with learning outcomes, and this is what I do now. [12:29] So, more tangible evidence, I suppose”

(ibid, p.5/ln.202-207)

9.8 INTERVIEW 4: RESPONDENT ‘D’

The full transcription and analysis of Respondent ‘B’s responses and the analysis stages in relation to coding and categorisation has been removed on recommendation from the viva voce board. Respondent ‘D’ had a senior role with the implementation of the SIF Programmes at DCU, and was instrumental in bringing the AFI (Academic Framework for Innovation) into the institution, which drove the learning outcomes agenda for several years. Respondent ‘D’ was also a member of the FIN (Framework Implementation Network) the advisory body to the universities set up by the NQAI. Respondent ‘D’ had previous experience within the IoT (Institutes of Technology) sector and was quite familiar with the Bologna Process and how this would impact on her own institution at the time. When they first came to DCU they gathered from the staff that they believed that the Process was inadvertently being an outside process imposed on the university sector. They even suggested that around 2005 some within DCU

didn't believe that Bologna would apply to the university, *"and they were saying things like, 'Well, the university sector doesn't have to do that', (Respondent 'D', Interview, 2011, p.2/ln.41-43), 'I was quite taken aback that we had such a low level of knowledge and of interest in it' (ibid, p.2/ln.39-40).* They suggested that the HEA did not enforce the process but strongly encouraged the universities to implement the Bologna process through the NQF guidelines.

"So I think from the university sector's point of view, it was, as many things were, it was kind of light touch, so you were encouraged and hoped that you would, but it wasn't mandated. I mean, you kind of, ultimately you were going to have to, but that's not what they were saying"

(ibid,p2/ln.50-53)

In relation to how the Bologna Process was sold within the university, Respondent 'D' suggests that the parallel process of the 'Enhancement of Learning Strategy' (2007) gave them an ideal opportunity to use the process to comply with the Bologna requirements, though at a meta-level these requirements only meant placing existing awards into the Framework at the various levels. i.e.level 7-10 on the NQF and with the Bologna Cycles 1,2 & 3 for Bologna. Respondent 'D' suggested that the issues with Bologna and the NQF in relation to learning outcomes have yet to be resolved. *"In fact the NQF descriptors are very generic. This is another one of these unanswered questions. I think there's a series of unanswered questions around Bologna and learning outcomes", (ibid, p.12/ln.418-420).*

Though once this began, DCU realised the process could not be done in isolation to student centred learning and the other Bologna Action Lines. *"Internally, we played up the need to align with the NQF in order to sort of, I suppose, prompt it to happen" (ibid, p.2/ln.65-67), "we would have said a lot of things like, "We have to demonstrate alignment with the NQF," whereas we knew all we had to do was place the awards in the framework" (ibid, p.2/ln.68-70).*

"because of the way it was worded, it was all very kind of persuasive and negotiated, but it was quite clear, and I think we were actually right. And we were thoroughly in ahead of everybody else in terms of saying, "Look, we have to do this. Let's use it as an opportunity"

(ibid, p.3/ln.84-87)

Respondent 'D's interview focused on the implementation of AFI within DCU. The level of detail within the interview was very helpful in relating this back to the Policy Development Chapters (5&6). Though the most insightful aspect of the findings within this interview was drawn from the issues relating to implementation of a student centred approach through the use of learning outcomes. Her evaluation of the situation in relation to assessment gave an enlightened view of the relationship between assessment and learning outcomes.

"I mean, it was funny because certainly when it came to the assessment of learning outcomes stuff, we very much wrote that report as a sort of handbook or a guide to help people. [9:35] But for whatever reason, it wasn't really disseminated widely. I think it might have been because we're all in the sort of coaxing and negotiation"

(ibid, p.5/ln.146-250)

"I felt myself that we were too early with the assessment. I still think there was a huge amount of work to be done on learning outcomes"

(ibid, p.5/ln.151-153)

"And they think more, now this is a very, it's a real generalisation, but even the biggest skeptics will talk about learning outcomes, and they will, even if they don't do anything about it, they know there's a very definite sort of cause and effect between assessment and learning outcomes"

(ibid, p.8/ln.254-257)

"And also, even though I don't think learning outcomes has caused as much of a shift from teaching to learning as we'd like to pretend it has, I think the teacher is still very much in control. But I think there's much more awareness"

(ibid, p.8/ln.270-272)

"And I think knowing that assessment needs to be appropriate, even if we haven't got there yet. It's out there, so I mean, I do think there's a whole culture and a language around curriculum that we just didn't have before"

(ibid, p.8/ln.263-266)

"But there's a sense that there is such a thing as curriculum, and that teaching, learning and assessment methods and that all contribute and all sort of go into the mix or whatever. And I think there's a much more consciousness of that sort of shift from teaching to learning, even though everybody doesn't accept that"

(ibid, p.8/ln.263-266)

"I can see it with AFI is we put so much effort into writing the learning outcomes, that there almost isn't the appetite for the assessment piece. And as you would know better than me, the assessment is what they're going to stand or fall on"

(ibid, p.5/ln.155-159).

"There's a good sense, I think, of the way assessment drives the curriculum and drives what the students learn"

(ibid, p.8/ln.258-259)

The most interesting findings drawn from Respondent 'D's interview was their opinions on the relationship between Learning Outcomes and the modular structure. She described the ambiguities of trying to assess learning outcomes based on the NFQ model of learning outcomes. Issues in regard to the *threshold* and *typical* constructs complicate the terrain. *"In the early days in DCU, there were a number of people who were of the view that you wrote the*

learning outcomes to the A standard, and worked backwards as opposed to . . . like to the one one, as opposed to the pass level”, (ibid, p.13/ln.433-435). They suggested that there is an assumption with a lot of HE teaching staff that, “they’re inherently linked, but the truth is Learning Outcomes originated from competences. You either pass your test or you failed (sic)”, (ibid, p.12/ln.427-428). They went on to say that the biggest problem (in the assessment of learning outcomes) is the link between the grading scheme and the learning outcomes (ibid, p.12/ln.421-422). She said she had even spoken to Dr Jenny Moon (a leading educationalist who has written extensively on reflection and learning outcomes) about this issue, “I got a very disappointing answer which is, “You should just treat them as separate.” (ibid, p.12/ln.427-428). In relation to academic freedom and the issues regarding subject knowledge they said “your discipline has the autonomy to decide what are the program outcomes, what are the modular outcomes, how they should be assessed. Don’t let anyone else tell you how to do it” (ibid, p.12/ln.395-397).

One of the most memorable quotations from the interview with Respondent ‘D’ was in relation to the link between using a student centred approach through the adoption of a learning outcomes approach, and the complexities of the modular structure was:

“The modular structure with the way we’ve developed the NFQ. They don’t fit. There’s an ultimate; there is a clash there”

(Ibid, p.13/ln.436-437)

When asked about where do the students voices fit into research about the impact of the Bologna Process on their own learning and assessment they said:

“My only hesitation around students [in the research process] is that, in a way, [clears throat] the whole process should be invisible to students really. [22:34] The ultimate for them should be that they get a quality experience. The other thing is, as students go through in a relatively short time frame, it would be very difficult to find students who you could get to do a before and after”

(Ibid, p.10/ln.342-346)

9.9 CONCLUSIONS

The interviews within this study played a supporting role as one of the data pillars. The purposeful sampling enabled the study to highlight the layered aspects of the research question. The mixed model approach lent itself to the overall connectedness of these interviews, in that they were able to simultaneously frame questions within the macro, meso and micro levels of the study. The findings from each interview converge with the other data

pillars through the concurrent triangulation method (Creswell, 2003). They act as qualitative vignettes and seek truth and meaning by triangulating their findings against the findings drawn from the other methods. The framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Archer, Maylor, Osgood, & Read, 2005) process generated themes and subthemes as outlined in Figure 9.3 and further shown in relation to the pre-existing themes outlined in Table 9.3. These themes were also codes through second stage analysis using the Creswell (2003) model drawing from the themes from the extant data, the literature review and the case studies.

Some of the findings from the interviews were expected, others were insightful. Many of the responses were predictable based upon the roles and the relationship to the research question of the individuals selected. The questioning techniques and the use of probing helped elicit some rich data. It is often difficult to get beyond the surface in interviews and one has to accept the answers given and it's only by probing that deeper answers, closer to the truth can emerge. Spence (1982) states that, 'The analyst can only use what he is told' (p. 79). Overall, insofar as words and their comprehension are central to the utility of instrument and interview alike, there is no hard bottom of 'objective reality' to be reached beneath either of them (Randall and Phoenix, 2009).

The final Chapter links the findings drawn from the interview data with that of the Case Studies, the Literature and the Policy Chapters. The convergent nature of the research design helps the sum-of-parts connect through a layered hierarchy.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY & CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The title of this thesis is 'Non Satis Scire', which roughly translates as 'to know is not enough'. This question is derived from the premise that knowledge is co-created by the learner and the teacher. The constructed worldview that adults adopt is based upon their own (life) experiences and their own beliefs. The liberal model of education submits to the view that knowledge *is* enough through education for educations' sake (Newman, 1955). This study has shown through empirical investigation that the concept of knowledge through the assessment of learning outcomes is a complex and contested research domain. The findings suggest that University educators and students alike need to become familiar with the construct of knowledge and its purpose in higher order learning and its uses. It is neither purely theoretical knowledge, (delivered through subject specific broad-based modules) or is it the practical knowledge in lists of competencies that can be acquired simply from doing. It is more about the utility of knowledge.

It is much more the kind of practical wisdom born of deliberation, shaped by critical discussion in the context of the practical, informed by relevant theoretical perspectives which, however, by themselves entail no one set of practices.

(Pring, 1995, p.305)

10.2 LINKING THE FINDINGS

This research study used a mixed model research design using within-stage case studies to form an empirical platform from which the other data can sit. The core of the research related to the case studies, which have shared foci. The focus of Phase 1: 2008-2011 of Case Study 1 related to originally to the perception, views and practices of DCU academic staff in relation to their assessment experiences. The case study then uses data obtained in additional phase (Phase 2: 2010-2012) where the focus of the qualitative research was on the link between learning, assessment and feedback. This study showed that DCU teaching staff:

1. Did not show a deep understanding of the link between modes of assessment and student learning levels.

2. Assessment was seen to be a cumbersome, time-consuming aspect of teaching and learning with its primary purpose being to mark, grade or rate students.
3. The concept of aligning attainment to lower and higher order learning outcomes was not evident either before the DCU AFI process or after.
4. The research showed that feedback was viewed as a 'necessary evil', though the majority of staff gave little or no time to this issue. The link between learning outcomes approach, AFI and student centered learning was seldom highlighted.

Case study 2 comprised of a three-phase process conducted from 2008 to 2012 also. The focus of this study related to the development of a revisited assessment framework, which was linked to the literature regarding learning outcomes, competencies and student assessment. Each phase acted in an evaluative manner to help the redesign of the assessment model. Quantitative methods were adopted through over 600 questionnaires to gain an insight into the trends associated with the development of the assessment framework. Each of the 600 surveys was made up of opened questions that were used to further develop the central research questions. The final phase of this case study linked the emergent themes drawn from the other three data pillars:

- (Chapter 5) Bologna process and European developments relating to the adoption of a learning outcomes approach
- (Chapter 6) Implementation of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications and the adoption of a student centred learning outcomes approach to higher education curriculum reform, and linking this to the DCUs academic Framework for Innovation which aimed to embed student-centred assessment practices into the curriculum through the adoption of a learning outcomes approach to assessment.
- (Chapter 9) Expert interviews from both the local (DCU) and the national (NQAI) perspectives who had a role in the implementation of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum reform in DCU and Ireland, through compliance with the Bologna Process.

The results from case study 2 were clustered into three main areas, *the Assessment framework; the student and teacher dynamic relating to constructive alignment; the importance of assessment feedback*. The main results drawn from the framework analysis were:

1. Issues of competence beyond competencies must be addressed through a shared understanding between students and teachers of threshold concepts related to the designing of modular learning outcomes.

2. Small-group feedback to ease peer feedback anxiety (feed-forward)
3. Transfer assessment framework to a range to all modules within Programme/s.
4. Ensure greater fairness and learning also in group based formative activities (peer assessment of individual contributions to group activities incorporated in the group activity mark)
5. Devise other assessment formats based on the principle of dialogical assessment
6. Develop and improve the assessment framework taking on board student feedback.
7. Highlight the teacher – student relationship through constructive alignment and explore the role of dialogical feedback in relation to the student-teacher relationship

The analysis of the expert interviews showed that the espoused link between student learning and the use of learning outcomes was based upon an idealistic concept of student centred learning. The origins of the Bologna Process were originally driven by the university academics and the student representative bodies. The extant data through the Bologna Process examination (Chapter 5) shows that the process developed the issues of learning outcomes and student centred learning related more closely to the increasing dominance within the Process of the quality assurance agenda driven primarily by other representative bodies throughout Europe. The use of learning outcomes became a useful conduit to describe graduate attributes and competences, which would increase the attractiveness of European graduates within the global and European market place. The interviews within this study clearly evidenced this hypothesis. There was an overwhelming view from the respondents that the Bologna Process acted as a catalyst for change though not all of these changes have had the students (and the life long learning agenda) at the heart of the issues.

The research presented in this study informs us through the findings that to know is simply not enough. This notion is relevant to this study from two perspectives. Firstly in terms of assessment, the liberal model of higher education places its emphasis on knowledge. The instrumental model that increasingly dominates Europe's HEIs views the notion of universities as incubators for the world of work. These exhibit themselves through the EHEA policies and the governmental frameworks that support these, such as the Bologna Process. But this model of higher education also leaves a vacuum for the learners. Secondly the statements also refer to the process of research as a pedagogic tool. Not just to generate theory, test models and critique, but to implement change by the very act of conducting the research. If this study

proves anything it proves that research does inform practice and that practice can be informed by research.

This thesis serves to further the contribution of knowledge in the area of assessment in higher education. Issues relating to these principles and practice dominate this study. Assessment of student learning is a complex and contested field largely due to the high stakes associated with such a process. In higher education, assessment is seen as the benchmark of student learning. If a student demonstrates through the examination process a level of understanding and competence then they are deemed to be competent graduates. In Ireland the link between entry to higher education and assessment has dominated education debates for decades. The 'points race' system for university entry is based upon academic success at post-primary level through the Leaving Certificate. One of the problems with student assessment in higher education is that it is discipline specific and therefore a vocational style approach to assessing student outcomes is considered appropriate. There is nothing wrong with this concept in itself however most students entering university are coming from the Leaving Certificate assessment model. This model is based upon the ideals of 'liberal education', a concept that is admirable in its own right but cannot function exclusively in today's increasingly responsive society. 'The chief goal of "liberal education" is to develop the ability to reason, to think critically and to appreciate that which is worthy of being appreciated' (Pring, 1995, p 184). The justification for this approach, 'is that cultivating the intellect is intrinsically worthwhile and is perhaps the supreme human good (ibid, p.185). Pring goes on to suggest that it has no other purpose and needs no further justification, although it is generally assumed that the intellectual improvement of individuals will benefit the wider society.

10.3 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY

However the universities in Ireland are no longer places for liberal education in isolation. As the societies' taxpayers fund higher education they expect a return on their investment. The increasing dialogue around this describes this as investing in human capital, value for money, societal cost benefits etc. This study shows how the ideals of the liberal university first emerged from the monastic universities across Ireland and Europe. One of the first of these was the University of Bologna where the genesis of the EHEA was born. The process moved between other great and historic centres of learning such as Salamanca and Sorbonne. The roots of the Bologna Process are firmly embedded in these historical institutions. Though philosophically the purpose of the modern Bologna Process couldn't have been further from these original values and beliefs. Liberal education takes place in universities, which are insulated from the distractions of the world of business, and utility Universities should ideally

be like monasteries (Pring, 1995, pp.186-88). In liberal education, the transaction between teacher and learner is shaped only by considerations internal to the intellectual disciplines (Johnstone, 1999). Harking back to this early concept of the university and the university graduate, Edward Copleston, Provost of Oriel College, quoted in Slee (1986) wrote in 1810:

The purpose of the university is to counter the effects upon the individual of gross materialism...not to training directly for the specific professionalism but rather to develop an elevated tone and flexible habit of mind, which would enable them to carry out with zeal and efficiency all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.

(p.11)

Coplestone was replying to an accusation by the *Edinburgh Review* that the Oxford and Cambridge Universities should reform their universities to prepare graduates for the pressures and problems of the 19th century. Johnstone (1999) argues that vocational education is in direct opposition to liberal education, in that the ultimate justification for education within the vocational paradigm is to get people ready for the world of work.. He suggests that vocational education is justified by reference to the needs of the economy and society (which require people with certain skills, knowledge, and competence). 'Crucially, in this idea, "education" is not regarded as intrinsically worthwhile. Rather, its value is derived from its usefulness to the economy, to the individual, or to society' (p.3). Is higher education in universities simply a reflection of our times? Do they react, develop and change based on societies perceived needs and aspirations? Are the driving forces of change based upon philosophical understanding and/or assumptions, or do governments shape, control and determine how our universities look, react and plan for the future? Perhaps a clue can be found in the open section of the HEA's document, '*Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*', published in February 2012.

Ireland has achieved a remarkable expansion of higher education opportunities over recent decades which resulted in a steady improvement in the educational profile of our workforce relative to international benchmarks.

(HEA, 2012, p.1)

The HEA in Ireland clearly do not see the university through the lens of Newman, Bacon and Coplestone. The utility of higher education is firmly set upon the foundations of economic development. The document went on to say:

In terms of participation, the National Strategy states that the further expansion of higher education is inevitable and essential if we are to fulfill our aspirations as a knowledge-based economy.....it is clear our HE system must strengthen its alignment with the evolving economic needs, and its integration within the education and training system as a whole.

10.4 ENABLING THE 21ST CENTURY GRADUATE

In order to facilitate the move towards Ireland's re-growth, the HEA also demands that the universities adapt and change to existing pressures both financially and philosophically. As the European national economies become increasingly interconnected particularly through the Euro any problems in economic stability can easily ripple through the EU member states. This is also the case in higher education. The international higher educational league tables, the international PISA results and the European competition for research funding all contribute to the competitiveness of the European university. The Bologna Process is a process aimed at creating a EHEA (originally by 2010). The fundamental question however should be what is the purpose of this Higher Education Area? As Europe heads toward a homogeneous marketplace issues such as mobility, participation and contribution all have become important discussion topics at inter-governmental levels. The Bologna Process enabled some of this discussion to be implemented through a harmonisation process of degree systems and the qualification frameworks. There are many other aspects of the Bologna Process as discussed previously in this study, though at the heart of the Process is a fundamental shift to describing learning in such a manner that employers can view the required skills, and competences that a graduate has acquired through his/her university experiences.

In order to enable our university graduates to describe these competences and attributes mechanisms had to be utilised to measure, score and grade these achievements. A drive towards adopting a learning outcomes approach was seen as the best means to enable these descriptions. In one sense this is of course understandable, we need evidence in order to make academic decisions about abilities, competences and standards. Though the complexity of the process and the philosophical underpinnings also need to be taken into consideration particularly *in relation to assessment of students*.

10.5 MOVING TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the Bologna Progress document Trends V (Sursock and Smidt, 2010) said that many institutions were slowly moving away from a system of teacher-centred provision and towards a student-centred concept of higher education. Although the data from Trends 2010 showed that only 4% of Institutions had not implemented a learning outcomes approach, the data does not show a clear understanding (by institutions) on the concept of learning outcomes in

relation to learning and student-centredness. The report suggests that as the Bologna Process evolved there seems to have been a fragmented and instrumental view of education that has not always facilitated understanding in institutions of the important links between the various elements. In March 2010 in Dublin Ms Ligia Deca, (Director of the BFUG Secretariat), highlighted the change in emphasis in the new post-Leuven work plan for 2009-2012. She said that there is renewed focus 'being placed on the development of multi-dimensional transparency tools and on the encouragement of student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education' (Deca in HEA, 2010, p.9). Bairbre Redmond, Deputy Registrar for Teaching and Learning at University College Dublin (UCD) and Irish Bologna Expert said 'Ireland's successful focus on learning outcomes had helped shift the emphasis towards student-centred learning (HEA, 2010: p.9). The research findings presented in this study did not concur with Redmond's view. Much of the findings here suggest that the learning outcomes model has taken the focus off student centred learning again and the emphasis has been placed on the detail of the measurement tools of assessment itself and within this context the student and holistic development of the learner may have gotten lost. The philosophical viewpoint of the liberal education may be an outdated one. Though it is possible to take on board the underlining beliefs of such theories and couple these with the concept of useful knowledge, or practical knowledge. These concepts are not polar opposites. Higher education should not be seen as a continuum with liberal and vocational education at different points but rather as a sphere with multiple viewpoints and vignettes. At the Dublin Bologna meeting in 2010 Professor Ray Kinsella from the Smurfit Business School, UCD, argued that education needed to bear in mind that its principal objective is the personal development of the learner. Professor Kinsella said:

I think that we have to ask questions about why we, as educators, didn't critique the false philosophy in corporate capitalism whose undoing has caused such catastrophic damage' he said. 'Why wasn't it critiqued? Where did we fail?'

(Kinsella in HEA, 2010:p33)

The research presented in this thesis shows that it may be possible to adopt a learning outcomes approach to assessment without losing the other pedagogical principles associated with liberal (educational) learning. Students need to have a clear understanding on the purpose and function of assessment. They should be part of the process of learning not just recipient (or clients) of it. Otherwise our graduates become customers and we become sellers of education. Professor Stephen Adam (2004) said, 'this [learning outcomes] is different in nature and cannot be limited to a skill/competence-based approach that creates a target-led culture focused on ticking boxes' (p.7). Therefore a quality learning experience in higher education should consider process issues as well as outcome issues. The relationship between

student approaches to learning, and the quality of those learning outcomes, have long been debated by many educational researchers over the years (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1976.) There is general agreement that there are two fundamental approaches to learning: *deep and surface*. Students who assume a deep approach to their learning are intrinsically motivated and search for meaning by integrating new information with existing knowledge. Surface learners are extrinsically motivated (largely by grades) and have a reproductive conception of learning. The findings of this study show how an assessment framework built upon partnership and the student teacher relationships through a co-equal stance can enable learners to move from surface to deep learning. This utilitarian application of learning outcomes may suggest that they could be viewed as an attack on the liberal conception of education, which in turn can reduce the teacher to facilitator and can hinder the life long learning aspect of university education by reducing it to an instrumentalist approach. From a technical viewpoint one of the problems with using learning outcomes is the resource implication associated with a full and robust process, which adheres to full *constructive alignment* (Biggs, 1999). Stephen Adam;

It is argued that learning outcomes written as threshold statements can limit learning and stifle creativity as well as dumb-down teaching. Learning outcomes can be over-described and under-described (too specific or too general)

(Adam, 2004, p.7)

The issue of what defines the achievement of a learning outcome is one that is still heavily debated. Very few learning outcomes are 'black and white'. The model of learning outcomes that has been proposed through the BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up Group) and the Bologna Processes map clearly to the EQF-LLL (European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning) regardless of the fact this was initially a parallel process. This Framework is based on learning outcomes, which are characterised by concepts such as knowledge, skills and competences. One of the problems with a learning outcomes approach to assessment is that the student's transferable attributes such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication, discourse are largely ignored unless they are stated within the learning outcomes themselves; The learning outcomes approach chooses to seek competence in a predefined subject specific domain.

Learning outcomes define the minimum requirements expected of a student to successfully pass the module. The actual level of attainment and achievement can only be determined by the assessment method and in particular the assessment criteria

(Bowe & Fitzmaurice, 2004, p.8)

In a chapter called *'Beyond Understanding'* in Land and Meyer's 2008 book, *Threshold Concepts within the Disciplines*, David Perkins suggests that *'Knowledge is information, or at least that seems to be the tacit view behind a good deal of learning. According to this possessive conception, knowledge is money in the cognitive bank'* (p.4). This issue of reducing attainment (often described in the literature as competences) to different levels such as *Threshold* and *Typical* is discussed within the Literature Chapter (Ch.2). However it is worth mentioning that, 'minimum competency tests underline the fact that 'levels, 'standards', and definitions of competency are not fixed absolutes, to be handed down by objective experts' (Wolf, 1995, p.84). In relation to this study and connected with the overall research question the Edinburgh Bologna seminar (2007) brought the issue of learning outcomes out of the policy and into the realms of teaching and learning. The Edinburgh seminar strengthened the need to examine learning outcomes from a holistic-learning perspective rather than simply as a quality assurance angle. At this forum Professor Adam also stated:

The benefits in the creation of learning outcomes result from the dynamic and cathartic process of creation where a new approach to learning is honestly undertaken. This will involve a simultaneous reflection on possible learning outcomes, their mode of delivery and their assessment. All learning outcomes must be capable of assessment or they are not fit for their task and should be scrapped. At the level of course and module design there is an obvious and intimate connection between the teaching-learning-assessment relationships.

(ibid, 2008, p.14)

Adam ended the seminar by posing a warning to the BFUG and the Bologna Experts:

The harmonisation of Europe's disparate higher education systems was never going to be straightforward or easy. Learning outcomes are not the universal panacea for all educational problems facing higher education and they certainly create distinct challenges that should not be underestimated. However, it is not possible to have a meaningful European Higher Education Area without their widespread and consistent use.

(ibid, 2008, p.19)

10.6 ASSESSMENT & LEARNING OUTCOMES

The two Case Studies aimed to examine aspects of the research question in relation to practice on-the-ground in DCU. They offered a vignette through a micro perspective of the problems, issues, and benefits of an aligned assessment framework. They are presented as Case Studies as the framework of each is situated within its own context. The larger context brings in other processes, contextual reference and future hypotheses all relating to assessment and feedback through learner centred approaches. In order to answer the broader question of the impact of

the Bologna Process through curriculum reform, to a student-centered model of teaching and learning as advocated by DCUs AFI process, it is important again to focus the questions on the assessment process and feedback mechanism that relate to this. This thesis adopted a mixed model approach to the research and one of these methods was Case Study approach. The embedded Case Studies were used to examine the Question at the 'micro' level and how the assessment of learning outcomes was implemented in DCU. Findings from the first Case Study showed that little was made of the AFI process itself and that the adoption of a learner centred approach to curriculum design had little bearing on the assessment of learning outcomes. Though the AFI process did seem to have an impact on the assessment instruments used, as the level of portfolio assessment had increased by 15% (5.8% to 20%). The Study also discovered although some DCU teaching staff acknowledged that a dual process of providing assessment feedback on providing corrective advice was important, very few actually engaged in such a practice. Many of the respondents still admitted to carrying out feedback at the end of the Unit of Learning. Based on the findings of the second Case Study this leaves no room for a dialogical process to occur. *Therefore the assessment seems to still be seen as a linear process where 'the act of assessing' still comes at the end of learning.*

The second Case Study brought the voice of the learner into the research question. This four-year study resulted in the research generating a possible assessment model that could embrace the ideals of Bologna, NQF and AFI through a dialogical relationship between the Student, the Assessment and the Teacher. Crucial to this model was the underlying philosophy of the liberal view of education as well as drawing from Dewey's, *broad* conception of 'vocational preparation' (pp. 358-74). The vocationality of the learning outcomes model can also be co-equal to the liberal assumptions of the purpose of education. This just takes careful curriculum planning through an alignment process of teaching, curriculum and assessment. The learners as democratic change agents in their own learning are also an important factor for the success of the model. At the heart of the assessment model is intrinsic value placed upon reflection, dialogue, and constructivism through feedback and more importantly feedforward. This model is the original true model of the Bologna propositions. The university can straddle both the monastery and the marketplace.

10.7 INPUTS VS OUTCOMES

This research has concluded that assessment of learning outcomes through an outcomes model alone is not enough. By itself outcomes assessment produce enough evidence to show how much the learner knows, can do or will be able to do or know in the future. It can offer a

snapshot of a period in time. Outcome assessment indicates what results have been produced in mechanistic structure of threshold concepts. In higher education we need more than this. We need to ask higher order questions in order to gain higher order answers. We shouldn't just want the assessment to produce 'correct answers, we need to ask why this is the 'correct' answer. As educational researchers we should want to know why the results were achieved. This is the task of the input process. In the case of student learning from surface to deep learning, 'a detailed understanding of the functioning of orientation, curriculum, instruction, academic advising, and other key educational processes is necessary for maximum improvement of institutional results', (Gardiner, 2003) This is to say that in order to achieve the balance within the assessment of student learning the results of both outcome and process assessment are needed to help improve the quality of outcomes.

10.8 FROM BOLOGNA TO ASSESSMENT

This commercial model of higher education cannot work effectively if we are to embrace the original aims of the European and Irish universities and the original aims of the Bologna philosophy. Using an assessment model that brings in the learners as a co-equal partner in the process can enable a deeper engagement in the learning process and also improve student grades through reflective cycles, thus enabling the student to gain the required 'threshold' and 'typical' achievements associated with measuring learning outcomes as well as broadening the utility of knowledge and making it practical and useful. So it is possible to have a foot in the monastery and the marketplace. The university experience for the student can embrace the 'monastery/cloister' philosophies, unfettered by real world issues, and 'encourage an experimental attitude well suited to a thoughtful discourse, from many angles, about important issues (Cantor & Schomberg, 2003, p.2) It can also permit a certain intellectual experimentation through reflection and feedback with ideas likely to encourage discovery. This model is deeply entrenched in the constructivist realm. Bologna can also be embraced through the adoption of the learning outcomes approach driven by AFI through the NFQ in Ireland, a model also rooted in the HEA and Governments' drive for economic success within and outside of Europe. Additionally, universities increasingly do need the capacity to deliver outcomes within the 'marketplace'. Issues around accountability, value for money and investment dominate higher education discussions currently. Universities also need the vibrancy and impulsive nature of the marketplace (Cantor & Schomberg, 2003). However this economically driven model has a tendency to demand short-term immediate gains. Often the loudest voice is the only voice heard. Europe's voice dominates educational reforms in Ireland. The Bologna Process can be seen as one with honorable intentions. The structures used to implement its

action are based upon consensus and dialogue, though ultimately Bologna is a political process. The Bologna Process through the deliverables (the Action Lines) may be slow, cumbersome and difficult to implement successfully in all signed up members and as they relate to this study in relation to learning outcomes and assessment. The Process itself may have been its greatest success. Peter Scott wrote in the UK's *Guardian Newspaper* on April 2012:

Bologna has opened up a space for dialogue on difficult policy issues..... it has heightened consciousness of the common legacy of European universities, the contemporary challenges they face and their future promise – as rivals in other world regions have quickly recognised.....But beneath the suffocating weight of E-acronyms, transparency instruments, action lines and the usual Euro-babble, a quiet revolution has been under way in European higher education – stimulated by the spirit of Bologna.

(Scott in the *Guardian Newspaper*, 2012)

There have been critics of the Bologna Process in relation to the use of learning outcomes and assessment. Felix Grigat, the representative of the *German Association of University Professors and Lecturers* suggested that degrees are now more skills-orientated than focused on developing critical thinking, he argued at a British Council conference in Wildbad Kreuth (Guardian Newspaper, 2012). Jack Grove quotes him in his article for the Times Higher Education (supplement) Newspaper:

studies centred on “competence” in a narrow field of knowledge, rather than immersion in a diverse range of academic studies.....This notion of ‘competence’ is only about markets, not about developing what is special about the person Humboldt is dead.....a more economical approach to universities was now the norm.

(Grove in Times Higher Education, 2012)

This study clearly shows that the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent follow-up Process intended to encourage curriculum reform within many higher education institutions cross Europe including Ireland. In DCU, the Process can be viewed through the AFI mechanism through the adoption of a learning outcomes model. My research also clearly points to the evidence that the link between learning outcomes and assessment design has not been highlighted amongst staff and students in DCU enough. If Assessment is what drives the curriculum and if we really want to find out the truth about our curriculum structures and systems (Rowntree, 1987) then assessment must be addressed through the learning outcomes process and focus on assessment as a learning tool could be development not simply as a means of telling employers what our graduates can do. If we truly want our graduates to be reflexive, adaptable and innovative then let's design assessment methods that

encourage these attributes rather than trying to churn out students through an assessment process based on the rather simplistic principle that only assesses within the lower levels of the cognitive and behavioural spectrums. This is a localised piece of research that clearly adds to the current knowledge in this area. DCU could adopt some of the assessment frameworks developed through case study 2 and bring the issues of student assessment back to the table for students and lectures alike to embrace, discuss and enhance the learning experiences.

A transformation needs to happen among assessment stakeholders. It is not sufficient to modify assessment formats. Attitudes need to be shifted and assessment roles need to be reconceived. As teachers' trainers we have a responsibility to foster change and improve practice. It is therefore essential that our own practice fosters sustainable learning and models future practice in a wider educational context.

Student feedback should be seen as part of the learning process and helps students move from surface to deep learning (Marton and Säljö (1976) Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1987, 1993) and Entwistle (1981). Situating Assessment in the constructivist domain brings together the pedagogical aspects of higher education that encourage critical thinking, dialogue, reflection and feedforward. There are many models of assessment, though simply relying on an outcomes model will not capture everything that one aims to capture.

Grigat's comments echo the views of many academics that believe that the Bologna Process is a process of vocationalisation. This is not argued within this study. Though the thrust of the argument is more to do with balance. Universities, with particular reference to my own, Dublin City University, should see the value of the old and the new. A word of caution should also be added. The very nature of the university purpose and philosophy should be upheld. Ireland (unlike many other European countries) has a reasonable level of autonomy when it comes to governance and planning (HEA, 2012). Ireland's universities should decide what kind of graduate they want, based on the broader question what kind of citizens of the 21st century does society and Europe need. The utility of small-scale research should be at the heart of our teaching in universities after all; 'Non Satis Scire': 'To Know is Not Enough'. Furthering this point and relating to the assessment of learning outcomes, it could also be said, 'Ad Facere est Non Satis' – 'To Do is Not Enough'.

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THE IMPACT OF EUROPE’S BOLOGNA PROCESS ON
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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

AFI PROPOSAL TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI) Proposals to Academic Council (25 June 2007)

Prepared by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning

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1. Introduction

Following discussion at Executive, Academic Council and the Academic Strategy Committee, the recommendations from the Working Group on Modularisation were referred by the VPLI and Registrar for detailed consideration to the Associate Deans for T&L, the Director of the Registry, the Head of the LIU and the Education Officer of the SU. A summary report, incorporating key elements contained in a detailed paper prepared by the Associate Deans, was presented to Executive on 28 November 2006. A more detailed paper was then discussed by faculties, prior to further discussion by Academic Strategy Committee and Academic Council on 14 February 2007. An Academic Framework for Innovation was then proposed, which would assist in the delivery of the Learning Innovation element of the Strategic Plan by:

- placing DCU in the forefront of educational thinking
- building upon existing strengths
- enabling interdisciplinarity
- rectifying current anomalies
- fostering flexible approaches to programme development
- widening student choice - both in terms of curriculum and mode of study
- supporting retention

Following an extensive consultation with all staff, the initial document was restructured and reworded. While the core ideas presented at Academic Council on 14th February remain, they have been clarified. Colleagues' comments, questions and concerns are addressed as much as possible in the present document, which

now includes additional details on the rationale and implications of each core principle (now called *precepts*). We have also included a FAQ section.

The proposals outlined in this document set out the blue print for a new academic framework, which will direct the review of existing programmes and awards and the design of new ones as well as their overall management. They do *not* constitute a step-by-step set of procedures, nor do they intend to impose rigid constraints on the day-to-day management of programmes. Rather, the adoption of these proposals will guarantee the University stakeholders that, irrespective of the exact form of the final framework, the University will be able to maintain and to ensure the sustainable development of its portfolio of diverse, flexible and innovative programmes.

These proposals are now put to Academic Council for consideration and adoption.

Dr Françoise Blin, Associate Dean for Learning Innovation, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Martin Henry, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Science and Health

Dr Noel Murphy, Head of School of Electronic Engineering (formerly Associate Dean for Education, Faculty of Computing and Engineering) Dr Anne Sinnott, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, DCUBS

2. Proposals for the design and implementation of a new Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI)

Proposal 1: Guiding principles

The following principles will guide any new academic framework adopted and implemented by the university:

1.1 The University is committed to meeting Bologna requirements, to complying with EU and national standards and to enhancing the quality of students' learning experience and outcomes;

1.2 The University is committed to guaranteeing fair and equitable assessment for all students;

1.3 The University is committed to taking cognisance of changes in study and work patterns, and to accommodating non-traditional students.

Proposal 2: Supporting the framework

Implementation of proposals 3 & 4 is conditional on the availability of appropriate support and resources.

Proposal 3: AFI precepts

The DCU Academic Framework for Innovation will be characterised by the following precepts:

3.1 The DCU portfolio of programme and awards will be compliant with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

3.2 Flexible learning pathways and programme access will be supported. In particular, annual progression will no longer be a universal requirement.

3.3 Registration for a module will last for one academic year only. Any resit opportunities must take place within this registration period.

3.4 New operations and procedures surrounding the allocation of marks and degree classification will be established:

(i) *Module Boards* will agree marks;

(ii) *Award Boards* will validate students' results, monitor and record their progress, and agree award grades.

(See detailed information and analysis in Section 3.)

Proposal 4: Implementation schedule

The Academic Framework for Innovation will be designed and implemented according to the following schedule. The timing of the implementation phase is contingent on the adoption by the HEA of a module-based funding model to replace the programme based funding model currently used. Here we assume a start date of the 2010-2011 academic year for full implementation.

	Sep-2007	Feb-2008	Aug-2008	Sep-2008	Feb-2009	Aug-2009	Sep-2009	Feb-2010	Aug-2010	Sep-2010	Feb-2011	Aug-2011
Implementation of NFQ for Bologna compliance												
Information and training sessions on NFQ and Learning Outcomes												
Preparation of new Marks and Standards, validation and accreditation templates, etc.												
Re-design of awards, modules and programmes in line with NFQ Learning Outcomes model												
Development of new Academic Framework and piloting												
Setting up of new structures and procedures for Module and Award Boards												
Design, development and testing of integrated Registration/Timetabling/ITS System,												
Gaming/simulation of implementation of AFI												
AFI piloting in Faculties (self-selected programmes/awards)												
Review of operation and subsequent revision of procedures, infrastructure, etc.												
Implementation Phase												
All new programmes under AFI												
Full implementation of new structures in integrated ITS (<i>old and new</i> programmes)												
Full implementation of AFI												

3. Proposal 3: Background and explanatory notes

Proposals	Rationale/underlying principles	Suggested implementation process	Anticipated additional benefits and outcomes	Requirements (some requiring substantial funding)
3.1 The DCU portfolio of programme and awards will be compliant with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).	To meet Bologna requirements; To facilitate compliance with national/EU standards and quality enhancement of students' learning experience and outcomes.	<i>Programme Review and (re-)validation</i> incl. adoption of a Learning Outcomes (LO) model for awards, modules and assessment; In-depth study of assessment for LO-based curriculum and application to existing and new programme and modules; Development and integration of a Quality Enhancement and Assurance Action: USC, ASC, OVPLI, LIU, Faculties, Programme Boards, Quality Promotion Unit	Alignment with formal European and national quality assurance procedures; Improved student mobility.	Training and support programme for staff; Staff release (academic and admin) in faculties, Registry, CSD & Ed. Services, Finance, etc.) Appropriate templates for module/programme reviews; New module descriptors; New validation and accreditation templates, documentation and procedures; Action: Executive, HR, USC, ASC, Finance Office, Budget Committee

Proposals	Rationale/underlying principles	Suggested implementation process	Anticipated additional benefits and outcomes	Requirements (some requiring substantial funding)
3.2 Flexible learning pathways and programme access will be supported. In particular, annual progression will no longer be a universal requirement.	To adapt to changes in student lifestyle and to reality of study/work patterns; To accommodate non-traditional students; To support retention.	Provision of <i>teaching resource requirements</i> (rooms and facilities/equipment, working day/week, academic calendar, learning technologies, etc.); Provision of services outside normal hours (e.g. library, registry opening hours, etc.) Clear definition of <i>pre-requisites and co-requisites</i> for modules contributing to DCU awards, inc. 'shelf-life' of accumulated credits; Specification of award requirements; Deployment of a <i>robust information management infrastructure</i>, incl. integrated timetabling, registration and student records; <i>Pilot</i> in Faculties. Action: Registry, CSD, Estates, Faculties	Match the challenge to student's circumstances; Student-centred framework (e.g. facilitating either part-time or accelerated study); Standards maintained/enhanced (e.g. students may elect to focus on selected areas to ensure in-depth learning).	Clarify HEA funding model in relation to part-time students; Check local authorities' regulation re: tuition and maintenance grants (and lobby if necessary); Clarity on potential HR issues; Action: Senior Management, OVPLI, HR, Finance Office

Proposals	Rationale/underlying principles	Suggested implementation process	Anticipated additional benefits and outcomes	Requirements (some requiring substantial funding)
3.3 Registration for a module will last for one academic year only. Any resit opportunities must take place within this registration period.	To guarantee fair and equitable assessment for all students; To provide stimulus to improve standards of achievement; To facilitate the change/development of modules and/or assessment methods; To better manage modules with large component of CA or large component of teamwork; To guarantee achievement of Learning Outcomes.	Development of a suitable <i>registration process and systems</i> Action: Registry, CSD, Faculties	Standards enhanced (e.g. guaranteed achievement of specified learning outcomes); Allows more choice to students; Simplified administration procedures and better/easier/ more reliable record keeping – everybody treated the same way. No complication of different types of modules and different types of registration (such as attendance or exam only); Facilitates change of lecturer for module.	Clarity and transparency regarding fees for modules/exams. Action: Executive/Finance

Proposals	Rationale/underlying principles	Suggested implementation process	Anticipated additional benefits and outcomes	Requirements (some requiring substantial funding)
3.4 New operations and procedures surrounding the allocation of marks and degree classification will be established: (i) Module Boards will agree marks; (ii) Award Boards will validate students' results, monitor and record their progress, and agree award grades.	To guarantee fair and equitable assessment for all students; (full or part time, etc); To eliminate differential decision-making for same modules on different programmes; To accommodate individualised pathways; To properly/fully implement Learning Outcomes model.	Replace current PBERCs and PABs by Module Boards (MBs) and Awards Boards (ABs); Define <i>role and membership</i> of MBs and ABs, including role and membership of <i>external examiners</i>; Academic Council to <i>approve membership</i> of MBs and ABs; Redefine role and membership of <i>programme boards</i> (or school teaching committees, course teams, etc.); Establish reporting mechanisms between Programme Boards and MBs/Abs (e.g. as relevant statistical information to be passed on to Award Board). Action: Registrar, Academic Council, USC, Faculties, Schools	Module marks agreed on the basis of achievement and separate from implications for individual student's award; Module marks can only be changed at the relevant Module Board, which includes the external examiner(s); Award Board to maintain "gold standard" system of H1, H2.1, etc...; Students full record provided to new AB; Full individual student's record to be available in addition to broadsheet (longsheet);	New <i>Marks and Standards</i> for LO model Action: Registry, USC.

4. Appendix - Frequently Asked Questions

4.1. Could you be more specific about the kind of support that is envisaged?

There is no doubt that reforming our academic framework along the lines proposed here will be a costly, complex, and time consuming endeavour. However, this should be seen as an investment, which will benefit the whole university in the medium and longer term.

Adequate staff support and training in reviewing programmes and modules in the light of the NFQ is absolutely essential if our portfolio of programmes is to be enhanced. Furthermore, we believe that a number of colleagues from each faculty, both academic and non-academic, should be released from some of their normal duties in order to champion and co-ordinate the review of programmes and modules, and to design and test new programme management structures and administrative procedures in collaboration with Registry, CSD and any other relevant unit.

Robust, reliable and user-friendly information and data management systems are equally essential if the implementation of the AFI is to be successful. A fully integrated registration/timetabling/ITS system is required and will have to be properly tested before full implementation occurs.

Gaming or simulating the implementation of the AFI will indeed be a fundamental stepping stone in our move towards the new framework. The results of such a simulation should enable us to identify areas that may require revisions as well as the limitations imposed by our staffing and physical resources, such as the number and type of classrooms that will be required, teaching and learning facilities and equipment, etc.

4.2. There is no mention of modularisation in the proposals...

Modularisation is about giving students significant control over their educational experience. By definition, this control is exercised through the choice of modules. On the other hand, learning in DCU has been characterised over the last 25 years by denominated programmes with whatever choice there is usually being strongly circumscribed. The aim of the Academic Framework for Innovation is not to impose full modularisation on all DCU Awards. Rather it is to enable the definition of awards

that are achieved through modularised pathways, as well as accommodating awards where the set of modules required is more tightly defined (such as in the case of awards accredited by national professional bodies).

4.3. What are NQAI and NFQ?

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was set up by legislation to introduce a qualifications framework for all qualifications at all levels in Ireland, including awards made by professional bodies. This framework (the National Qualifications Framework – NFQ) is binding on the FETAC and HETAC sectors. It is not strictly speaking binding on the Universities, but the IUA have agreed to align their major and minor awards with it. The NFQ has now also been aligned with the two cycles of the Bologna process. Internationally, the Irish NFQ is seen as a fundamental element in the development of an overarching European Qualifications Framework, the purpose of which is to provide a tool for the mobility, transfer and progression of students and graduates across Europe.

The NFQ is thus a Bologna compliant, Irish system of ten levels. It is designed to provide appropriate awards for the students' level of learning, wherever obtained. It puts the focus on learning outcomes, at both programme and module level. The NFQ emphasises breadth and depth of knowledge as well as professional skills and competencies. Accordingly, learning outcomes and their associated assessment methods drive learning activities and student engagement. The NFQ also supports the national objective of moving towards a lifelong learning society.

The NFQ framework has been adopted by the second level system, and many professional bodies in Ireland. As a result, the language of the NFQ has become the main language of the majority of the third level sector stakeholders including FETAC and HETAC.

4.4. What is a module in the context of the NFQ? How does it differ from current DCU modules?

Under the proposed AFI, modules need to be characterised by their academic level, the amount of student activity involved as indicated by the number of ECTS credits, when and how they are delivered, and possibly in certain cases by a “shelf-life” or expiry date. We focus here just on the academic level aspect.

DCU currently has five different module levels, corresponding roughly to academic years. In the NFQ system, the term “level” is applied to awards and there are level

descriptors associated with each level of award. Of the post-leaving certificate awards, DCU is primarily concerned with NFQ Level 8 (Honours Bachelor), NFQ Level 9 (Masters) and NFQ Level 10 (Doctorate).

There is to an extent an academic progression in the post leaving cert NFQ levels 6-10, but it is by no means the only distinguishing characteristic – primarily these award levels are about fitness for purpose. It does not seem to be simple or useful to equate the progress of a DCU student from entry into the University towards an Honours Bachelor award with the NFQ level 6, 7 and 8 progression. Consequently, we could use here the term *stage* to refer to this progress from ab initio entry towards a Level 8 or Level 9 award. The most natural and most useful categorisation of this progress seems to be in terms of three stages to an Honours Bachelor plus one further stage for the taught Masters level. For example, the following categorisation could be adopted:

- *Introductory Stage* (DCU existing Level 1, probably about 60 credits maximum for any award);
- *Intermediate Stage* (DCU existing Levels 2 and 3 on a four year degree; Level 2 on a three year degree, probably 60 -120 credits);
- *Advanced, or Honours Bachelor Stage* (DCU existing level 4 on a four year degree; Level 3 on a three year degree, probably about 60 credits);
- *Expert, or Graduate/Masters/Doctorate Stage* (DCU existing level 5).

Stage descriptors analogous to the NFQ level descriptors will need to be defined in order to act as a meta-framework for the writing of module Learning Outcomes, so that these are consistent across the University. Because Learning Outcomes are intimately connected with the assessment, another way of putting this would be to decide that, as Dr D.G.A. Scurry puts it in his report to the DCU Working Group on Modularisation in 2004, “University-wide assessment criteria will need to be developed to ensure that modules taught at the same [stage] are assessed to similar standards.”

4.5. Where are the “Programmes”? And the Programme Boards?

In DCU terminology, the term “programme” refers to a defined set of modules and stages that students are required to complete successfully in order to be awarded a denominated degree. Under the AFI, programmes still exist but they are likely to be

more flexible and individualised than is currently the case. A programme may thus refer to the learning pathways or trajectory (i.e. the suite of modules, with their pre- and co-requisites) taken by an individual student registered for an award. The range of learning pathways that students can choose will be specified by the Award requirements as defined by validation and accreditation.

Programme Boards/School & Faculty Teaching Committees will still exist and may be responsible for more than one award. However, their terms of reference and membership may need to be reviewed and harmonised within and between Faculties. In any case, Programme Chairs and/or Course Directors will continue to play a key role in the development, management, operations and monitoring/evaluation of programmes and awards. For example, Programme Boards functions are likely to include Quality Assurance procedures. Robust communication channels and reporting mechanisms between Programme Boards, Module Boards and Award Boards will also need to be put in place.

4.6. What will be the composition of Module Examination Boards (MB) and Award Boards (AB)?

At this stage, it is envisaged that Module Boards will have responsibility for more than one module. Given the differences between and within Faculties, Schools and/or disciplines will determine the required number of Module Boards for which they are responsible. The specific modules falling under the remit of a Module Board may be determined according to established discipline boundaries (e.g. inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, French language, accounting, etc.) or according to any coherent set of criteria deemed as most appropriate. Each Module Board must have at least one external examiner (in this case, the MB may be responsible for all modules sharing the same external examiner), but may have more. All internal examiners/assessors would normally be members of the relevant Module Board(s).

By contrast, only selected representatives from the MBs involved in an award/programme would be members of the corresponding Award Board. The number of representatives would reflect the number of credits from the MB that contribute to the award. Award External Examiners (as distinct from Module Board External Examiners) and Chairs of Programme Boards/Course directors will be key members of the Award Board, which may be chaired by the Dean of the Faculty or his/her nominee.

The membership of Module Boards and Award Boards will be approved by Academic

Council/University Standard
Committee.

4.7. What kind of 'information infrastructure' will be put in place?

An Information Infrastructure that combines information on registration, current student module completion status, module learning outcomes, award requirements and timetabled contact events, will need to be introduced. The infrastructure should allow a student and/or an academic mentor to explore what options are available for proceeding, given the student's current status. Fixed and centralised timetables with coherent or coordinated treatment of different categories of student contact such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, labs, etc., are a feature of modularised systems generally. These would need to be introduced in DCU.

APPENDIX B.1

CASE STUDY 1: PHASE 1 - QUESTIONIARES

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

1. You

1. what is your professional role in relation to assessment in your School/Faculty?

☐ Year head student

☐ Post Graduate

☐ Lecturer

☐ Programme Chair

☐ Teaching & Learning advisor

Other (please specify)

2. Purposes of Assessment

1. What do you believe is the purpose of assessment in DCU?

never	sometimes	frequently	always	To motivate learning
☐	☐	☐	☐	To
evaluate teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐
To rank learners	☐	☐	☐	☐
To grade achievement	☐	☐	☐	☐
To diagnose strengths or weaknesses	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)				

3. Content of Assessment

1. When I devise assessments I focus on the;

never	sometimes	frequently	always	application of knowledge
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
analysis of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
development of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
presentation of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
evaluation of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
synthesis of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)				

*2. When designing assessments I consider the;

never	sometimes	frequently	always	profile of the learners
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
module descriptors learning objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐
module descriptors indicative syllabus	☐	☐	☐	☐
weighting of the module	☐	☐	☐	☐
information that was taught	☐	☐	☐	☐

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

*3. When designing assessments I break the questions down into;

never	sometimes	frequently	always	Knowledge
	☐	☐	☐	Skills
	☐	☐	☐	Competence
	☐	☐	☐	Attitudes
	☐	☐	☐	Other (please specify)

*4. After I design my assessment I;

never	sometimes	frequently	always
ask a colleague to proof it and check for errors	☐	☐	☐
submit it to a superiour / teaching & learning rep	☐	☐	☐
pilot it	☐	☐	☐
check for reliability	☐	☐	☐
check for validity	☐	☐	☐

4. Assessors

*1. Assessment is normally carried out by;

never	sometimes	frequently	always self
	☐	☐	peers or colleagues
	☐	☐	
post grads	☐	☐	☐

5. Timing of Assessment

*1. Assessment is carried out;

never	sometimes	frequently	always
more than once throughout the duration of the module	☐	☐	☐
during the module	☐	☐	☐
at the start of the module	☐	☐	☐
at then end of the module	☐	☐	☐
when the learner is ready	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)			

6. Modes of Assessment

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

*1. Assessment is through;

never	sometimes	frequently	always	multiple-choice questions
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
case studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
audio / video recordings	☐	☐	☐	☐
observations	☐	☐	☐	☐
computer assisted questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
short answer questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
reflective logs / diaries	☐	☐	☐	☐
lab participation	☐	☐	☐	☐
portfolio of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
individual presentations to peers	☐	☐	☐	☐
peer marking	☐	☐	☐	☐
group presentations to peers	☐	☐	☐	☐
essay / paper	☐	☐	☐	☐
seminar contributions	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 to 1 dialogue	☐	☐	☐	☐
written exams	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other assessment modes (please specify)				

7. Marking Assessments

*1. Marking is;

never	sometimes	frequently	always	against implicit criteria
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
against explicit criteria	☐	☐	☐	☐
to assess knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
to assess critical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
to assess presentation of knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
given a summative grade	☐	☐	☐	☐
routinely second marked	☐	☐	☐	☐
second marked if a fail	☐	☐	☐	☐
sampled in-house by a moderator	☐	☐	☐	☐
anonymous	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Value of feedback

1. In relation top feedback on student assessment:

never	sometimes	frequently	always
Do you offer 1 to 1 personalised feedback?	☐	☐	☐

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

2. On average what percentage of students seek 1 to 1 personalised feedback?

- ☐ 0-10%
- ☐ 10-15%
- ☐ 15-25%
- ☐ 25-40%
- ☐ 40-55%
- ☐ 55-70%
- ☐ more than 70%

3. Feedback and student development.

	never	sometimes	frequently	always
Individualised written feedback is provided for each student.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student feedback occurs generically within a class setting	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your students who have received assessment feedback view assessment as part of learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students seeking personalised feedback are often the ones who don't require correctional advice.	☐	☐	☐	☐
In a modular context, where assessment is essentially summative, is feedback necessary?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

4. You & Assessment

I view devising assessments in the context of Knowledge, skills, and competencies.				
Devising a written exam is the best way for me to assess large groups.				
I would like to use more formative assessment approaches without creating a larger work load.				
Assessment within my module often is based on the material taught.				
I value additional in-service training on assessment practices.				
I view assessment as the most important aspect of my module				
When devising assessments I use the experience in the subject area and what I delivered through the lectures.				
Assessing large groups is too time consuming for formative assessment.				

APPENDIX B.1

CASE STUDY 1: PHASE 1 - RESULTS

Audit of Academic Staff Perceptions of their Assessment Practices

1. what is your professional role in relation to assessment in your School/Faculty?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Lecturer		74.6%	91
Year head		4.1%	5
Programme Chair		22.1%	27
Post Graduate student		9.0%	11
Teaching & Learning advisor		13.9%	17
Other (please specify)			19
answered question			122
skipped question			15

2. What do you believe is the purpose of assessment in DCU?

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
To motivate learning	5.6% (6)	17.8% (19)	29.9% (32)	46.7% (50)	3.18	107
To grade achievement	3.8% (4)	10.6% (11)	26.0% (27)	59.6% (62)	3.41	104
To rank learners	17.2% (17)	35.4% (35)	33.3% (33)	14.1% (14)	2.44	99
To diagnose strengths or weaknesses	3.9% (4)	35.3% (36)	26.5% (27)	34.3% (35)	2.91	102
To evaluate teaching	13.3% (14)	41.9% (44)	28.6% (30)	16.2% (17)	2.48	105
Other (please specify)						10
answered question						109
skipped question						28

3. When I devise assessments I focus on the;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
development of knowledge	4.7% (4)	20.0% (17)	38.8% (33)	36.5% (31)	3.07	85
application of knowledge	2.3% (2)	4.6% (4)	40.2% (35)	52.9% (46)	3.44	87
presentation of knowledge	4.8% (4)	25.0% (21)	44.0% (37)	26.2% (22)	2.92	84
analysis of knowledge	2.4% (2)	9.4% (8)	55.3% (47)	32.9% (28)	3.19	85
synthesis of knowledge	1.2% (1)	20.2% (17)	41.7% (35)	36.9% (31)	3.14	84
evaluation of knowledge	2.4% (2)	13.1% (11)	40.5% (34)	44.0% (37)	3.26	84

Other (please specify)

4

answered question

88

skipped question

49

4. When designing assessments I consider the;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
profile of the learners	4.4% (4)	18.7% (17)	27.5% (25)	49.5% (45)	3.22	91
module descriptors learning objectives	4.4% (4)	14.3% (13)	18.7% (17)	62.6% (57)	3.40	91
module descriptors indicative syllabus	6.6% (6)	20.9% (19)	30.8% (28)	41.8% (38)	3.08	91
weighting of the module	20.9% (19)	24.2% (22)	20.9% (19)	34.1% (31)	2.68	91
information that was taught	3.3% (3)	4.4% (4)	23.1% (21)	69.2% (63)	3.58	91
					answered question	91
					skipped question	46

5. When designing assessments I break the questions down into;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
Knowledge	12.2% (11)	15.6% (14)	30.0% (27)	42.2% (38)	3.02	90
Skills	12.4% (11)	16.9% (15)	40.4% (36)	30.3% (27)	2.89	89
Competence	12.4% (11)	24.7% (22)	31.5% (28)	31.5% (28)	2.82	89
Attitudes	36.0% (32)	27.0% (24)	23.6% (21)	13.5% (12)	2.15	89

Other (please specify)

7

answered question

91

skipped question

46

6. After I design my assessment I;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
ask a colleague to proof it and check for errors	20.9% (19)	37.4% (34)	19.8% (18)	22.0% (20)	2.43	91
submit it to a superiour / teaching & learning rep	53.8% (49)	19.8% (18)	13.2% (12)	13.2% (12)	1.86	91
pilot it	54.9% (50)	29.7% (27)	9.9% (9)	5.5% (5)	1.66	91
check for reliability	33.0% (30)	22.0% (20)	17.6% (16)	27.5% (25)	2.40	91
check for validity	35.2% (32)	16.5% (15)	20.9% (19)	27.5% (25)	2.41	91
answered question						91
skipped question						46

7. Assessment is normally carried out by;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
self	3.3% (3)	10.0% (9)	25.6% (23)	61.1% (55)	3.44	90
peers or colleagues	31.1% (28)	42.2% (38)	17.8% (16)	8.9% (8)	2.04	90
post grads	63.3% (57)	21.1% (19)	11.1% (10)	4.4% (4)	1.57	90
answered question						90
skipped question						47

8. Assessment is carried out;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
at the start of the module	67.4% (58)	24.4% (21)	3.5% (3)	4.7% (4)	1.45	86
during the module	7.8% (7)	25.6% (23)	44.4% (40)	22.2% (20)	2.81	90
at then end of the module	7.9% (7)	13.5% (12)	31.5% (28)	47.2% (42)	3.18	89
when the learner is ready	38.8% (31)	21.3% (17)	30.0% (24)	10.0% (8)	2.11	80
more than once throughout the duration of the module	13.3% (12)	25.6% (23)	37.8% (34)	23.3% (21)	2.71	90
Other (please specify)						9
answered question						90
skipped question						47

9. Assessment is through;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
seminar contributions	51.2% (44)	30.2% (26)	14.0% (12)	4.7% (4)	1.72	86
individual presentations to peers	31.4% (27)	38.4% (33)	27.9% (24)	2.3% (2)	2.01	86
group presentations to peers	17.4% (15)	40.7% (35)	34.9% (30)	7.0% (6)	2.31	86
essay / paper	9.3% (8)	23.3% (20)	48.8% (42)	18.6% (16)	2.77	86
multiple-choice questions	46.5% (40)	34.9% (30)	16.3% (14)	2.3% (2)	1.74	86
short answer questions	34.9% (30)	38.4% (33)	24.4% (21)	2.3% (2)	1.94	86
case studies	33.7% (29)	37.2% (32)	24.4% (21)	4.7% (4)	2.00	86
reflective logs / diaries	41.9% (36)	32.6% (28)	19.8% (17)	5.8% (5)	1.90	86
portfolio of work	44.2% (38)	23.3% (20)	26.7% (23)	5.8% (5)	1.94	86
lab participation	53.5% (46)	24.4% (21)	16.3% (14)	5.8% (5)	1.74	86
audio / video recordings	76.7% (66)	9.3% (8)	10.5% (9)	3.5% (3)	1.41	86
1 to 1 dialogue	69.8% (60)	16.3% (14)	10.5% (9)	3.5% (3)	1.48	86
written exams	20.9% (18)	20.9% (18)	41.9% (36)	16.3% (14)	2.53	86
computer assisted questions	59.3% (51)	23.3% (20)	16.3% (14)	1.2% (1)	1.59	86
peer marking	61.6% (53)	27.9% (24)	5.8% (5)	4.7% (4)	1.53	86
observations	51.2% (44)	25.6% (22)	20.9% (18)	2.3% (2)	1.74	86

Other assessment modes (please specify)

9

answered question	86
skipped question	51

10. Marking is;

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
against implicit criteria	20.9% (18)	45.3% (39)	22.1% (19)	11.6% (10)	2.24	86
against explicit criteria	4.7% (4)	17.4% (15)	34.9% (30)	43.0% (37)	3.16	86
to assess knowledge	1.2% (1)	10.5% (9)	46.5% (40)	41.9% (36)	3.29	86
to assess critical thinking	2.3% (2)	9.3% (8)	44.2% (38)	44.2% (38)	3.30	86
to assess presentation of knowledge	5.8% (5)	30.2% (26)	37.2% (32)	26.7% (23)	2.85	86
given a summative grade	2.3% (2)	25.6% (22)	37.2% (32)	34.9% (30)	3.05	86
routinely second marked	29.1% (25)	36.0% (31)	19.8% (17)	15.1% (13)	2.21	86
second marked if a fail	20.9% (18)	29.1% (25)	16.3% (14)	33.7% (29)	2.63	86
sampled in-house by a moderator	32.6% (28)	27.9% (24)	19.8% (17)	19.8% (17)	2.27	86
anonymous	38.4% (33)	38.4% (33)	16.3% (14)	7.0% (6)	1.92	86
answered question						86
skipped question						51

11. In relation top feedback on student assessment:

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
Do you offer 1 to 1 personalised feedback?	0.0% (0)	24.7% (18)	27.4% (20)	47.9% (35)	3.23	73
answered question						73
skipped question						64

12. On average what percentage of students seek 1 to 1 personalised feedback?

		Response Percent	Response Count
0-10%		29.1%	23
10-15%		24.1%	19
15-25%		26.6%	21
25-40%		6.3%	5
40-55%		3.8%	3
55-70%		1.3%	1
more than 70%		8.9%	7
answered question			79
skipped question			58

13. Feedback and student development.

	never	sometimes	frequently	always	Rating Average	Response Count
Individualised written feedback is provided for each student.	16.7% (13)	25.6% (20)	21.8% (17)	35.9% (28)	2.77	78
Student feedback occurs generically within a class setting	15.4% (12)	38.5% (30)	37.2% (29)	9.0% (7)	2.40	78
Your students who have received assessment feedback view assessment as part of learning.	4.2% (3)	42.3% (30)	32.4% (23)	21.1% (15)	2.70	71
Students seeking personalised feedback are often the ones who don't require correctional advice.	1.3% (1)	50.7% (38)	45.3% (34)	2.7% (2)	2.49	75
In a modular context, where assessment is essentially summative, is feedback necessary?	0.0% (0)	30.3% (23)	28.9% (22)	40.8% (31)	3.11	76
answered question						80
skipped question						57

14. You & Assessment

					Rating Average	Response Count
Assessment within my module often is based on the material taught.	2.6% (2)	17.9% (14)	46.2% (36)	33.3% (26)	3.10	78
I view assessment as the most important aspect of my module	30.3% (23)	39.5% (30)	25.0% (19)	5.3% (4)	2.05	76
Assessing large groups is too time consuming for formative assessment.	17.1% (13)	48.7% (37)	26.3% (20)	7.9% (6)	2.25	76
Devising a written exam is the best way for me to assess large groups.	18.2% (14)	45.5% (35)	27.3% (21)	9.1% (7)	2.27	77
I would like to use more formative assessment approaches without creating a larger work load.	4.0% (3)	24.0% (18)	32.0% (24)	40.0% (30)	3.08	75
I value additional in-service training on assessment practices.	9.0% (7)	24.4% (19)	34.6% (27)	32.1% (25)	2.90	78
I view devising assessments in the context of Knowledge, skills, and competencies.	1.3% (1)	20.8% (16)	36.4% (28)	41.6% (32)	3.18	77
When devising assessments I use the experience in the subject area and what I delivered through the lectures.	1.3% (1)	5.2% (4)	48.1% (37)	45.5% (35)	3.38	77
answered question						79
skipped question						58

Page 1, Q1. what is your professional role in relation to assessment in your School/Faculty?

1	Teaching Fellow	Jan 5, 2009 3:42 PM
2	d	Jan 5, 2009 10:49 AM
3	Associate Lecturer	Dec 22, 2008 12:04 PM
4	Tutor	Dec 20, 2008 4:46 PM
5	Part-time	Dec 19, 2008 4:54 PM
6	Technology Transfer	Dec 19, 2008 3:14 PM
7	Part-time lecturer	Dec 19, 2008 3:05 PM
8	student studying to be a teacher	Dec 19, 2008 3:03 PM
9	student/intern	Dec 19, 2008 3:02 PM
10	Part-time lecturer AND post grad student	Dec 19, 2008 2:59 PM
11	OSCAIL tutor	Dec 19, 2008 2:19 PM
12	Postdoctoral Researcher	Dec 19, 2008 2:16 PM
13	Librarian	Dec 19, 2008 2:10 PM
14	postdoc	Dec 19, 2008 1:59 PM
15	research Centre Senior Scientist	Dec 19, 2008 1:38 PM
16	Co-ordinator of masters programme	Dec 11, 2008 7:13 PM
17	Part time	Dec 4, 2008 2:59 PM
18	Part time	Dec 4, 2008 2:21 PM
19	I keep John in check	Jul 8, 2008 3:33 PM

Page 2, Q1. What do you believe is the purpose of assessment in DCU?

1	to determine if the learning outcome of a module are achieved	Jan 26, 2009 11:22 AM
2	I also see assessment as a method of exploring students' level of critical thinking relating to a certain topic/idea.	Jan 5, 2009 10:39 AM
3	To aid learning by timely feedback	Dec 22, 2008 11:25 AM
4	Often not too sure why we assess	Dec 19, 2008 10:53 PM
5	I'm not sure that I can speak on behalf of DCU in stating its purpose.	Dec 19, 2008 4:56 PM
6	To assist in the learning process, by giving students a task during which they will gather, analyse and synthesise new ideas and information	Dec 19, 2008 3:01 PM
7	to make programmes conform to externally devised norms	Dec 19, 2008 2:50 PM
8	to satisfy award descriptors and requirements of external bodies	Dec 19, 2008 2:12 PM
9	To evaluate learning	Dec 19, 2008 1:46 PM
10	to evaluate learning and provide direction for future learning	Dec 19, 2008 1:41 PM

Page 3, Q1. When I devise assessments I focus on the;

1	Integrating knowledge appropriately into other relevant areas, not sure how to word it exactly but make sure that students can correctly transfer material learned in one context into other relevant situations	Jan 8, 2009 1:37 PM
2	This question is nearly incomprehensible!	Dec 19, 2008 10:56 PM
3	I focus more in skill than on knowledge.	Dec 19, 2008 5:00 PM
4	practice and potential for improvement	Dec 11, 2008 7:17 PM

Page 3, Q3. When designing assessments I break the questions down into;

1	not sure if 'questions' appropriate term - we set 'tasks'...	Jan 6, 2009 12:49 PM
2	poorly designed question	Jan 5, 2009 10:14 AM
3	Quite unanswerable as asked	Dec 19, 2008 10:56 PM
4	The ability to make and argument; the ability to apply a theory, or contrast/compare different cases	Dec 19, 2008 3:04 PM
5	Role of assessment more for promoting critical thinking	Dec 19, 2008 2:14 PM
6	Transfer into the workplace	Dec 11, 2008 7:17 PM
7	Mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes.	Dec 5, 2008 2:00 PM

Page 5, Q1. Assessment is carried out;

1	In relation to "at the start of the module" would do informal Q&A to see level of knowledge student is bringin with them but would never do formal assessment so not sure whether I should put in "never" or "always" for that one	Jan 8, 2009 1:39 PM
2	can't answer the 'when learner is ready' as not sure what is intended here	Jan 6, 2009 12:50 PM
3	one lab assessment based on practical and knowledge skills halfway thro each semester	Jan 5, 2009 3:48 PM
4	Answers overlap	Dec 19, 2008 10:56 PM
5	you shouldnot make people answer questions that may not be relevent	Dec 19, 2008 8:40 PM
6	It depends on the situation	Dec 19, 2008 7:03 PM
7	the above categories are not mutually exclusive	Dec 19, 2008 2:15 PM
8	When the learner is ready is a badly phrased question	Dec 19, 2008 1:41 PM
9	through assignment	Dec 11, 2008 7:18 PM

Page 6, Q1. Assessment is through;

1	poster presentation	Jan 26, 2009 11:26 AM
2	peer critiques	Jan 6, 2009 12:52 PM
3	prelab quizzes/ post lab questions on moodle	Jan 5, 2009 3:51 PM
4	contributions to discussions; constructing assessment questions	Jan 5, 2009 10:19 AM
5	Poster, report, market research evaluation	Jan 1, 2009 1:07 PM
6	Two essays and one final written exam	Dec 19, 2008 10:23 PM
7	Group Presentation to Peers	Dec 19, 2008 4:00 PM
8	groups project 2-3 students per group	Dec 19, 2008 1:54 PM
9	Questions in class	Dec 11, 2008 7:20 PM

APPENDIX C

CASE STUDY 1: ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

Assessment & Feedback

Module ES204 / ES222

(ET2 / BET2) Semester One

Lecturer : Justin Rami

<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Submission Date(s)</i>
Task 1	28 th Oct 2011
Task 2	30 th November 2011
Task 3	16 th December 2011

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to module ES204 / ES222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

The aims of this module are:

- *Familiarise students with assessment approaches and strategies appropriate to a variety of organisational cultures*
- *Gain an understanding of assessment purposes and principles*
- *Inform students of the main accreditation systems available in Ireland and how they operate*
- *Inform students of assessment policies, techniques and instruments available for offering support for disabilities.*

At the end of this module you should be able to:

- ☐ Understand the relationship between assessment and learning and curriculum and assessment
- ☐ Recognise and define different assessment types
- ☐ Understand the purpose of different forms of assessment in relation to learning and to society
- ☐ Discriminate between different grading and feedback theories and practices
- ☐ Exercise appropriate judgment in planning, designing and implementing a wide range of assessment strategies in order to meet the needs of specific learners' groups.
- ☐ Show an awareness of the specific needs of disabled students in relation to assessment and of the techniques and tools to best address them.

You will study this module over the next 12 weeks; you will have 11 lectures as well as some online support. The module is assessed exclusively by continuous assessment and the portfolio presented in this workbook accounts for 100% of module mark

This module will be supported by a virtual learning environment called Moodle. Moodle can be accessed via an ordinary Web Browser (such as Internet Explorer or Netscape) at <http://moodle.dcu.ie>. When you log on to Moodle, you will be asked for your username and password.

Please read this workbook carefully before starting your studies. Ensure that you meet the deadlines in the Course Schedule and keep in contact with your lecturer or penalties will apply.

In addition, your fellow students in the discussion area should also be regarded as a resource. Other students may be able to answer your questions, while you should feel free to answer questions posed by other students.

Best wishes with your studies.

Justin Rami
Lecturer

Justin.rami@dcu.ie

It is our aim to ensure that the Learning & Teaching that you experience at DCU is of the highest possible quality. Here are some suggestions to help facilitate this.

- ☐ You **must attend** all lectures. The flexibility built into the timetable was designed in such a way that you all have an opportunity to have a good work-life balance. The pay-off for this flexibility is that all students **must attend all lectures, workshops, and tutorials. You will be asked to sign attendance sheets for each class/seminar.**
- ☐ If you are absent you are requested to contact the Year Head/Co-ordinator (ET2: Francesca Lorenzi; BET2: Jane O'Kelly) and explain your non- attendance. If you are ill for more than 2 consecutive days you must produce a medical certificate.
- ☐ Be on time for all lectures. If there is a break given ensure you are back in time for the remainder of the lecture.
- ☐ Switch off all mobile phones during lecture time.
- ☐ Try to ensure that all your interactions within the group/class are respectful and dignified. Bullying or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- ☐ Questions are an important part of Education, but if you have a question please ensure that it is related to the topic and relevant to the discussion. Also make sure that your questions do not take up too much teaching time, as you can talk to the Lecturer after the session.
- ☐ Lecturers/Markers can not comment on results before the official publication of results by the Registry (through your portal page).
- ☐ Read the policies guidelines on Plagiarism and Deferrals outlined within this workbook.
- ☐ Any academic or class related issues should be addressed through your Class Representatives, who in turn will pass on to the Module Lecturer and in turn to the Year Head.
- ☐ When writing assignments please read each Brief carefully and seek clarification from the Module lecturer if required.
- ☐ Ensure that you refer to the academic conventions for referencing and other guidelines outlined in School of Education Studies Booklet. The style of the writing is subject to the guidelines in the Brief. For example, in a very personal essay discussing your own development etc, it is perfectly acceptable to use 'I', in the first person tense. Eg: *"The work of Kolb (1984) informed how I approach my own learning, and I am now beginning to understand his notion of 'abstract conceptualisation.'"* The aim is to be consistent. When writing an assignment for a more knowledge/content based module, it may be more appropriate to discuss the issues in the third person, eg: *"LB Curzon (2003) discussed in his book Teaching in further education : an outline of principles and practice, that the work of Watson & Skinner were closely related."*

Syllabus

Within this module we will discuss a range of aspects which relate to the concept of Assessment and the related practices. These topics will make up the core of the work we will do and all relate to understanding about Assessment.

Assessment and learning: constructive alignment; validation of multiple forms of intelligence; formative value of assessment; the role of feedback, integrated assessment system, Assessment and Bloom's Taxonomy

Assessment definitions and descriptions: terminology – norm and criterion referenced, continuous, summative, formative, diagnostic; competence; validity, reliability; formative feedback; feedback loop; feed-forward.

Purposes and Audiences: assessment as statement of achievement; assessment as an indicator of progress; assessment as learner empowerment; assessment as screening device; assessment motivations, assessment as accreditation on teaching and learning experience; assessment and student retention.

Assessment methods & techniques: examination of different types – written, practical, interview and oral assessment, observation, portfolios, projects, task and performance related strategies.

Assessment and accreditation: Accreditation systems, NFQ, the EQF for LLL and Learning outcome

Equal Opportunities and Assessment: concept of reasonable accommodation and its importance in understanding assessment techniques as they relate to people with special needs, including people with physical, sensory disabilities and specific learning disabilities.

Reading list

- Black, P. (1998) *Testing: Friend or Foe? Theory and Practice of Assessment and Testing*, Falmer Press, London (particularly Chapter 4)
- Clarke, S. (2005) *Formative Assessment in Action, weaving the elements together*, London, Hodder Murray.
- Rami, J. et al. *Accreditation of Vocational Learning Outcomes: Perspectives for a European Transfer*, ITB; University of Bremen, 2009.
- Coolahan, J. *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, (1981) Institute of Public Administration, Dublin
- Hanafin, J. (1997) *Towards New Understandings: Assessment and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Cork, UCC
- Hyland, A. (2000) *Innovations in Assessment in Irish Education*, Cork, UCC
- Kelly, M.B. (1994) *Can you Credit it? Implications of Accreditation for Learners and Groups in the Community Sector*. Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency
- Stenström M. and Laine K. (2006) *Towards Good Practices for Practice-Oriented Assessment in European Vocational Education*, Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

Readings

Rather than spending a lot of money on books and trying to borrow books that are limited and in demand. I will copy you several readings weekly regarding the topic we are discussing. I will ask you about various aspects of these readings during the module and you will be expected to use them in your written work and refer and cite relevant aspects of them.

A NOTE ON REGULATIONS

- Assessments must be submitted on time and through the proper procedures
- Students should read carefully the School of Education's new policy and procedures for extensions
- Students should ensure that there is written confirmation of the submission. This may involve signing off for the paper.
- All assignments should be typed.
- **Students should keep an electronic copy of the assignment for their own records.** Papers cannot be returned to students, as they must be made available for the external examiner at the end of the academic year.
- All assignments must have a properly completed cover sheet. Copies of the cover sheet will be distributed at the beginning of the term.
- Each cover sheet should indicate the word count of the particular assignment.

Font	Times New Roman
Font Size	Body Copy: 12 Point
Spacing	Body Copy: Double (See References)
Margins	Left Justify. For Quotations see separate section
Page Numbers	Centre Pagination
Binding	Please staple all assignments on top left- hand corner. Please do not use binders or folders of any kind. You may place paper in an envelope for submission purposes if necessary.
Title Page	This page should contain the following: Student Name, Student ID, Title of Paper, Name of Module, Name of lecturer to whom paper is submitted, date and word count.
References	References are included at end of the paper. Please note the correct format for references.

Final Check

It is a very good idea to set aside some time before the submission deadline for one last check—a check for readability—of your essay. In this final check of your pre-final submission draft, read your

essay ensuring that your ideas are clearly expressed, that the arguments follow, that there is a logical progression throughout. Adjust anything that you feel interrupts the flow of the written word, and adjust anything you feel necessary to improve the written expression of your ideas and arguments.

TASK 1 : DESIGN AN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	
Submission date (by):	28 th October 2011
Word count	Approx. 850 words PLUS fill Appendix 1 form
Marking	Peer marking

Task Description

For this task you are required to design an assessment activity for a module of your choice. The task is subdivided in three sub-tasks:

- ☐ the **description of the module** for which you are designing the assessment activity (fill form in Appendix 1);
- ☐ the **design of the activity**. For this sub-task you provide a description of the activity (approx. 100 words), offer some guidance through written instructions (approx. 200 words) and set clearly specified assessment criteria (approx. 150 words) to be used by assessors and students as a reference.
- ☐ the **justification of your design choices** on the basis of the theoretical knowledge you have Acquired this far (400 words).

This task is a (peer) marked draft submission of a final activity design. You will have the opportunity to revise your plan as a part of **Task 3**. Task 1 and Task 2 will be marked separately.

You will receive anonymous marks & feedback on your assessment design by fellow students (Task 2) and for Task 3 you will be asked to revise your plan in response to the advice received through the feedback comments.

Task Objectives

The purpose of this activity is to apply the theory of assessment methods and curriculum alignment to a real life scenario. In your professional career you may be faced with a similar task or you may be asked to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of assessment activities set by others.

By attempting to set assessment activities for a module you should

- ☐ gain an awareness of the structured thinking that setting assessment activities requires.
- ☐ start to think about module objectives and how these can be met through an assessment activity that allows students to display evidence of their learning and knowledge.

Task Instructions

This task requires you to think carefully about the structure of the module you are designing for, its learning outcomes and the type of competence that you wish your students to display by carrying out this activity.

You need to ask yourself:

“What are my students learning?” and “what they will be able to do as a result of studying for this module?”

And in the case of professionally oriented courses

“what level of performance they need to achieve in order to effectively function in their professional environment?”. The assessment activity you will design should allow your students to show evidence of

their knowledge and ability to apply it to a specific environment.

First sub-task: background

Firstly you need to provide information on the course/module for which you are designing the activity. You will need to fill **the template in Appendix I** indicating the duration of the module the number of students taking the module and % contribution of the module to the overall qualification.

Some brief indication of the module syllabus is necessary. You can choose a module you are already familiar with, create a new module or look up existing modules from courses descriptions available from various sources on the web. You are not assessed on the quality of your syllabus design but on your ability to link the module syllabus that you choose with an assessment activity. Nevertheless, you should bear in mind that, if the module design is under- specified, you will find it more difficult to design a suitable assessment activity.

You will notice that the template in **Appendix I** requires you to specify the level of the course. For detailed information on how to determine the level see the fan diagram available level descriptions available from the NFQ website

http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/frame_action/documents/DeterminationsfortheOutlineNFQ.pdf

You might also find it useful to check the following link:

<http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/slo/blooms.htm>

In the module description form you will also find a blank box. In this box you can add any additional information that you feel may be helpful in defining your module.

While the descriptions refer to courses, modules part of course should match the descriptors for the particular level. The descriptors specified in this document should guide your decisions in terms of breadth of knowledge, competence and skills for the module you are designing assessment for. You chose any Module as a basis of this assessment but FETAC offer easy modules for you to use and copy into Appendix I: If you wish to use a FETAC module please follow these instructions:

Its not the easiest website to negotiate. It can be quite difficult to search for module descriptors.

It is important to understand how FETAC present awards first. There is an overall Award which is usually identified by a 5 Alfa code (eg: ECHSX), within this Award there are several core modules and several specialist modules. It is the Modules we are interested in looking at for our Assignments.

see <http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/awardsDirectory.do?method=getMajorAwardDetails&majorAwardId=5479&fromPage=awardsByField> example link

to download a module descriptor you click on the Code of module (eg: D20032) you want to look at from the listings. This brings up another page that lists all the other Awards hat this module is in, see he bottom of the page where it says 'Award Specification' with the word 'English' below. Click the word 'English' to download the 'English' language version of this module.

Second sub-task: design

Once you have decided the level, duration of the course and an approximate number of the students taking this module you need to consider what form of assessment is going to offer the best of opportunity for your students to show their understanding. For instance for a professional course-training chefs in pastry making an essay type assessment format is likely to show their theoretical knowledge but it will not give them the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to a professional scenario. In such a professional scenario, theoretical knowledge will not be sufficient to perform the task efficiently and effectively.

Another consideration is the current level of skills and knowledge of your students and the access to technology, should you wish to incorporate some blended element in your Assessment activities. Finally, some consideration should also be given to the resources available (Time, economic, staff, equipment, venues...) available for the organization and administration of your assessment activity.

This section should be organized in three sub-sections:

- ❑ **activity description.** The activity description you should give a brief outline of the structure and content of the activity.
- ❑ **instructions.** With the activity instructions you are giving information to your students on how to approach the task
- ❑ **assessment criteria.** With the assessment criteria you are communicating clear and transparent information about how the students' work will be evaluated and what evidence they will need to produce in order to show their knowledge and skills.

Third sub-task: justification

In this section you are justifying your design choice. You

need to:

- ❑ relate your discussion to the core principles of validity, reliability, transparency and fairness.
- ❑ show to what extent and how the module learning objectives and the assessment outcomes have been aligned.

Also it would be advisable to attempt to foresee any potential problems in the administration of this assessment activity and in the students' response to the task to ensure that the activity that you are proposing is pedagogically worthwhile and that you have carefully considered all the necessary resources for its delivery and administration.

Assessment criteria

Your assessment activity design should meet the following criteria:

For the assessment activity design:

- ❑ A **clearly specified link between module learning objectives and assessment criteria.**
The activity you design should give students the opportunity to display the knowledge and skills that they are supposed to have acquired and developed through studying for this module. You should be able to provide an answer to the question: *"Is my assessment activity helping students to show understanding of the objectives of this module?"*
- ❑ Clear **activity instructions.** Your instructions should avoid ambiguous wording and clearly specify what students are expected to do to meet the activity objectives. You should be able to answer the question: *"Will my students know what they are expected to do?"*.
- ❑ Clear **assessment criteria**
Your goal should be helping students to *do well*.
The specification of assessment criteria should maximize the students' chances to *do well*. You should be able to answer the question: *"Will my students know what does 'doing well' mean for this activity?"*

For the justification of your design choices:

In this section you should:

- ❑ Show **an awareness of the theoretical underpinnings of assessment design.**
Some reference to core theory is necessary. While the short word-count does not allow for a detailed discussion you should show that your choice can be justifiable in theoretical terms
- ❑ Explain **why your students are likely to learn** and show evidence of learning through completing the activity you have designed.

In addition to the above please ensure that you are also referring to grade descriptions listed in your workbook.

TASK 2 : MARK AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO A FELLOW STUDENT

Submission date (by):	30 th November 2011
Word count	Approx. 300 words per feedback sheet
Marking	Assessor marking

Task Description

For this task you are offering anonymous feedback to fellow students. Using the attached form (**Appendix 2**) you will be commenting on the assessment activity submitted by fellow students for Task 1. You need to critically evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and viability of the assessment activity designed by a fellow student and offer specific advice on how it can be improved. This is a peer-assessment activity where the feedback and mark allocated by peers counts towards the module mark.

Task Objectives

Through this task you are gaining experience of marking and providing feedback to fellow students. This task should help you to understand

- ☐ what constitutes useful/good feedback?
- ☐ what information should be included in feedback comments in order to help learning progression.
- ☐ how the information is received by the comments' recipient and what impact structure, clarity And tone may have on how the feedback message is received.

Task Instructions

The lecturer will provide your team with three assessment designs by fellow students.

You are required to:

- Carefully read and evaluate the quality of the three assignments you have received in terms of the assessment criteria specified for Task 1 and general grading descriptors.
- Provide feedback and an overall mark using the supplied form (**Appendix 2**). A separate form should be used for each activity. The form should be filled electronically. A downloadable copy is available from Moodle.
- Return the filled forms to Justin.rami@dcu.ie no later than 30th November 2010. A hard copy including the cover sheet should also be left in the assignment box by the same date.

The details of fellow students will be removed. Your feedback will also remain anonymous. This should help you to be honest and accurate in your evaluation.

The same assessment activities will also be evaluated by other fellow students. The mark you will allocate to the assignment you are evaluating will be agreed within your marking group and crosschecked by Justin. This feedback provided by you and your peers will be cross-checked and sample marked by Justin Rami to ensure greater reliability. This may result in minor adjustments.

As you are contributing to the final mark allocation it is essential that you carefully consider all elements and you clearly justify your decision in the feedback comments.

TASK 3: RE-DESIGN AN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY AND REPORT ON THE CHANGES

Submission date (by):	16 th December 2011
Word count	Approx. 1000 words + revised assessment activity
Marking	Lecturer marking

Task Description

For this task you need to carefully read the feedback comments you have received from fellow students. This task comprises of three parts.

- ☐ Part one: **respond to the feedback** you have received (approx 100) and consider to what extent you agree with the suggestions made.
- ☐ Part two: include a **revised assessment design**.
- ☐ Part three: provide a **brief explanation of the changes** you have made (approx. 100 words) and what motivated them.

Task Objectives

By completing this task you should be able to:

- ☐ critically evaluate your own work through responding to feedback received from others
- ☐ show a greater understanding of the theory of assessment design.

This activity should enable you to reflect not only on your own practice but also on the quality of feedback received. In a professional context you may be faced with a similar scenario where you may be asked to revise your plans or may feel that you need to critically defend and support your views.

Task Instructions

The most important element of this task is showing that there has been some progression in your understanding of assessment design theory.

This does not mean that you are required to completely re-draft your plans. If you feel that your initial draft was well thought out and presented and if you have also received feedback to support your design, it may be a matter of making only very small changes and to concentrate on framing more accurately your plans in terms of assessment theory.

The following sub-tasks should be completed:

☐ First sub-task: Response to feedback received

You will receive anonymous feedback from fellow students. You may choose to agree and act upon the advice received or to refute it. In either case you need to respond and justify your decision. Your response should be grounded in the theoretical knowledge and professional experience that you have acquired so far. You can choose to write a combined response to the two feedback sheets you have received or to offer two separate answers. Your response/s should be approximately 300 words in total (approximately 1 page).

☐ second Sub-task: Assessment activity re-draft

For this sub-task you are required to make changes to your initial draft in order to act upon the advice you have received through feedback comments and show greater understanding of assessment design theory.

As mentioned above, unless you think it is appropriate, you are not required to make radical changes. The goal of this activity is to fine-tune your plans and you need to carefully reflect on the pedagogical effectiveness but also on the efficiency (ie you need to think also of viability in terms of human, financial and time resources) of your activity in achieving the learning objectives you had set out in your module description.

It is assumed that your module description remains the same, therefore you do not need to change its description. However it is helpful to include a copy of the original module description

with the revised assessment activity design.

☐ Third **sub-task: critical description of changes**

For this task you are providing a description of the changes you have made to your assessment activity design. The description is not a mere list of changes but it should create a discussion. Changes should be justified in terms of your enhanced understanding of assessment theory. You are also encouraged to refer to your professional experience to support your revised plan. Your critical description should be approximately 300 words (approximately 1 page).

Assessment criteria

For the response to feedback received: In

this section you should:

- ☐ Critically **engage with the advice received** by showing an awareness of the theoretical underpinnings of assessment design to either agree with or refute the advice received.

For the assessment activity design:

- ☐ A **clearly specified link between module learning objectives and assessment criteria**. The activity you design should give students the opportunity to display the knowledge and skills that they are supposed to have acquired and developed through studying for this module. You should be able to provide an answer to the question: “*Is my assessment activity helping students to show understanding of the objectives of this module?*”
- ☐ Clear **activity instructions**. Your instructions should avoid ambiguous wording and clearly specify what students are expected to do to meet the activity objectives. You should be able to answer the question: “Will my students know what they are expected to do?”.
- ☐ Clear **assessment criteria**
Your goal should be helping students to *do well*.
The specification of assessment criteria should maximize the students’ chances to *do well*. You should be able to answer the question: “Will my students know what does ‘doing well’ mean for this activity?”

For the justification of your design choices: In

this section you should:

- ☐ Show **an awareness of the theoretical underpinnings of assessment design**. Some reference to core theoretical is necessary. While the short word-count does not allow for a detailed discussion you should show that your choice could be justifiable in theoretical terms
- ☐ Explain **why your students are likely to learn** and show evidence of learning through completing the activity you have designed

APPENDIX I - TASK I : DESIGN AN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	
Module name ¹ :	
Accreditation ² : (if applicable)	
Level ³ (if applicable):	
ECTS credits: (if applicable)	
Duration:	
Approx no. Students:	
Syllabus description:	
Learning outcomes:	
Other information:	

¹ In this box insert the name of the module you have chosen for designing an assessment activity.

² In this case the name of the Professional Body or Authority crediting the module should be

entered.

³ To establish the level you should refer to the NFQ descriptors.

APPENDIX 2

Evaluation ref. no.⁴

Overall grade

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE⁵

Assessment criteria	Bands					
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Pass	Poor	
Activity design: Organisation (Planning, Structure and Topic Development)						Tot.
30 Marks						
	30	24	18	12	6	
Constructive alignment						
Activity structure						
Clarity of activity instructions						
Specification of assessment criteria						
Justification (analysis) 40 marks						Tot.
	40	32	24	16	8	
Discussion coherence						
Theory awareness						
Learning promotion						
References 15 Marks						Tot.
	15	12	9	6	3	
Referencing/use of sources						
Presentation 15 Marks						Tot.
	15	12	9	6	3	
Grammatical fluency						
Activity presentation						

Summary Comments

ADVICE FOR PERFECTING ASSESSMENT DESIGN

⁴ In this section enter the evaluation no. that you will receive from your lecturer

⁵ This table indicates the performance categories achieved in selected components of the student's assignment, and is designed to indicate the main strengths

APPENDIX D.1

CASE STUDY 2: ALL QUESTIONNAIRES

Assessment Module - Survey 2009 (ES204/ES222)

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES204/Es222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

The focus of this research is only on the ASSESSMENT component (Lec: Justin Rami) of the module NOT the EVALUATION element.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Please select your class:**

☐ 2nd Year Full time BSc Student study ES204 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

☐ 2nd Year (DET) Part time BSc Student study ES222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

***3. Please select your age category**

☐ 18-23

☐ 24-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 45+

*4. Previous teaching/training experience

- ☐ admin role connected to teaching /training
- ☐ currently full time teacher/trainer
- ☐ currently part time teacher/trainer
- ☐ no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)
- ☐ voluntary experience as teacher/trainer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*5. Experience of Assessment in Education or Training (outside of this course)

- ☐ implementing / overseeing assessments
- ☐ marking / grading assessments
- ☐ no experience of assessment in education & training
- ☐ experience of designing assessments
- ☐ experience only as a student / trainee undergoing an assessment
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*6. Based on your knowledge of this module, as a student what would be your preferred mode of assessment and why?

- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ practice based assessment
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ group presentation

if mixture of above, (please specify, and explain reasons)

Assessment Module - Survey 2009 (ES204/ES222)

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The assessment portfolio for this module was well structured	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received sufficient support to tackle portfolio tasks by my lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Portfolio assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would use portfolio assessment with my students in future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation of the value of assessment feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After undertaking this module I understand the role of all stakeholders in assessment policy and practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The knowledge I have acquired in this module will influence my professional practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Based on your knowledge of this module, as trainer / teacher / assessor what would be your preferred mode of assessment for YOUR trainees / students be and why?

- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment
- ☐ portfolio assessment
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ practice based assessment
- ☐ group presentation
- ☐ mixture of some of the above

if mix, which mix (please specify)

Assessment Module - Survey 2009 (ES204/ES222)

*9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

*10. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice. (6 = not at all useful; 1 = extremely useful)

	Extremely useful	very useful	useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

*11. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes' please explain how your attitude has changed

Assessment Module - Survey 2009 (ES204/ES222)

***12. Has your views on the the role of the learner in the assessment process changed after completing this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain your answer

13. Is there anything you would like to add or change about the the assessment structure of this module?

14. In what way do you think your experience of being assessment within this module will help you with your professional development?

15. Which aspect of assessment taught in this module have you been able to use in your daily life?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES204/Es222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

The focus of this research is only on the ASSESSMENT component (Lec: Justin Rami) of the module NOT the EVALUATION element.

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Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Please select your class:**

☐ 2nd Year Full time BSc Student study ES204 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

☐ 2nd Year (DET) Part time BSc Student study ES222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

***3. Please select your age category**

☐ 18-23

☐ 24-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 45+

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

*4. Previous teaching/training experience

- ☐ admin role connected to teaching /training
- ☐ currently full time teacher/trainer
- ☐ currently part time teacher/trainer
- ☐ no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)
- ☐ voluntary experience as teacher/trainer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*5. Experience of Assessment in Education or Training (outside of this course)

- ☐ implementing / overseeing assessments
- ☐ experience of designing assessments
- ☐ experience only as a student / trainee undergoing an assessment
- ☐ marking / grading assessments
- ☐ no experience of assessment in education & training
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*6. Based on your knowledge of this module, as a student what would be your preferred mode of assessment and why?

- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ practice based assessment
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ group presentation

if mixture of above, (please specify, and explain reasons)

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The assessment portfolio for this module was well structured	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received sufficient support to tackle portfolio tasks by my lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Portfolio assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would use portfolio assessment with my students in future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation of the value of assessment feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After undertaking this module I understand the role of all stakeholders in assessment policy and practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The knowledge I have acquired in this module will influence my professional practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Based on your knowledge of this module, as trainer / teacher / assessor what would be your preferred mode of assessment for YOUR trainees / students be and why?

- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment
- ☐ portfolio assessment
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ practice based assessment
- ☐ group presentation
- ☐ mixture of some of the above

if mix, which mix (please specify)

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

*9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

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Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

*11. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes' please explain how your attitude has changed

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

***12. Has your views on the the role of the learner in the assessment process changed after completing this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain your answer

13. Is there anything you would like to add or change about the the assessment structure of this module?

14. In what way do you think your experience of being assessment within this module will help you with your professional development?

15. Which aspect of assessment taught in this module have you been able to use in your daily life?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2010 (ES204/ES222)

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES204/Es222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

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I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Please select your class:**

☐ 2nd Year Full time BSc Student study ES204 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

☐ 2nd Year (DET) Part time BSc Student study ES222 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation

***3. Please select your age category**

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☐ 24-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 45+

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*6. Based on your knowledge of this module, as a student what would be your preferred mode of assessment and why?

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- ☐ group presentation

if mixture of above, (please specify, and explain reasons)

Assessment Module - Survey : 2010 (ES204/ES222)

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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I received sufficient support to tackle portfolio tasks by my lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Portfolio assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would use portfolio assessment with my students in future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation of the value of assessment feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After undertaking this module I understand the role of all stakeholders in assessment policy and practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The knowledge I have acquired in this module will influence my professional practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Based on your knowledge of this module, as trainer / teacher / assessor what would be your preferred mode of assessment for YOUR trainees / students be and why?

- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment
- ☐ portfolio assessment
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ practice based assessment
- ☐ group presentation
- ☐ mixture of some of the above

if mix, which mix (please specify)

Assessment Module - Survey : 2010 (ES204/ES222)

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Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

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	Extremely useful	very useful	useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

*11. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes' please explain how your attitude has changed

Assessment Module - Survey : 2010 (ES204/ES222)

***12. Has your views on the the role of the learner in the assessment process changed after completing this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain your answer

13. Is there anything you would like to add or change about the the assessment structure of this module?

14. In what way do you think your experience of being assessment within this module will help you with your professional development?

15. Which aspect of assessment taught in this module have you been able to use in your daily life?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) post survey

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment method we used for Module ES204 Curriculum Assessment & Evaluation. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module for enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

The focus of this research is only on the ASSESSMENT component (Lec: Justin Rami) of the module NOT the EVALUATION element.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Please select your age category**

☐ 18-23

☐ 24-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 45+

3. How much expericene do you have either designing assessment or assessing student learning?

☐ 10 years + experience

☐ 5 years + experience

☐ less than 5 years experience

☐ Little or no experience

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) post survey

*4. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice.

	Extremely useful	Useful	Not useful	Not useful at all
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

*5. Please rate you level of agreement with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received from your peer assessor (you can tick more than one box)

- ☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received
- ☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received
- ☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before
- ☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve
- ☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting
- ☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for
- ☐ Feedback is not helpful
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) post survey

***7. How much were you able to transfer some of the advice / feedback received (from your Peer) in your Task 1 to the final Task 3?**

☐ All of it
 ☐ More than 50%
 ☐ Less than 50%
 ☐ None of it

8. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module was well structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was clear about the 3 tasks involved	☐	☐	☐	☐
This type of assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would staged assessment(s) with my own students in the future	☐	☐	☐	☐
Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development as a potential trainer / teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation how to design assessments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Understanding how to design and mark assessments helps me understand the learning process better	☐	☐	☐	☐

***9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) post survey

***10. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

In what way has your perception or attitude changed?

***11. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES114?**

***12. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES114?**

***13. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?**

***14. What aspect of the this module did you find LEAST useful?**

***15. Are you always aware of the learning outcomes for each module you participate in?**

☐ Yes

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ No

***16. Are you aware of any trends or developments in Assessment (curriculum reform) in Higher Education in Ireland or the European Union that could help or hinder learning in higher education?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes (please specify)

***17. As a learner studying teaching & training:**

How much would your views or experiences of assessment influence the way you might assess your trainees / students now or in the future?

- ☐ Influence them a lot
- ☐ Some influence
- ☐ Little influence
- ☐ Not influence them at all

ES402 Assessment Survey 2011 (BET3)

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Assessment & Feedback methods we used for this Module ES402.

We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing a dialogical framework which was developed by Justin Rami & Francesca Lorenzi over three years during the teaching of modules ES204 and ES222. Your views and opinions sought regarding Assessment were used to help create this model.

This time the focus of this research is on the ASSESSMENT component of Module ES402 Philosophical Perspectives on Education (Lec: Francesca Lorenzi)

Our research aims establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and a range Education Studies modules, and not just related to studying 'Assessment' as a subject.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Previous teaching/training experience**

☐ admin role connected to teaching /training

☐ currently full time teacher/trainer

☐ currently part time teacher/trainer

☐ no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)

☐ voluntary experience as teacher/trainer

☐ Other (please specify)

ES402 Assessment Survey 2011 (BET3)

*3. Did you submit Task 1 draft essay?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark (you can tick more than one box)

☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task

☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task

☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received

☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received

☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before

☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve

☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting

☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for

☐ Other (please specify)

5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft;

What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

*7. Were you able to transfer some of the advice received in your draft submission to task2?

All of it More than 50% less than 50% None of it

The amount of feedback used from task 1 to task 2

☐☐☐☐

ES402 Assessment Survey 2011 (BET3)

*8. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree to Some extent	Disagree
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	☐	☐	☐
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	☐	☐	☐
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐

9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

*10. If you did not submit a TASK 1 draft why did you decide not to?

- ☐ Question Does not apply (I did submit Draft 1)
- ☐ Time Pressure (other comittments)
- ☐ I am confident in my performance (I felt I did not need to submit a draft)
- ☐ I prefer to address assessment at the end of a module

*11. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments regarding any of the above (please specify)

ES402 Assessment Survey 2011 (BET3)

*12. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐

*13. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes', please explain how you attitude has changed

14. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Assessment & Feedback methods we used for this Module ES402.

We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing a dialogical framework which was developed by Justin Rami & Francesca Lorenzi over three years during the teaching of modules ES204 and ES222. Your views and opinions sought regarding Assessment were used to help create this model.

This time the focus of this research is on the ASSESSMENT component of Module ES402 Philosophical Perspectives on Education (Lec: Francesca Lorenzi)

Our research aims establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and a range Education Studies modules, and not just related to studying 'Assessment' as a subject.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey'and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Previous teaching/training experience**

☐ admin role connected to teaching /training

☐ currently full time teacher/trainer

☐ currently part time teacher/trainer

☐ no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)

☐ voluntary experience as teacher/trainer

☐ Other (please specify)

***3. Did you submit the formative group essay?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark (you can tick more than one box)

- ☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received
- ☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received
- ☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before
- ☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve
- ☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting
- ☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. If you did submit the formative group essay;

What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

***7. Were you able to transfer some of the advice received in your draft submission to the individual essay?**

All of it More than 50% less than 50% None of it

The amount of feedback used from the formative group essay to the individual essay

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

*8. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree to Some extent	Disagree
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	☐	☐	☐
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	☐	☐	☐
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐
The feedback on the formative essay helped to understand how the assessment criteria are applied	☐	☐	☐
The feedback on the formative task improved my chances to perform well in the final assessment submission	☐	☐	☐
The feedback on the formative task gave me the opportunity to interact more closely with my lecturer	☐	☐	☐

9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

*10. If you did not submit the formative group essay why did you decide not to?

- ☐ Question Does not apply (I did submit Draft 1)
- ☐ Time Pressure (other comittments)
- ☐ I am confident in my performance (I felt I did not need to submit a draft)
- ☐ I prefer to address assessment at the end of a module
- ☐ I was too late to join a group
- ☐ I prefer to work individually

*11. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments regarding any of the above (please specify)

*12. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐

*13. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes', please explain how you attitude has changed

14. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?



ES556 Assessment feedback GDED2 2011

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Assessment & Feedback methods we used for this Module ES402.

We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing a dialogical framework which was developed by Justin Rami & Francesca Lorenzi over three years during the teaching of modules ES204 and ES222. Your views and opinions sought regarding Assessment were used to help create this model.

This time the focus of this research is on the ASSESSMENT component of Module ES402 Philosophical Perspectives on Education (Lec: Francesca Lorenzi)

Our research aims establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and a range Education Studies modules, and not just related to studying 'Assessment' as a subject.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey'and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Previous teaching/training experience**

☐ admin role connected to teaching /training

☐ currently full time teacher/trainer

☐ currently part time teacher/trainer

☐ no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)

☐ voluntary experience as teacher/trainer

☐ Other (please specify)

ES556 Assessment feedback GDED2 2011

*3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree
The assessment format helped me to perform to the best of my ability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment format helped me to engage with the course content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment format encouraged me to reflect on core educational themes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment format allowed me to express my own thinking.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment objectives were well aligned with the module learning outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment helped me to establish a good relationship with the lecturer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark (you can tick more than one box)

- ☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received
- ☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received
- ☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before
- ☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve
- ☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting
- ☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft;

What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

*7. Were you able to transfer some of the advice received in your draft submission to task2?

	All of it	More than 50%	less than 50%	None of it
The amount of feedback used from task 1 to task 2	☐	☐	☐	☐

*8. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree to Some extent
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐

9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

ES556 Assessment feedback GDED2 2011

*10. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments regarding any of the above (please specify)

*11. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

	Strongly Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interacting with my group for task 1 helped me to perform better	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interacting with my group for task 1 helped me to understand the module content better	☐	☐	☐	☐

*12. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes', please explain how you attitude has changed

ES556 Assessment feedback GDED2 2011

13. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?



Assessment Module - Survey : 2011-12 (ES222 ONLY) pre survey

Dear BET2 Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES222 Assessment & Feedback. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011-12 (ES222 ONLY) pre survey

***2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module.**

This way we can match the survey answers from before you take the course to survey answers after you take the course.

If your name is Michael Mahon and you were born on 1st August 1989 you would fill in:

1. Please write your initials here (First Last) MM

2. Please write you birthday here (Day Month Year) 010889

In this example the answer to the next question would be: MM010889 (NOTE: no spaces)

***3. Please select your age category**

- ☐ 18-23
- ☐ 24-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 45+

***4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.**

	Very relaxed	relaxed, very little anxiety	niether relaxed or anxious	a little anxious	anxious	Extrememly anxious
Anxiety level from low to high	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

why do you think this is?

*5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ series of smaller written exams

Why? (please specify)

*6. What is the function of feedback?

*7. When should feedback happen?

*8. Which modes of assessment do your own employees, trainees, students, clients favour?

- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays

Why? (please specify)

***9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?**

- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay

Why? (please specify)

***10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?**

Not at all Not very often sometimes Often Always

Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Explain your choice

***11. How do you feel about the student teacher relationship when it comes to assessment. (pick only the most important choice)**

- ☐ I think there has to be a relationship between the learner and the teacher built on honesty and dialogue
- ☐ The curriculum is more important than the teacher / student relationship
- ☐ I think that if a learner understands the Learning Outcomes then the focus should be on the material not the Teacher
- ☐ I think that the function of assessment is for the teacher to test if we were listen to them during the year
- ☐ I think the purpose of the assessment is for me to see where I can improve

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

Dear ET2 / BET2 Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES204 / ES222 Assessment & Feedback. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

***2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module.**

This way we can match the survey answers from before you take the course to survey answers after you take the course.

If your name is Michael Mahon and you were born on 1st August 1989 you would fill in:

1. Please write your initials here (First Last) MM

2. Please write you birthday here (Day Month Year) 010889

In this example the answer to the next question would be: MM010889 (NOTE: no spaces)

***3. Please select your age category**

- ☐ 18-23
- ☐ 24-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 45+

***4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.**

	Very relaxed	relaxed, very little anxiety	niether relaxed or anxious	a little anxious	anxious	Extrememly anxious
Anxiety level from low to high	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

why do you think this is?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2011 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

*5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ online/computerised exam

Why? (please specify)

*6. What is the function of feedback?

*7. When should feedback happen?

*8. Which modes of assessment do your own employees, trainees, students, clients favour?

- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ Portfolio assessment

Why? (please specify)

***9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?**

- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ group/pair presentation

Why? (please specify)

***10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?**

Not at
all Not
very
often sometimes Often Always

Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Explain your choice

Assessment Module - Survey : 20111-12 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

Dear ET2 Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment method we used for Module ES204 Assessment & Feedback. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module in enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Assessment Module - Survey : 20111-12 (ES204 ONLY) pre survey

***2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module.**

This way we can match the survey answers from before you take the course to survey answers after you take the course.

If your name is Michael Mahon and you were born on 1st August 1989 you would fill in:

1. Please write your initials here (First Last) MM

2. Please write you birthday here (Day Month Year) 010889

In this example the answer to the next question would be: MM010889 (NOTE: no spaces)

***3. Please select your age category**

- ☐ 18-23
- ☐ 24-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 45+

***4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.**

	Very relaxed	relaxed, very little anxiety	niether relaxed or anxious	a little anxious	anxious	Extrememly anxious
Anxiety level from low to high	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

why do you think this is?

*5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ online/computerised exam
- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam

Why? (please specify)

*6. What is the function of feedback?

*7. When should feedback happen?

*8. Which modes of assessment do think most other students or employees might favour?

- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ online/computerised exam

Why? (please specify)

***9. If you were an Assessor / marker what do you think your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark might be?**

- ☐ series of smaller written assignments/essays
- ☐ individual presentation
- ☐ Portfolio assessment
- ☐ practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)
- ☐ series of smaller written exams
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay
- ☐ group/pair presentation
- ☐ end of term/module/unit written exam
- ☐ online/computerised exam

Why? (please specify)

***10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?**

Not at all Not very often sometimes Often Always

Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Explain your choice

***11. How do you feel about the student teacher relationship when it comes to assessment. (pick only the most important choice)**

- ☐ I think there has to be a relationship between the learner and the teacher built on honesty and dialogue
- ☐ The curriculum is more important than the teacher / student relationship
- ☐ I think that if a learner understands the Learning Outcomes then the focus should be on the material not the Teacher
- ☐ I think that the function of assessment is for the teacher to test if we were listen to them during the year
- ☐ I think the purpose of the assessment is for me to see where I can improve

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment method we used for Module ES222 Assessment & Feedback. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module for enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

***1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided.**

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

***2. Please select your age category**

☐ 18-23

☐ 24-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 45+

3. How much experience do you have either designing assessment or assessing student learning?

☐ 10 years + experience

☐ 5 years + experience

☐ less than 5 years experience

☐ Little or no experience

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

4. As a result of completing this module how much more confident are you if you were now asked to design and mark an Assessment?

- ☐ 0- 10% more confident
 ☐ 31-40% more confident
 ☐ 71-80% more confident
☐ 10-15% more confident
 ☐ 41-50% more confident
 ☐ 81-90% more confident
☐ 16-20% more confident
 ☐ 51-60% more confident
 ☐ 91-100% more confident
☐ 21-30% more confident
 ☐ 61-70% more confident
☐ not at all confident

*5. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice.

	Extremely useful	Useful	Not useful	Not useful at all
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

*6. Please rate you level of agreement with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the assessment structure;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was clear about the 3 tasks involved	☐	☐	☐	☐
This type of assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would used staged (portfolio) assessment(s) with my own future students Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development as a potential trainer / teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation how to design assessments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Understanding how to design and mark assessments helps me understand the learning process better	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. feedback varies significantly between markers. How difficult did you find it to receive feedback from another peer, maybe even someone you may know in your class?

- ☐ not difficult at all
- ☐ quite difficult
- ☐ difficult
- ☐ very difficult

9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the feedback task;

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐	☐

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

10. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received from your peer assessor (you can tick more than one box)

- ☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received
- ☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received
- ☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before
- ☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve
- ☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting
- ☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for
- ☐ The feedback I received was not helpful
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*11. How much were you able to transfer some of the advice / feedback received (from your Peer) in your Task 1 to the final Task 3?

- ☐ All of it ☐ More than 50% ☐ Less than 50% ☐ None of it

*12. Express your level of agreement with the following general statements related to assessment;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

***13. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

In what way has your perception or attitude changed?

***14. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES222?**

***15. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES222?**

***16. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?**

***17. What aspect of the this module did you find LEAST useful?**

***18. Do you think this kind of assessment method (experiential, constructivist, dialogical & staged) helps you understand the concept of Assessment better?**

☐ yes

☐ no

19. Do you think there is too much assessment in this module?

☐ yes

☐ no

***20. Are you always aware of the learning outcomes for each module you participate in?**

☐ Yes

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ No

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES222 ONLY) post survey

***21. Are you aware of any trends or developments in Assessment (curriculum reform) in Higher Education in Ireland or the European Union that could help or hinder learning in higher education?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes (please specify)

***22. As a learner studying teaching & training:**

How much would your views or experiences of assessment influence the way you might assess your trainees / students now or in the future?

☐ Influence them a lot

☐ Some influence

☐ Little influence

☐ Not influence them at all

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES204 ONLY) .post survey

Dear Student,

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment method we used for Module ES204 Assessment & Feedback. We would like to get your opinions on the format of the module for enhancing the quality of the learning experience by providing practical experience of key assessment activities.

It aims to establish whether this assessment format is suited to different student groups and whether the response to the assessment activity is influenced by various factors, such as previous learning experiences, professional experience and personal attitudes.

Arrangements will be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

The two researchers are Francesca Lorenzi & Justin Rami from the School of Education Studies.

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES204 ONLY) .post survey

***1. We are asking for your voluntary participation in this research.**

Please read the following information about the project. If you would like to participate, please select the appropriate box below.

Purpose of the project: If you participate, you will be asked to:

Time required for participation: Potential Risks of Study:

Benefits: How confidentiality will be maintained:

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact: Adult Sponsor: _____

Phone/email: _____

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question.

By signing this form I am attesting that I have read and understand the information above and I freely give my consent/assent to participate or permission for my child to participate.

I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers.

I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES204 ONLY) .post survey

*2. Please select your age category

- ☐ 18-23
☐ 24-30
☐ 31-45
☐ 45+

3. How much experience do you have either designing assessment or assessing student learning?

- ☐ 10 years + experience
☐ 5 years + experience
☐ less than 5 years experience
☐ Little or no experience

4. As a result of completing this module how much more confident are you if you were now asked to design and mark an Assessment?

☐ 0- 10% more confident	☐ 31-40% more confident	☐ 71-80% more confident
☐ 10-15% more confident	☐ 41-50% more confident	☐ 81-90% more confident
☐ 16-20% more confident	☐ 51-60% more confident	☐ 91-100% more confident
☐ 21-30% more confident	☐ 61-70% more confident	
☐ not at all confident		

*5. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice.

	Extremely useful	Useful	Not useful	Not useful at all
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES204 ONLY) .post survey

*6. Please rate you level of agreement with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The assessment for this module is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	☐	☐	☐	☐
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the assessment structure;

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was clear about the 3 tasks involved	☐	☐	☐	☐
This type of assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would used staged (portfolio) assessment(s) with my own future students Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development as a potential trainer / teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a better appreciation how to design assessments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Understanding how to design and mark assessments helps me understand the learning process better	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. feedback varies significantly between markers. How difficult did you find it to receive feedback from another peer, maybe even someone you may know in your class?

- ☐ not difficult at all
☐ quite difficult
☐ difficult
☐ very difficult

9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the feedback task;

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. This year we introduced a team mate rating system based upon 5 key areas
Contributing to the team's work,
Interacting with teammates,
Keeping the team on track,
Expecting quality,
Having relevant knowledge skills and abilities

The primary CATME instrument is a behaviorally anchored rating scale, which describes behaviors that are typical of various levels of performance in each of the five categories. Raters select the category of behaviors that most closely matches the actual behavior of each student on their team (including themselves).

This system enabled the group to gain a mark as a whole for Task 2 then this mark was multiplied by the individual peer rating. This allowed each group member to gain a differing task 2 mark based on this process. (I know at times the rating system within CATME was a little too much and some questions irrelevant). But overall how would you rate this concept of encouraging group performance.

- ☐ I think using a team rating system to ensure all members work equally is fair
- ☐ I think using a team rating system to ensure all members work equally is unfair

11. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received from your peer assessor (you can tick more than one box)

- ☐ I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task
- ☐ I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received
- ☐ I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received
- ☐ I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before
- ☐ I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve
- ☐ I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting
- ☐ I felt I did better than I was given credit for
- ☐ The feedback I received was not helpful
- ☐ Other (please specify)

***12. How much were you able to transfer some of the advice / feedback received (from your Peer) in your Task 1 to the final Task 3?**

- ☐ All of it
- ☐ More than 50%
- ☐ Less than 50%
- ☐ None of it

Assessment Module - Survey : 2012 (ES204 ONLY) .post survey

***13. Express your level of agreement with the following general statements related to assessment;**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐

which of these statements would you most agree with?

***14. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

In what way has your perception or attitude changed?

***15. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES204?**

***16. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES204?**

***17. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?**

***18. What aspect of the this module did you find LEAST useful?**

***19. Do you think this kind of assessment method (experiential, constructivist, dialogical & staged) helps you understand the concept of Assessment better?**

☐ yes

☐ no

20. Do you think there is too much assessment in this module?

☐ yes

☐ no

***21. Are you always aware of the learning outcomes for each module you participate in?**

☐ Yes

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ No

***22. Are you aware of any trends or developments in Assessment (curriculum reform) in Higher Education in Ireland or the European Union that could help or hinder learning in higher education?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes (please specify)

***23. As a learner studying teaching & training:**

How much would your views or experiences of assessment influence the way you might assess your trainees / students now or in the future?

☐ Influence them a lot

☐ Some influence

☐ Little influence

☐ Not influence them at all

APPENDIX D.2

CASE STUDY 2: RESULTS

Assessment Module - Survey : 2009-2010

1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided. I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers. I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		98.4%	61
No		1.6%	1
answered question			62
skipped question			0

2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module. This way we can match the survey answers from before you take the course to survey answers after you take the course. If your name is Michael Mahon and you were born on 1st August 1989 you would fill in: 1. Please write your initials here (First Last) MM 2. Please write you birthday here (Day Month Year) 010889 In this example the answer to the next question would be: MM010889 (NOTE: no spaces)

	Response Count
	54
answered question	54
skipped question	8

3. Please select your age category

			Response Percent	Response Count
31-45			9.3%	5
24-30			5.6%	3
18-23			81.5%	44
45+			3.7%	2
			answered question	54
			skipped question	8

4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment learner.

		very little	neither relaxed or anxious	a little anxious	anxious	Extrememly anxious	Rating Average	R
relaxed, Very relaxed anxiety								
Anxiety level from low to high	0.0% (0) 5.8% (3)		9.6% (5)	46.2% (24)	32.7% (17)	5.8% (3)	4.23	

why do you think this is?

answered question
skipped question

5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		15.7%	8
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		19.6%	10
end of term/module/unit written exam		11.8%	6
series of smaller written exams		15.7%	8
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		25.5%	13
series of smaller written assignments/essays		41.2%	21
individual presentation		9.8%	5
group/pair presentation		13.7%	7
online/computerised exam		3.9%	2

Why? (please specify) 42

answered question 51

skipped question 11

6. What is the function of feedback?

Response Count

47

answered question 47

skipped question 15

7. When should feedback happen?

	Response Count
	47
answered question	47
skipped question	15

8. Which modes of assessment do your own employees, trainees, students, clients favour?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		10.6%	5
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		21.3%	10
end of term/module/unit written exam		8.5%	4
series of smaller written exams		6.4%	3
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		31.9%	15
series of smaller written assignments/essays		46.8%	22
individual presentation		6.4%	3
group/pair presentation		31.9%	15
online/computerised exam		2.1%	1
Why? (please specify)			25

answered question	47
skipped question	15

9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		10.6%	5
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		29.8%	14
end of term/module/unit written exam		21.3%	10
series of smaller written exams		31.9%	15
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		17.0%	8
series of smaller written assignments/essays		31.9%	15
individual presentation		10.6%	5
group/pair presentation		12.8%	6
online/computerised exam		2.1%	1

Why? (please specify)

31

answered question

47

skipped question

15

10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

	Not very Not at all often		sometimes	Often	Always	Response Count
Do you find feedback useful / helpful?	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	21.3% (10)	23.4% (11)	55.3% (26)	47

Explain your choice

36

answered question

47

skipped question

15

Page 2, Q2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module.

This way we can match the survey answers from befo...

1	87090	Nov 7, 2011 8:31 PM
2	SB060890	Nov 8, 2010 11:48 AM
3	GB21071987	Oct 21, 2010 1:00 PM
4	DD071161	Oct 18, 2010 6:09 PM
5	LC 210888	Oct 17, 2010 7:49 PM
6	LMG221290	Oct 11, 2010 2:00 PM
7	KOC250391	Oct 9, 2010 11:50 AM
8	ED090266	Oct 7, 2010 8:34 PM
9	COM090891	Oct 6, 2010 11:00 AM
10	COR170988	Oct 6, 2010 10:53 AM
11	JH040185	Oct 5, 2010 9:35 PM
12	MJ 020588	Oct 5, 2010 4:41 PM
13	KC19101990	Oct 5, 2010 11:18 AM
14	SF211089	Oct 5, 2010 9:03 AM
15	BR191091	Oct 4, 2010 9:44 PM
16	ED090266	Oct 4, 2010 6:32 PM
17	RQ02031990	Oct 4, 2010 5:23 PM
18	LA070489	Oct 4, 2010 4:49 PM
19	NP110688	Oct 4, 2010 3:20 PM
20	AB251089	Oct 4, 2010 3:12 PM
21	MD090565	Oct 4, 2010 2:11 PM
22	EC091090	Oct 4, 2010 1:32 PM
23	ET290492	Oct 4, 2010 1:12 PM
24	LR160591	Oct 4, 2010 12:38 PM
25	SF030891	Oct 4, 2010 12:16 PM
26	SM110291	Oct 4, 2010 12:03 PM
27	BMCE25121989	Oct 4, 2010 11:25 AM
28	KS220492	Oct 4, 2010 11:18 AM

Page 2, Q2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth. This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you to complete at the end of the module.

This way we can match the survey answers from before...

29	LM130191	Oct 4, 2010 11:18 AM
30	AF040689	Oct 4, 2010 10:37 AM
31	SF14091988	Oct 4, 2010 10:36 AM
32	CMO	Oct 4, 2010 10:34 AM
33	AOF 111091	Oct 4, 2010 10:32 AM
34	sw05101988	Oct 4, 2010 8:25 AM
35	SMG300382	Oct 4, 2010 12:17 AM
36	CK 100990	Oct 2, 2010 1:48 PM
37	EC250590	Oct 1, 2010 6:47 PM
38	SF051190	Oct 1, 2010 3:56 PM
39	AD01051991	Oct 1, 2010 8:34 AM
40	UA080889	Sep 30, 2010 12:01 PM
41	SM161190	Sep 30, 2010 10:07 AM
42	LD220690	Sep 29, 2010 8:04 PM
43	ED090266	Sep 29, 2010 7:34 PM
44	DC190273	Sep 29, 2010 2:16 PM
45	RF220687	Sep 29, 2010 1:37 PM
46	DB031087	Sep 29, 2010 10:20 AM
47	GK040391	Sep 28, 2010 8:56 PM
48	MM251290	Sep 28, 2010 6:48 PM
49	SB06081990	Sep 28, 2010 6:19 PM
50	SM180589	Sep 28, 2010 11:52 AM
51	SM220191	Sep 27, 2010 7:09 PM
52	LB 260589	Sep 27, 2010 6:07 PM
53	c	Sep 27, 2010 3:55 PM
54	ID201190	Sep 27, 2010 3:10 PM

Page 3, Q4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.

1	Just because i associate assessment with assignments. With an exam you really know whether what your writting is right or wrong whereas with an assignment you can think your on the right track but its completly wrong.	Nov 8, 2010 11:50 AM
2	Relaxed until close to the assessment time when i can become quite anxious.	Oct 21, 2010 1:01 PM
3	I like participating	Oct 18, 2010 6:10 PM
4	Because I hate the thought of doing badly and also the pressure to study correctly.	Oct 17, 2010 7:50 PM
5	I would be anxious of conveying my knowledge across to the lecturer in a the correct way and also anxious in case of a blank.	Oct 11, 2010 2:01 PM
6	Just get worried about how well I'm going to do.	Oct 9, 2010 11:50 AM
7	As I have no previous experience in the field of assessment, I feel a little anxious that I fairly and justly assess my fellow student's work by using the correct vocabulary. This anxiety also exists as I am aware that my own personal assessment will also be assessed in due course.	Oct 7, 2010 8:44 PM
8	I think this is because your expected to do well from people such as peers and parents and if you are weak at things sometimes you can get slagged over it from peers.This will put your confidence down and then your mind is not set on what you can achieve	Oct 6, 2010 11:02 AM
9	I always leave it until the last minute to complete it.	Oct 6, 2010 10:57 AM
10	trying to fit either study or writing an assignment into an already hectic schedule, pressure leading to anxiety	Oct 5, 2010 9:38 PM
11	Just because it's an assignment and they are being graded	Oct 5, 2010 4:42 PM
12	I think this because I feel that my future depends on each grade in each subject in some way. Certain assessments make me more anxious i.e exams, because they are just a one-time thing to get right.	Oct 5, 2010 11:20 AM
13	i think because im just relaxed person	Oct 4, 2010 9:45 PM
14	I fear doing things wrong and being on the wrong track and that my work wouldnt be good enough	Oct 4, 2010 5:24 PM
15	i feel anxious at the thoughts off assessment because I worry about how I will do, what result I will get, and about failing the assessment	Oct 4, 2010 4:51 PM
16	Just built up from being nervous in school taking exams.	Oct 4, 2010 4:42 PM
17	Fear of not meeting a deadline.	Oct 4, 2010 3:22 PM
18	It depends on the type of assessment. Exams are the worst, but you know that you have to know what you've been thought. I'd go as far as answer extremely anxious for them. Assignments give you a lot more time to work but the research is down to yourself and sometimes you're not sure if everything you are using is relevant. I find that the anxious part about them.	Oct 4, 2010 3:14 PM
19	Its not that I havent worked or studied. Its just whether my answers are the	Oct 4, 2010 2:12 PM

Page 3, Q4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.

	ones the lecturer is looking for.	
20	Afraid of not doing the task right therefore results will not be sufficient.	Oct 4, 2010 1:35 PM
21	I like to get assesments done early and have them out of the way so when I first recieve an assignment, I get quite stressed until it is done and I can relax :)	Oct 4, 2010 1:13 PM
22	I feel I do suffer from this because I get nervous when I am doing assignments in case I make mistakes, I also feel I think too much into assignments , where I should try to relax.	Oct 4, 2010 12:20 PM
23	At times I may get a little anxious about assessments in case I do not them to the correct standard or if I may not do the right thing. I may worry a little about failing and having repeats.	Oct 4, 2010 11:27 AM
24	It's probably because I don't know whether I'm putting in the right information and in the correct way.	Oct 4, 2010 11:20 AM
25	Anxious to complete the assignment in time and I mostly feel anxious about getting started and finding materials to assist me.	Oct 4, 2010 10:38 AM
26	not understanding clearly what has to be done and not being confident enough to ask questions in class which is really stupid.	Oct 4, 2010 10:35 AM
27	too much work!	Oct 4, 2010 8:26 AM
28	Just thinking that you might not understand what the assignment is about or that you might fail	Oct 2, 2010 1:49 PM
29	I think I get anxious before doing an assessment because I get worried that I won't be able to remember information on the spot and in a formal exam setting therefore not performing well.	Oct 1, 2010 6:53 PM
30	Anxious about failing or not meeting specific criteria, therefore not being able to advance to the next level.	Oct 1, 2010 8:39 AM
31	Trying to make sure the word count and content is correct without any plagiarism.	Sep 30, 2010 10:08 AM
32	Personally I find it extremely hard and stressfull learing an abundance of information which has to be recalled in such a short space of time.everything that happens within that "exam time"is what you are judged on there is no time for corrections or improvments ,and the thought of failing and not being able to move on contributes extremely to my anxiety.	Sep 29, 2010 8:14 PM
33	I currently have no experience in this field and therefore feel a little anxious with regard to assessing another student's work. I believe that assessment must be honest and fair and should also include the use of constructive criticism (should this be deemed necessary) with the intention to help the student to learn however, I also feel somewhat anxious that I endeavour to use the correct vocabulary within my assessment in order to avoid unnecessary or negative criticism.	Sep 29, 2010 8:01 PM
34	The word assessment makes me think it will be on-going. I prefer assessment in this way. On the other hand a one off exam can make me feel quite nervous.	Sep 29, 2010 2:19 PM

Page 3, Q4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.

35	I feel it depends in the assessment, if it was an exam I would have alot of anxiety as I find exam situations hard to cope with. Personally when I have to work on a C/A im more relaxed as I cope better with this type of assessment	Sep 29, 2010 1:39 PM
36	I feel everyone gets a little anxious regardless of the circumstances.	Sep 29, 2010 10:21 AM
37	BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK IT IS A FORMAL EXAM AND EVERYBODYS FIRST REACTIONTO AN EXAM IS ANXIOUS OR NERVOUS.	Sep 28, 2010 8:56 PM
38	Because I have failed an exam before and it caused a lot of hassle financially and personally. On a more general view because of expectations and pressure from myself and parents. Also I have a bad memory and can get mental blocks for even the simplest of exam question that has a knock- on effect to my confidence and frustrates me.	Sep 28, 2010 11:55 AM
39	I feel anxious that I wont perform as wel as i can.	Sep 27, 2010 7:10 PM
40	Sometimes i over-think the task at hand and convince myself it is harder than it really is.	Sep 27, 2010 3:15 PM

Page 4, Q5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

1	I think once you put the study in to an exam you will do well, whereas you can put loads of work in to an assignment and still not do so well. I think this reflects on my past results from exams and assignments	Nov 8, 2010 11:51 AM
2	whole result is not reliant on one single written exam. less anxiety	Oct 21, 2010 1:02 PM
3	I like live feedback	Oct 18, 2010 6:12 PM
4	I prefer what I am learning to be broken down and it takes some of the pressure off myself.	Oct 17, 2010 7:51 PM
5	I find it easier to not have a large amount of pressure on one day and would rather break up assessment into a long term basis as it promotes learning for long term instead of just cramming a week before the exam/assignment.	Oct 11, 2010 2:04 PM
6	Ongoing assessment gives you the time to do it and you don't get as nervous with it like you do with exams.	Oct 9, 2010 11:52 AM
7	I enjoy the challenge involved in compiling a well composed assignment/essay and although a due date is necessary for completion, I feel that being given a reasonable timescale in order to complete my assignment/essay also allows the opportunity to use any previous knowledge gained to the best of my ability.	Oct 7, 2010 8:45 PM
8	because you don't have to put everything you know in to one thing, instead it is more continuous and more accurate in where your good and bad at and helps the learner improve specifically in what they are weak at	Oct 6, 2010 11:03 AM
9	catalogues work, on-going, reflective so easier to remember material discussed/learned	Oct 5, 2010 9:40 PM
10	I just find exams easier and I am used to doing in exams from secondary school	Oct 5, 2010 4:43 PM
11	The constant and consistent smaller chunks of work help me to understand the subject better by being assessed in each area of the module.	Oct 5, 2010 11:22 AM
12	I like to work with people	Oct 4, 2010 9:46 PM
13	i find with assignment i have more time to research and get my head around doing it as oppose to an exam	Oct 4, 2010 5:27 PM
14	I prefer group or pair work as I feel it helps me learn more and learn from the other person, I also don't mind written essays or assignments as long as the brief is clear and you have a good amount of time to complete it	Oct 4, 2010 4:54 PM
15	I think when doing an exam you know the answer your writing is either right or wrong, you know what you have learnt. Whereas when you do an assignment, you don't exactly know what your writing is correct and it's easier to go off the point.	Oct 4, 2010 4:44 PM
16	Easy to prepare for.	Oct 4, 2010 3:22 PM
17	The smaller assignments means you can do bad and not have to worry a whole lot. The lost marks can be made up later. The group/Pair presentation is because it lightens the work load. There is still the pressure of the assessment but the stress is distributed among people involved. I believe this is better if you can pick your group/partners because being stuck with	Oct 4, 2010 3:17 PM

Page 4, Q5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

	someone you don't know is annoying if they turn out to be a lazy/bad worker.	
18	Because I like writing, and I can probably express myself better this way	Oct 4, 2010 2:13 PM
19	Find it is easier to compile information from the year.	Oct 4, 2010 1:42 PM
20	I find them less stressful and easy to prepare for. All you have to do is study on your own.	Oct 4, 2010 1:13 PM
21	I think putting the skills I am learning into practice helps me, and continuous assignments I prefer as they don't give me as much stress as a final exam would.	Oct 4, 2010 12:24 PM
22	I feel more relaxed when being assessed on an assignment/ essay .	Oct 4, 2010 12:04 PM
23	I rather practice based assessments for some modules as I feel it shows your true ability and understanding of a subject but I also think that an end of term assignment benefits students too as they have plenty of time to do research for a topic.	Oct 4, 2010 11:31 AM
24	Because I don't have to learn everything off like I would have to do in an exam, and all of my information would be in front of me to incorporate into my essay. Also, I would be able to ask my lecturer throughout the term on any parts of the essay that I didn't understand.	Oct 4, 2010 11:25 AM
25	Less pressure working at your own pace easier to prepare for	Oct 4, 2010 10:40 AM
26	I like to see the progression of work and information build up as the course progresses and how much I have learned from the course.	Oct 4, 2010 10:37 AM
27	get it over and done with in one exam	Oct 4, 2010 8:27 AM
28	less pressure	Oct 4, 2010 12:18 AM
29	because it is continuous and not one big assignment/essay at the end	Oct 2, 2010 1:50 PM
30	I prefer to be assessed by written assignment or essay because all the information is on hand with books, online articles etc. It allows me to give my own opinions and form a point of view on the topic. I like having time which means if I'm having a bad day it won't mean that I fail.	Oct 1, 2010 7:08 PM
31	I chose these two as I believe it would be easier to be tested as we go along, it may also help with studying i.e. we would only have to study certain parts at certain times rather than trying to cram everything in at the end and remember it all	Oct 1, 2010 3:58 PM
32	Project based assessments allow a more hands on practical approach.	Oct 1, 2010 8:45 AM
33	It gives you more of an opportunity to express your point.	Sep 30, 2010 10:09 AM
34	allows me to demonstrate various types of skills,	Sep 29, 2010 8:47 PM
35	I enjoy the challenge involved in compiling a well composed assignment/essay and although a due date is necessary for completion, I feel that being given a reasonable timescale in order to complete my assignment/essay also allows me the opportunity to use any previous knowledge gained to the best of my ability.	Sep 29, 2010 8:33 PM

Page 4, Q5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

36	I'm a very practical person and kinesthetic learner..	Sep 29, 2010 2:21 PM
37	Im a practical learner I like to visualise content on graphs etc and then interpret them my own way wether that be true designing a poster or presenting a powerpoint....	Sep 29, 2010 1:41 PM
38	More time is given and can be done continuously.	Sep 29, 2010 10:21 AM
39	I JUST FEEL ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN AT THE END OF THE YEAR FOR AN EXAM, SICK NERVOUS ETC. SERIES OF ASSIGNMENTS ETC GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO ALSO RELECT ON FIRST ONE AND BENEFIT YOU FOR YOUR NEXT ONE.	Sep 28, 2010 8:59 PM
40	It would make the assessment more personal and approachable mentally as opposed to just conforming to cramming loads of information and then reproducing it in both exam questions and essay questions.	Sep 28, 2010 11:57 AM
41	Because I prefere CA in writing which I can prepare, look over and redraft as opose to one day exams/practical which can go wrong.	Sep 27, 2010 7:13 PM
42	Accumulating resources and information during the module and finalizing it at the end allows for a satisfactory completion and summary	Sep 27, 2010 3:16 PM

Page 5, Q6. What is the function of feedback?

1	To provide you with an explanation, of areas you are doing well in and areas that have room for improvement	Nov 8, 2010 11:52 AM
2	to show the learner what they are doing right and what they may need to work more on, so they know where they stand	Oct 21, 2010 1:03 PM
3	To create a communication loop	Oct 18, 2010 6:15 PM
4	For a student to see what they are doing right and wrong. A student can develop their confidence as a person and also it gives them the chance to improve their abilities.	Oct 17, 2010 7:53 PM
5	It allows an insight into where the learner is going wrong and also where the teacher is wrong.	Oct 11, 2010 2:07 PM
6	To let you know if you're doing your work well or not.	Oct 9, 2010 11:52 AM
7	In my opinion, feedback can be negative or positive and ultimately it's function is to help us learn and grow. On one hand feedback should allow the opportunity to learn from our mistakes while on the other hand it can be used to further develop what has already been done well.	Oct 7, 2010 8:56 PM
8	To help the learner improve what they aren't strong at and lets them know how they are getting on with work	Oct 6, 2010 11:05 AM
9	To help us as a learner recognise our strengths and weaknesses.	Oct 6, 2010 11:00 AM
10	feedback is an explanation of why a person attains a certain result. if a student does not understand why they got a certain result they ask for an explanation- feedback	Oct 5, 2010 9:42 PM
11	To know if what you are teaching is getting to your student and making sure they are learning.	Oct 5, 2010 4:45 PM
12	It lets us, as teachers/trainers, know what the students know, it lets other students know what they know. It forms a basis for assessment alterations if needed. We know the students thoughts and feelings about the subject. We can make changes to our teaching/training based on feedback.	Oct 5, 2010 11:26 AM
13	The function of feedback is for the purpose of reflection for both the student and the teacher/trainer. It is to reflect on what has been covered and how it can be improved.	Oct 5, 2010 9:08 AM
14	to give teachers and learners way of improving their work	Oct 4, 2010 9:46 PM
15	feedback is to let the teacher know that what they are teaching is both effective and working well. it can also be used for students.	Oct 4, 2010 5:30 PM
16	to help the learner see where and how they went wrong or did well.	Oct 4, 2010 4:55 PM
17	To find out what you are doing right, what you need help with? Also for the lecturer to find out if their aims and outcomes are being achieved.	Oct 4, 2010 4:46 PM
18	Help the learner in the process of learning. Highlight his achievements and errors throughout the process of learning.	Oct 4, 2010 3:25 PM
19	feed back is important to see where you went wrong and what you can do to improve it for the future	Oct 4, 2010 2:15 PM

Page 5, Q6. What is the function of feedback?

20	To let you know if the assesment has been successful or not yet also other components of the module.	Oct 4, 2010 1:43 PM
21	To see how the students felt about a particular course or subject.	Oct 4, 2010 1:14 PM
22	To inform the learner about what they did wrong in an exam/assignment etc.	Oct 4, 2010 12:42 PM
23	I feel the function of feedback is to let students see how they got on in an assignment , where they went wrong and also where they got on well.	Oct 4, 2010 12:34 PM
24	To inform the student/teacher where they are going wrong and what their doing right.	Oct 4, 2010 12:06 PM
25	Feedback enables people to know what went well or what went poorly in a certain topic. Feedback can give both positive and negative criticism and can provide the person with different ways to produce a solution to the problem.	Oct 4, 2010 11:36 AM
26	To allow both the teacher and student to identify different elements of the class which may need to be improved on and how much the learners were able to learn.	Oct 4, 2010 11:27 AM
27	To see what students have gained from a particular lesson. It gives Students and teachers a chance to see where more work may be needed on a particular subject.	Oct 4, 2010 11:21 AM
28	To tell you were you going wrong or what your doing right.	Oct 4, 2010 10:50 AM
29	To guide students through mistakes they may have made throughout the module.	Oct 4, 2010 10:38 AM
30	to provide motivation, more knowledge, progress on how a learner is doing and to help improve a course and see what works and what does not work.	Oct 4, 2010 10:38 AM
31	To provide a sence of direction for student/teacher in terms of improvement.	Oct 4, 2010 10:35 AM
32	to find out the areas that you lost marks or the area that you did well	Oct 4, 2010 8:27 AM
33	to point out areas that need improvement and help the student do the best they can	Oct 4, 2010 12:21 AM
34	To find out how you did in you assignment	Oct 2, 2010 1:50 PM
35	To improve on your weakness.	Oct 1, 2010 7:20 PM
36	I believe feedback is important to see if the learner is understanding what they are learning and it gives them a chance to ask any questions they have	Oct 1, 2010 4:01 PM
37	To give the students an understanding of where they went wrong and where they have done well.	Oct 1, 2010 8:49 AM
38	To point out were a student went wrong in an assessmet and how they can improve on those faults for future assessments.	Sep 30, 2010 12:05 PM
39	The idea of feedback is to give you the opportunity to find out from a lecturer where one is going wrong in an exam or assignment or where the good points of the exam or assignment are.	Sep 30, 2010 10:11 AM

Page 5, Q6. What is the function of feedback?

40	feedback allows students to identify there personal strengths and weaknesses.it can be used as a form of improving and developing for each individual student.it is crucial for students to identify what areas they are developing and what areas need to be worked on ,in order to prevent repition of "downfalls".	Sep 29, 2010 8:47 PM
41	helps build some rapport with lecturer's. gives students knowledge of where they made mistakes.	Sep 29, 2010 2:23 PM
42	To give the learner positive and negative points about their work. If they are going wrong feedback can help the learner fix their mistakes and steer them back on the correct path	Sep 29, 2010 1:43 PM
43	Feedback can allow you to improve on certain things.	Sep 29, 2010 10:23 AM
44 ETC..	TO FIND OUT WHAT WENT WRONG, WHAT YOU COULD CHANGE	Sep 28, 2010 9:00 PM
45	To gain knowlege of the knowlege you have and what standard it is and how well you portray what you know and to find out how to better yourself in certain areas and progress.	Sep 28, 2010 12:00 PM
46	To see where your going wrong, what you can improve on and where you want to go.	Sep 27, 2010 7:16 PM
47	so the instructor can assess what the learner has learned and what part of the session may need to be rectified or changed.	Sep 27, 2010 3:18 PM

Page 5, Q7. When should feedback happen?

1	All throughout the year, not just at the end. therefore you know what you need to work on before the exam comes	Nov 8, 2010 11:52 AM
2	after the assessment	Oct 21, 2010 1:03 PM
3	Continually	Oct 18, 2010 6:15 PM
4	At the end of each assessment.	Oct 17, 2010 7:53 PM
5	feedback should commence after a subject has been taught.	Oct 11, 2010 2:07 PM
6	After an assesment or exam.	Oct 9, 2010 11:52 AM
7	In my opinion, feedback should preferably happen at the appropriate time. Feedback, where possible, should happen regularly throughout the term, thus allowing the student to learn and grow on an ongoing basis.	Oct 7, 2010 8:56 PM
8	very reguraly every 2-3 weeks in my opinion	Oct 6, 2010 11:05 AM
9	After any written assessment,or practical assessment.	Oct 6, 2010 11:00 AM
10	if assessment is formative then so should feedback be on going to improve future assessment	Oct 5, 2010 9:42 PM
11	In class and maybe on a feedback sheet so everyone knows how they've done individually	Oct 5, 2010 4:45 PM
12	On a regular basis. If a module consists of 5 classes a week, then feedback should be given at the end of the week. Like our module now, feedback should happen at the end of the month, every month.	Oct 5, 2010 11:26 AM
13	So the student is aware of the level they are at now and the level they need to be at in the future.	Oct 5, 2010 9:08 AM
14	after any form of assessment	Oct 4, 2010 9:46 PM
15	perhaps at the end of a teaching session or term	Oct 4, 2010 5:30 PM
16	i think it should happen 2 or 3 times during the course, not just at the end	Oct 4, 2010 4:55 PM
17	All throughout the year, to make sure you are gaining a good understanding of the course and are on the right track.	Oct 4, 2010 4:46 PM
18	As often as possible. Never leave it until the end of the course of study.	Oct 4, 2010 3:25 PM
19	I think it should be ongoing	Oct 4, 2010 2:15 PM
20	It should happen beofre and after as tehrefore you can see which areas need improvement and which were successful.	Oct 4, 2010 1:43 PM
21	I think it should happen at the end of a module.	Oct 4, 2010 1:14 PM
22	straight after the assessment has been marked	Oct 4, 2010 12:42 PM
23	I think feedback shouldn't only happen after an assignment or exam. I feel students should be able to meet a lecturer for feedback of the course overall just before submission date. This could help students finish up their assignments and give them more confidence in their assignments.	Oct 4, 2010 12:34 PM

24	Because they feel more secure with two people.	Sep 27, 2010 7:18 PM
25	im not sure	Sep 27, 2010 3:19 PM

Page 5, Q7. When should feedback happen?

24	after grading assessment.	Oct 4, 2010 12:06 PM
25	Feedback should happen at the end of a certain topic.	Oct 4, 2010 11:36 AM

26	During and after each lecture	Oct 4, 2010 11:27 AM
27	At the end of a lesson.	Oct 4, 2010 11:21 AM
28	After a draught so that you can utilise it for the final project.	Oct 4, 2010 10:50 AM
29	After an assessment.	Oct 4, 2010 10:38 AM
30	at regular intervals and appropriate times in a course.	Oct 4, 2010 10:38 AM
31	To motivate for improvement, to ensure mistakes are not repeated.	Oct 4, 2010 10:35 AM
32	after the results come out and when its relevant	Oct 4, 2010 8:27 AM
33	after any assignment/exam	Oct 4, 2010 12:21 AM
34	To help the learner become better	Oct 2, 2010 1:50 PM
35	All along.	Oct 1, 2010 7:20 PM
36	I would like feedback maybe once a month, just a few minutes at the end of a class could clear up a lot of problems and answer questions	Oct 1, 2010 4:01 PM
37	Throughout the assessment process. Not just when the results are out.	Oct 1, 2010 8:49 AM
38	Directly after results are given	Sep 30, 2010 12:05 PM
39	Feedback should happen after any work is handed up.	Sep 30, 2010 10:11 AM
40	continuosly.after every assesment.	Sep 29, 2010 8:47 PM
41	after assessments	Sep 29, 2010 2:23 PM
42	I feel depending on the assessment that it should happen throughout the module and not ust at the end as I feel its really to late by then. Good example Micrteaching Bad example Psychology	Sep 29, 2010 1:43 PM
43	It should happen from start to finish of a module.	Sep 29, 2010 10:23 AM
44	AFTER AN ASSIGNMENT/EXAM/ESSAY.	Sep 28, 2010 9:00 PM
45	As early as possible, after all assessments at the appropriate time for both student and teacher.	Sep 28, 2010 12:00 PM
46	Feedback should happen after every session/lesson through questioning and student reaction therefore reflecting and try to improve further lessons.	Sep 27, 2010 7:16 PM
47	After each bout of learning therefore there is something to give feedback on.	Sep 27, 2010 3:18 PM

Page 7, Q9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?

1	I think I would enjoy marking most assesments, it would be good to have a few different types, just to have different experiences for the learner	Nov 8, 2010 11:54 AM
2	written exam has right and wrong answers, clearer to mark. and skills, there is little ambiguity	Oct 21, 2010 1:05 PM
3	Entertainment	Oct 18, 2010 6:21 PM
4	it would help you to know if students had a grasp on the subject as opposed to them failing an end of year exam when as an educator you didnt know they were struggling.	Oct 11, 2010 2:10 PM
5	Easier to mark.	Oct 9, 2010 11:53 AM
6	Personally, I feel that by leaving the assessment until the end of term, the student has been given the opportunity to compile their assignment/essay in a reasonable timescale. I also feel that by assessing written work, the marker has the opportunity to 'see' if the student has progressed by comparison to previous submissions.	Oct 7, 2010 9:19 PM
7	it is easier to know what level of education a person is at and what they need to improve on to have and overall strong level of education	Oct 6, 2010 11:08 AM
8	It is easier to mark what a student has learned by showing you rather than writing what they have learned,as not everyone is academic.	Oct 6, 2010 11:05 AM
9	dont understand question im not a marker????	Oct 5, 2010 9:46 PM
10	I believe that the best way to learn is to teach or demonstrate a skill. I like the students to be practical in their learning	Oct 5, 2010 11:30 AM
11	easier to follow	Oct 4, 2010 9:48 PM
12	i feel it would be easier to mark and correct	Oct 4, 2010 5:31 PM
13	I think it would be easier to mark exams, as they have a right and wrong answer, wheras assignments can be interpreted in many different ways	Oct 4, 2010 4:48 PM
14	Manageable amount of work to mark each time, where proper feedback can be given to each student.	Oct 4, 2010 3:30 PM
15 out	there is more variety, and in the group situation people can help each other	Oct 4, 2010 2:17 PM
16	Easier to follow a marking scheme and give marks where necessary.	Oct 4, 2010 1:45 PM
17	Easy to correct and organised.	Oct 4, 2010 1:16 PM
18	I feel Id get to know the student through their series of assignments what they are good at and where their downfall is, it would also be easier to give them that feedback	Oct 4, 2010 12:38 PM
19	I can help them improve for their next assignment/essay.	Oct 4, 2010 12:09 PM
20	Less time to correct, easier to grade in terms of straight forward right or wrong answers.	Oct 4, 2010 10:57 AM
21	because i can see if a learner can do what it is they have been taught	Oct 4, 2010 10:40 AM

Page 7, Q9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?

22	it will determine the exact are of knowledge the student knows	Oct 4, 2010 8:30 AM
23	If i was marking work, I would prefer to use a pair presentation or a series of smaller written exams. The reason for this is because i feel a pair/group presentation would give me a sense of each persons personality and also allow them to bouce ideas off each other and come up with some really great results. With a series of smaller written exams I get to see a students progession or where they may be struggling, also it wouldnt be just one exam where personal issues may be effecting the student. So a series of exams would paint a clearer picture of who they really are.	Oct 1, 2010 7:50 PM
24	A series of assessments rather than a single assessment allows the assessor to see the students progress over a period of time.	Oct 1, 2010 8:54 AM
25	I find in an exam the answers are ether right or wrong.	Sep 30, 2010 10:14 AM
26	spread the work out	Sep 29, 2010 2:25 PM
27	As I love these types of assessments I would be more inclined to assess these types of assessments over an exam	Sep 29, 2010 1:47 PM
28	LESS PRESSURE ON THE STUDENTS AND CAN BENEFIT FROM EACH ASPECT.	Sep 28, 2010 9:02 PM
29	More view on the progress of the person under less stress	Sep 28, 2010 12:04 PM
30	Because a marking scheme could be easier follow than a presentation/practical.For example fact= mark.	Sep 27, 2010 7:20 PM
31	My choices allow for a variety of methods which may meet the needs of different students who excell at different levels	Sep 27, 2010 3:22 PM

Page 7, Q10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

1	Its mostly helpful, when its constructive. But if it is putting your work down and nothing helpful with it, it may make u resent the subject and not want to put the work in anymore	Nov 8, 2010 11:54 AM
2	of course, gives me a clearer view on what my strong and weak points are	Oct 21, 2010 1:05 PM
3	keeps one on task	Oct 18, 2010 6:21 PM
4	it helps you to know where your going wrong and where to improve.	Oct 11, 2010 2:10 PM
5	I am happy to accept and learn from my mistakes in the form of constructive criticism, while I also feel pleased and encouraged with my efforts when feedback is positive.	Oct 7, 2010 9:19 PM
6	it helps that it sets a target for the next time such as i need to improve maths grade because i only got 50 in that and i got 75% in my other subjects	Oct 6, 2010 11:08 AM
7	I understand what my weaknesses are and can learn to correct them.	Oct 6, 2010 11:05 AM
8	for greater insights	Oct 5, 2010 9:46 PM
9	It is very helpful to me because, from it, I know how the students felt about my teaching, the subject content and the way it is assessed	Oct 5, 2010 11:30 AM
10	it helps me to know were i lost and gained makrs	Oct 4, 2010 9:48 PM
11	i think feedback is always usful as it can help the student see areas they may need to work further on	Oct 4, 2010 9:16 PM
12	i find it puts u on the right track whether it is positive or negative	Oct 4, 2010 5:31 PM
13	feedback can be very helpfull if it good and clear feedback and explains how you can do better the next time	Oct 4, 2010 4:57 PM
14	Most of the time it is extremly useful, but sometimes if its bad feedback it can be quite disheartening.	Oct 4, 2010 4:48 PM
15	Feedback is essential.	Oct 4, 2010 3:30 PM
16	only if I can see where I went wrong	Oct 4, 2010 2:17 PM
17	Sometimes as not all modules,subjects etc are rewarding.	Oct 4, 2010 1:45 PM
18	You then know what the students feel and what they want to change and that can help you decide on how to make the course better etc.	Oct 4, 2010 1:16 PM
19	it gives the students an understanding of how they are getting on	Oct 4, 2010 12:38 PM
20	It helps for the next assignment as you know what to change.	Oct 4, 2010 12:09 PM
21	I think that feedback tells me what i did well and what I need to improve on for the next time. I am constantly learning from feedback.	Oct 4, 2010 11:39 AM
22	only when it is constructive	Oct 4, 2010 10:57 AM
23	Helps you see where you went wrong,trainer able to go over your presentation/exam with you and point out mistakes.	Oct 4, 2010 10:49 AM

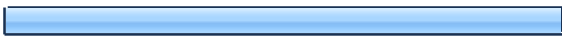
Page 7, Q10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

24	it depends on the teacher from feedback	Oct 4, 2010 8:30 AM
25	helps students get the most from their course	Oct 4, 2010 12:24 AM
26	Almost always, however the timing of feedback is crucial.	Oct 1, 2010 7:50 PM
27	Feedback allows me to find out where I went wrong.	Oct 1, 2010 8:54 AM
28	From feedback you can take the advice given and apply it to your next assignment or exam.	Sep 30, 2010 10:14 AM
29	I have never being given feedback which i havent learnt from,it helps me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and build upon them,	Sep 29, 2010 8:48 PM
30	its good to find out what to lost makes on	Sep 29, 2010 2:25 PM
31	I wish I had of had feedback on some of my essays last year as I feel I could have made my C/A essays more academic	Sep 29, 2010 1:47 PM
32	Allows the person to take on board valid points and improve.	Sep 29, 2010 10:24 AM
33	IT TELLS YOU WHERE YOU HAVE GONE WRONG AND WHAT TO CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE.	Sep 28, 2010 9:02 PM
34	often the person wont convey what they feel coherently or they will often just say what went wrong and not how things should progress but often people will portray themselves well	Sep 28, 2010 12:04 PM
35	When its constructive because you see where your going wrong and where you can improve	Sep 27, 2010 7:20 PM
36	Yes it allows you to evaluate what you need to change in a session and what you might take or add to or from the lesson	Sep 27, 2010 3:22 PM

Assessment Module - Survey : 2009-2010

pre survey

1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey' and understand the information provided. I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers. I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		90.0%	9
No		10.0%	1
answered question			10
skipped question			0

2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module. This way we can match the survey answers from before you take the course to survey answers after you take the course. If your name is Michael Mahon and you were born on 1st August 1989 you would fill in: 1. Please write your initials here (First Last) MM 2. Please write you birthday here (Day Month Year) 010889 In this example the answer to the next question would be: MM010889 (NOTE: no spaces)

	Response Count
	7
answered question	7
skipped question	3

3. Please select your age category

		Response Percent	Response Count
31-45		42.9%	3
24-30		14.3%	1
18-23		0.0%	0
45+		42.9%	3
answered question			7
skipped question			3

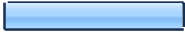
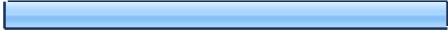
4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment learner.

relaxed, Very relaxed anxiety		very little	niether relaxed or anxious	a little anxious	anxious	Extrememly anxious	Rating Average	R
Anxiety level from low to high	0.0% 0.0% (0) (0)	42.9% (3)		14.3% (1)	42.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.57	

why do you think this is?

answered question
skipped question

5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		0.0%	0
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		28.6%	2
end of term/module/unit written exam		28.6%	2
series of smaller written exams		14.3%	1
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		28.6%	2
series of smaller written assignments/essays		71.4%	5
individual presentation		14.3%	1
group/pair presentation		0.0%	0
online/computerised exam		0.0%	0

Why? (please specify) 7

answered question 7

skipped question 3

6. What is the function of feedback?

	Response Count
	7
answered question	7
skipped question	3

7. When should feedback happen?

	Response Count
	7
answered question	7
skipped question	3

8. Which modes of assessment do your own employees, trainees, students, clients favour?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		28.6%	2
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		42.9%	3
end of term/module/unit written exam		0.0%	0
series of smaller written exams		0.0%	0
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		0.0%	0
series of smaller written assignments/essays		14.3%	1
individual presentation		0.0%	0
group/pair presentation		28.6%	2
online/computerised exam		28.6%	2
Why? (please specify)			5
answered question			7
skipped question			3

9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Portfolio assessment		14.3%	1
practice based assessment (Skills demonstration)		42.9%	3
end of term/module/unit written exam		0.0%	0
series of smaller written exams		0.0%	0
end of term/module/unit written assignment/essay		28.6%	2
series of smaller written assignments/essays		28.6%	2
individual presentation		14.3%	1
group/pair presentation		0.0%	0
online/computerised exam		14.3%	1

Why? (please specify) 6

answered question 7

skipped question 3

10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

	Not very Not at all often		sometimes	Often	Always	Response Count
Do you find feedback useful / helpful?	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	57.1% (4)	28.6% (2)	7

Explain your choice 6

answered question 7

skipped question 3

11. How do you feel about the student teacher relationship when it comes to assessment. (pick only the most important choice)

		Response Percent	Response Count
I think there has to be a relationship between the learner and the teacher built on honesty and dialogue		85.7%	6
The curriculum is more important than the teacher / student relationship		0.0%	0
I think that if a learner understands the Learning Outcomes then the focus should be on the material not the Teacher		0.0%	0
I think that the function of assessment is for the teacher to test if we were listen to them during the year		0.0%	0
I think the purpose of the assessment is for me to see where I can improve		14.3%	1
answered question			7
skipped question			3

Page 2, Q2. As this is an anonymous survey we do not want to know your name, just your initials and your Date of Birth . This is because these are easy for you to remember for this survey and one which we will ask you o complete at the end of the module.

This way we can match the survey answers from befo...

1	SF261276	Oct 31, 2011 11:23 AM
2	DK030859	Oct 25, 2011 12:55 PM
3	jd181059	Oct 21, 2011 3:46 PM
4	DP0406	Oct 20, 2011 2:03 PM
5	EOH100969	Oct 19, 2011 5:15 PM
6	NC09101982	Oct 1, 2011 6:19 PM
7	doc130670	Sep 28, 2011 9:13 PM

Page 3, Q4. Please rate your level of anxiety when it comes to thinking about, or doing an assessment as a learner.

1	the results of an assessment helps me to understand where I stand in terms of knowledge, what I have done and what I should be doing to improve further	Oct 31, 2011 11:25 AM
2	Because it IS an assessment!	Oct 25, 2011 12:56 PM
3	just the though of whats involved before hand	Oct 21, 2011 3:50 PM
4	It really depends on the assessment. If I know the subject well, Im not affected. If Im not so sure then Im anxious because I think that I may not give the correct info for my assessment, and will there be any difficult obstacles or unexpected obstacles and challenges,,so really its the fear of the unknown and will I be able to cope with what is expected of me.	Oct 19, 2011 5:19 PM
5	I want to ensure that I meet the expectations of the lecturer. Assignments are usually given at the start of the module before students acquire the knowledge they need to complete it and that can cause som initial concerns.	Oct 1, 2011 6:20 PM
6	Because its stand alone time. No matter how attentive you may have been you're always going to bervous of anyone scrutinising your work and of course of examinations.	Sep 28, 2011 9:16 PM

Page 4, Q5. Your favoured mode of assessment as a learner?

1	helps me to ensure that I can apply the knowledge acquired	Oct 31, 2011 11:26 AM
2	I think it allows for information to be absorbed at a better rate than trying to memorise facts and it means, for me, that I can remember more info.	Oct 25, 2011 12:58 PM
3	not as rushed as a written exam over 2hours	Oct 21, 2011 3:55 PM
4	Have had experience of these modes and am comfortable with them.	Oct 20, 2011 2:05 PM
5	because my perception is that it is less daunting, then trying to remember everything I have learned for one exam at term	Oct 19, 2011 5:21 PM
6	I receive better results for exams than other forms of assessment.	Oct 1, 2011 6:21 PM
7	This allows you to constantly improve and develop., The practical assessments are great for people who may not be fantastic with words but are extremely capable/	Sep 28, 2011 9:19 PM

Page 5, Q6. What is the function of feedback?

1	Reinforce and promote knowledge	Oct 31, 2011 11:27 AM
2	It should be to inform the student of their progress and not just their short comings.on learning	Oct 25, 2011 1:04 PM
3	this can help you measure how you are doing through the smester	Oct 21, 2011 4:00 PM
4	Help the learner to understand	Oct 20, 2011 2:06 PM
5	Feedback is necessary to guide the learner and to point out to the learner where the learner may need to improve,and for me it gives me reassurance that Im on the right track or where its necessary to make changes.	Oct 19, 2011 5:25 PM
6	Feedback is necessary for students to develop and to gain an understanding into what worked well and what didn't.	Oct 1, 2011 6:23 PM
7	To tell you what you did well and to show how to improve the things you don't do well.	Sep 28, 2011 9:21 PM

Page 5, Q7. When should feedback happen?

1	Constantly	Oct 31, 2011 11:27 AM
2	During a course or module. Giving feedback at the end of a course only lets the learner know what they should have known and not necessarily what they do know. It can effect their confidence and may not encourage the learner to continue with their studies.	Oct 25, 2011 1:04 PM
3	some times on a on going basic	Oct 21, 2011 4:00 PM
4	Always	Oct 20, 2011 2:06 PM
5	Feedback could happen after every assignment and or presentation submitted.	Oct 19, 2011 5:25 PM
6	At various stages throughout a module and always on completion of an assessment. General feedback can be provided during class too.	Oct 1, 2011 6:23 PM
7	As often as possible.	Sep 28, 2011 9:21 PM

Page 6, Q8. Which modes of assessment do your own employees, trainees, students, clients favour?

1	Teaching technical skills is vital for people to practise the new skills to ensure they feel confident once back at the desk	Oct 31, 2011 11:28 AM
2	Because they feel it highlights their own abilities in the particular module they are doing.	Oct 25, 2011 1:06 PM
3	Im not in a position as of yet to have trainees and students	Oct 19, 2011 5:26 PM
4	Less anxious when you can share the responsibility over a longer period of time.	Oct 1, 2011 6:23 PM
5	I work in a primary school and for the most part the children would be unaware that they were being assessed. I would say that given the choice most children would prefer practice based assessment.	Sep 28, 2011 9:23 PM

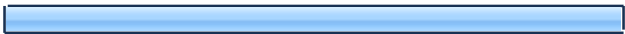
Page 7, Q9. As an Assessor / marker what is your preferred or favoured mode of assessment to mark?

1	Easy to measured	Oct 31, 2011 11:30 AM
2	because I can see exactly what the learner has achieved.	Oct 25, 2011 1:10 PM
3	you get a better sence of the work been handed in	Oct 21, 2011 4:13 PM
4	Suit the subject matter	Oct 20, 2011 2:08 PM
5	Smaller assignments over the course of the whole module gives a clear indication of how the learner develops but my module is generally based on practice which is key also.	Oct 1, 2011 6:26 PM
6	I feel that this is the most realistic measure of learning. If you are completing a task the skills you have leaarned are more likely to be evident than in other forms of assessment.	Sep 28, 2011 9:27 PM

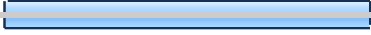
Page 7, Q10. Do you find feedback useful / helpful?

1	People sometimes are not open to feedback	Oct 31, 2011 11:30 AM
2	Sometimes it doesn't clear up where a problem is. This can be because the person giving the feedback isn't clear or just not good at giving feedback.	Oct 25, 2011 1:10 PM
3	feedback helps you to stay on top of your work load	Oct 21, 2011 4:13 PM
4	I like the reassurance of feedback	Oct 19, 2011 5:47 PM
5	I think feedback is essential for my own development but it depends on the person providing the feedback. It's not always clear as to why marks were deducted or given in certain areas even when feedback is offered.	Oct 1, 2011 6:26 PM
6	It is always helpful to know if you are on the right or wrong track.	Sep 28, 2011 9:27 PM

1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey'and understand the information provided. I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers. I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	19
No		0.0%	0
answered question			19
skipped question			0

2. Previous teaching/training experience

		Response Percent	Response Count
no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)		5.9%	1
currently part time teacher/trainer		58.8%	10
currently full time teacher/trainer		29.4%	5
voluntary experience as teacher/trainer		0.0%	0
admin role connected to teaching /training		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		5.9%	1
answered question			17
skipped question			2

3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Agree to Strongly Agree Agree			some	Disagree to some Average	Strongly Count extent	Rating disagree extent	Response extent
The assessment format helped me to perform to the best of my ability.	42.9% (6)	35.7% (5)	14.3% (2)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.86	14
The assessment format helped me to engage with the course content.	28.6% 0.0% (0) (4)	57.1% (8)	14.3% (2)		0.0% (0)	1.86	14
The assessment format encouraged me to reflect on core educational themes.	26.7% 0.0% (0) (4)	73.3% (11)		0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.73	15
The assessment format allowed me to express my own thinking.	14.3% 0.0% (0) (2)	71.4% (10)	14.3% (2)		0.0% (0)	2.00	14
The assessment objectives were well aligned with the module learning outcomes.	35.7% (5)	35.7% (5)	21.4% (3)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.00	14
The assessment helped me to establish a good relationship with the lecturer.	21.4% 0.0% (0) (3)	42.9% (6)	28.6% (4)		7.1% (1)	2.29	14
answered question							15
skipped question							4

4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received? (you can tick more than one box)

		Response Percent	Response Count
I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task		35.7%	5
I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task		0.0%	0
I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received		78.6%	11
I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received		0.0%	0
I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before		0.0%	0
I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve		57.1%	8
I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting		0.0%	0
I felt I did better than I was given credit for		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		7.1%	1
answered question			14
skipped question			5

5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft; What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

	Response Count
	13
answered question	13
skipped question	6

6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

	Response Count
	11
answered question	11
skipped question	8

7. Were you able to transfer some of the advice received in your draft submission to task2?

More than All of it 50%			less than 50%	None of it	Rating Average	Response Count
The amount of feedback used from task 1 to task 2	40.0% (6)	53.3% (8)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (1)	1.73	15
				answered question		15
				skipped question		4

8. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

Agree to Strongly Agree		Some	Disagree to some Average	Strongly Count extent	Rating Disagree	Response extent
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	93.3% (14) 0.0% (0)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.13	15
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	66.7% (10) 26.7% (4)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.40	15
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	53.3% (8) 26.7% (4)	13.3% (2)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.73	15
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	60.0% (9) 0.0% (0)	26.7% (4)	13.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.53	15
						answered question 15
						skipped question 4

9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

Response Count	
8	
answered question	8
skipped question	11

10. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

Strongly Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	26.7% (4)	46.7% (7)	26.7% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.00	15
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	42.9% (6)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.57	14
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	26.7% (4)	60.0% (9)	13.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.87	15
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	46.7% (7)	46.7% (7)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.60	15
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	40.0% (6)	60.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.60	15
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	40.0% (6)	60.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.60	15
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	28.6% (4)	71.4% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.71	14
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	26.7% (4)	73.3% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.73	15

Comments regarding any of the above (please specify)

1

answered question

15

skipped question

4

11. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

Agree to Strongly Agree			Disagree Response Average	some Count	Strongly to some Disagree extent	Rating
The assessment for this module is fair	53.3% (8)	40.0% (6)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.53	15
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	60.0% (9)	33.3% (5)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.47	15
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	66.7% (10)	26.7% (4)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.40	15
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	60.0% (9)	33.3% (5)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.47	15
Interacting with my group for task 1 helped me to perform better	53.3% (8)	20.0% (3)	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)	1.87	15
Interacting with my group for task 1 helped me to understand the module content better	46.7% (7)	33.3% (5)	6.7% (1)	13.3% (2)	1.87	15
answered question						15
skipped question						4

12. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		46.7%	7
No		53.3%	8

If 'Yes', please explain how you attitude has changed

7

answered question	15
skipped question	4

13. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?

Response Count	
8	
answered question	8
skipped question	11

Page 2, Q2. Previous teaching/training experience

1	special needs assistant and sub teacher	May 20, 2011 11:18 AM

Page 4, Q4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received? (you can tick more than one box)

1	N/A as results have not yet been received	May 20, 2011 7:33 AM

Page 4, Q5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft;

What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

1	The feedback was very informative, showing areas that need to be improved and hopefully allowed us to improve on our final draft	Jun 1, 2011 8:22 PM
2	Reference n not to reply in the you sense	May 31, 2011 9:15 PM
3	All aspects of the feedback were useful most especially outlining what we had done well, the identification of words / sentences to improve or remove	May 24, 2011 6:41 PM
4	I found the feedback to be very welcome, it meant that as a group we could see the areas that needed improving and the areas which were on point.	May 24, 2011 10:26 AM
5	The detail and direction provided.	May 23, 2011 1:13 PM
6	It was great guidance on what was expected in writing a philosophy lecture as quite honestly I had never written one before and wasn't sure what the correct format was. It helped me to overcome the pitfalls which I was falling into.	May 23, 2011 9:19 AM
7	It was so detailed and all very useful	May 23, 2011 8:01 AM
8	The prescriptive nature of the comments	May 23, 2011 4:58 AM
9	Tips on how to structure argument throughout the essay	May 22, 2011 9:57 PM
10	It was very thorough and gave very valuable pointers as to how to improve the second draft (group essay)	May 20, 2011 11:22 AM
11	written report attached to essay	May 20, 2011 10:00 AM
12	The detail of the feedback helped focus my study	May 20, 2011 9:36 AM
13 group	that the feedback involved questions that I felt we could then address as a	May 19, 2011 6:07 PM

Page 4, Q6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

1	none	Jun 1, 2011 8:22 PM
2	N/a	May 31, 2011 9:15 PM
3	None	May 24, 2011 6:41 PM
4	I found all the feedback to be of great use.	May 24, 2011 10:26 AM
5	None - feedback was useful in improving assignment content	May 23, 2011 1:13 PM
6	none of it , it was all useful	May 23, 2011 9:19 AM
7	None	May 23, 2011 8:01 AM
8	Comments on the theme of the piece - it seemed to imply the requirement to change our opinion.	May 23, 2011 4:58 AM
9	none	May 22, 2011 9:57 PM
10	No Complaints	May 20, 2011 11:22 AM
11	None	May 19, 2011 6:07 PM

Page 4, Q9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

1	no - quality of feedback was excellent	Jun 1, 2011 8:22 PM
2	N/a	May 31, 2011 9:15 PM
3	Possibly some direction on which readings would improve the assignment, advice on how to divide the work - writing a group essay is difficult and this is the only module which required us to do so.	May 24, 2011 6:41 PM
4	No !! Because I personally feel it was excellent feed back	May 23, 2011 9:19 AM
5	None	May 23, 2011 8:01 AM
6	No it was perfect	May 22, 2011 9:57 PM
7	No	May 20, 2011 11:22 AM
8	No - it was perfect.	May 19, 2011 6:07 PM

Page 5, Q10. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

1	Hard to work as a group as there are very dominate players	May 31, 2011 9:19 PM

Page 5, Q12. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

1	yes, i would be in favour of all modules adopting a similar format	Jun 1, 2011 8:29 PM
2	The necessity for feedback for a course of study and a different style of writing / presenting an argument which I hadn't experienced before - ie philosophy	May 24, 2011 6:45 PM
3	I really benefited from the assessment in this module and I would like to see it introduced in other modules as well for future students.	May 23, 2011 9:23 AM
4	I have now taken the time to provide detailed students to my exam students on some exam questions	May 23, 2011 8:04 AM
5	Yes, my attitude has changed because of the detail of feedback it was very helpful.	May 22, 2011 9:59 PM
6	The value of feedback and positive group cooperation and constructive teamwork was invaluable	May 20, 2011 11:26 AM
7	I have adapted my own level of feedback to students to be more detailed than before.	May 19, 2011 6:08 PM

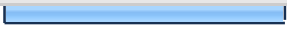
Page 5, Q13. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?

1	Group work was an issue with some members of the group not contributing in any way to the end assignment and some structure/penalty could be in place to address this matter. It was very frustrating that some people made no effort, yet will benefit from the result	Jun 1, 2011 8:29 PM
2	If the group task could be handed in a little later that would allow students to be more familiar with the concepts. I found that we didnt really get started until near the due date as we all felt that we needed to continue reading before we could offer input	May 23, 2011 8:04 AM
3	I found the group task an unfair means of assessment. Having been requested to be removed from the group by some of its members before work started due to its large size, I felt compelled to limit my intellectual contribution or 'row in' with the group's opinion despite the fact that I felt our submission to be less than adequate. I also felt that the contribution of some members of the group was little or even non-existent.	May 23, 2011 5:08 AM
4	no	May 22, 2011 9:59 PM
5	It is a 'heavy' topic and if should be timetabled with a lighter topic ie having it and psychology on the same evening was very demanding	May 20, 2011 11:26 AM
6	smaller groups	May 20, 2011 10:03 AM
7	While the group task was good for me personally I did find it frustrating that certain members contributed nothing and yet benefitted from our work. i feel this issue should be addressed in that we as a group must sign of on the contribution of each member.	May 20, 2011 9:40 AM
8	I would be clearer about what the assignment questions are as they were quite difficult to ascertain sometimes.	May 19, 2011 6:08 PM

1. I have read the the 'purpose of this survey'and understand the information provided. I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and Research-based papers. I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		95.8%	23
No		4.2%	1
answered question			24
skipped question			0

2. Previous teaching/training experience

		Response Percent	Response Count
no experience as teacher/trainer (outside of this course)		5.0%	1
currently part time teacher/trainer		45.0%	9
currently full time teacher/trainer		25.0%	5
voluntary experience as teacher/trainer		5.0%	1
admin role connected to teaching /training		10.0%	2
Other (please specify)		10.0%	2
answered question			20
skipped question			4

3. Did you submit Task 1 draft essay?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		85.0%	17
No		15.0%	3
answered question			20
skipped question			4

4. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received? (you can tick more than one box)

		Response Percent	Response Count
I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task		60.0%	9
I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task		0.0%	0
I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received		93.3%	14
I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received		0.0%	0
I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before		0.0%	0
I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve		73.3%	11
I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting		6.7%	1
I felt I did better than I was given credit for		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0.0%	0
answered question			15
skipped question			9

5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft; What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

	Response Count
	15
answered question	15
skipped question	9

6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

	Response Count
	14
answered question	14
skipped question	10

7. Were you able to transfer some of the advice received in your draft submission to task2?

	More than All of it 50%		less than 50%	None of it	Rating Average	Response Count
The amount of feedback used from task 1 to task 2	46.7% (7)	53.3% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.53	15
				answered question		15
				skipped question		9

8. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

Agree to Strongly Agree			Disagree to some Average	Strongly Count extent	Rating Disagree extent	Response
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	66.7% (10)	33.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.33	15
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	60.0% (9)	33.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (1)	1.53	15
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	100.0% (15)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	15
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	93.3% (14)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.07	15
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	93.3% (14)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.07	15
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	86.7% (13)	13.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.13	15
answered question						15
skipped question						9

9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

	Response Count
	15
answered question	15
skipped question	9

10. If you did not submit a TASK 1 draft why did you decide not to?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Question Does not apply (I did submit Draft 1)		57.1%	8
Time Pressure (other comittments)		7.1%	1
I am confident in my performance (I felt I did not need to submit a draft)		0.0%	0
I prefer to address assessment at the end of a module		0.0%	0
answered question			14
skipped question			10

11. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

Strongly Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.21	14
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	92.9% (13)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.07	14
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	42.9% (6)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	1.71	14
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	50.0% (7)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.50	14
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.29	14
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.29	14
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	50.0% (7)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.50	14
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	46.2% (6)	53.8% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.54	13

Comments regarding any of the above (please specify)

2

answered question

14

skipped question

10

12. Please indicate your level of agreement in relation the Assessment of module Es402

Agree to Strongly Agree			Disagree Response Average	Response some Count	Strongly to some Disagree extent	Rating
The assessment for this module is fair	93.3% (14)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.07	15
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	80.0% (12)	20.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.20	15
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	86.7% (13)	6.7% (1)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.20	15
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	80.0% (12)	13.3% (2)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.27	15
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	66.7% (10)	26.7% (4)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (1)	1.47	15
answered question						15
skipped question						9

13. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		66.7%	10
No		33.3%	5

If 'Yes', please explain how you attitude has changed

10

answered question	15
skipped question	9

14. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?

**Response
Count**

9

answered question

9

skipped question

15

Page 2, Q2. Previous teaching/training experience

1	Youth Development Officer training volunteers.	Feb 15, 2011 2:26 PM
2	I	Feb 15, 2011 10:15 AM

Page 4, Q5. If you did submit a Task 1 draft;

What aspect of the feedback you received did you find MOST useful?

1	All of it. It provided a direction and indicated what points I needed to improve and elaborate on. It also confirmed that I had engaged with the module and needed to tweak some points to improve my grade	Feb 16, 2011 11:35 PM
2	It clearly showed where I could improve and certain actions I could make which would benefit the task of writing philosophy in general.	Feb 16, 2011 7:25 PM
3	The difference in the format between writing an academic assignment and a philosophical assignment and also the annotated feedback	Feb 16, 2011 1:07 PM
4	The feedback was really detailed and gave me huge support. I realised and understood referencing for the first time and my marks will improve all round.	Feb 15, 2011 2:34 PM
5	Finding the right voice for the piece	Feb 15, 2011 1:25 PM
6	feedback was excellent	Feb 15, 2011 12:54 PM
7	The clear detailed approach applied to the feedback highlighted the areas needed to be changed.	Feb 15, 2011 12:43 PM
8	The level of detail and particularly the annotated feedback.	Feb 15, 2011 10:39 AM
9	The detailed annotated comments were very explicit and helpful in re-drafting the assignment.	Feb 15, 2011 9:53 AM
10	The level of feedback was amazing, thorough and detailed. I found it difficult to change to the philosophical style, but seen the way to do it from the feedback.	Feb 14, 2011 10:00 PM
11	I found all of the feedback extremely useful, I also appreciated the time and commitment to my work and it helped me hugely,	Feb 14, 2011 9:46 PM
12	feedback was paragraph by paragraph so very easy to follow and understand	Feb 14, 2011 9:28 PM
13	I found most the feedback very useful as it was broken down into sections, i.e. The Level, H1, H2:1, H2:2 etc. and gave me a better understanding of what was required and where I could improve.	Feb 14, 2011 5:36 PM
14	The suggestions from Francesca on what to focus on i.e I expanded on a small point I had made in the draft submission	Feb 14, 2011 2:46 PM
15	All of the feedback was useful but for me I suppose it was in relation to the layout of essay. I struggle with writing and found the feedback relating to paragraphs and organisation very useful.	Feb 14, 2011 2:43 PM

Page 4, Q6. What aspect of the feedback you received did you find LEAST useful?

1	None	Feb 16, 2011 11:35 PM
2	N/A	Feb 16, 2011 7:25 PM
3	All feed back was useful	Feb 16, 2011 1:07 PM
4	None I found it all very useful	Feb 15, 2011 2:34 PM
5	All was helpful	Feb 15, 2011 1:25 PM
6	all was useful	Feb 15, 2011 12:43 PM
7	The restructuring of a sentence.	Feb 15, 2011 10:39 AM
8	N/A	Feb 15, 2011 9:53 AM
9	none	Feb 14, 2011 10:00 PM
10	None I took on board all the feedback and I can honestely say I learned from all of the feedback.	Feb 14, 2011 9:46 PM
11	By correcting some paragraphs effected my word courd so i had to drop some paragraphs that had recieved good feedback.	Feb 14, 2011 9:28 PM
12	None. It was all relevant and each aspect was important in itself, even down to the referencing.	Feb 14, 2011 5:36 PM
13	I found the feedback EXCELLENT. This was the most enjoyable module i have studied in DCU to date, largely because I felt like I knew exactly what was expected of me in the essay.	Feb 14, 2011 2:46 PM
14	All of the feedback was useful so it is hard to pick the least useful element but I did find it a little bit tricky in understanding fully some points made by the lecturer as I felt I did not reach that level of expertise with the module.	Feb 14, 2011 2:43 PM

Page 4, Q9. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of feedback on TASK 1 for module ES402?

1	I thought the feedback was excellent and very detailed which was appreciated. The lecturer understood the students had never written a philosophy essay before and is very different to other modules. I cannot suggest any improvements, It was the best feedback I ever received and reflected the lecturer's passion for teaching and caring for students.	Feb 16, 2011 11:35 PM
2	No I found it one of the better modules	Feb 16, 2011 7:25 PM
3	Whilst written feedback is valuable a meeting in person whilst time consuming would enhance the feedback where further points could be clarified if required.	Feb 16, 2011 1:07 PM
4	If participants received feedback in all modules this way they would benefit much more and feel much more included in the whole experience.	Feb 15, 2011 2:34 PM
5	No it was very detailed and helpful. It gave me and others in the group confidence in what they were doing and direction for future work.	Feb 15, 2011 1:25 PM
6	not really as i was very happy with the feedback i recieved	Feb 15, 2011 12:54 PM
7	The feedback was excellent, clear and concise. Delivered within the time frame that enabled you to change your essay before submitting. The only suggestion would be a feedback meeting with the feedback to clarify any areas of confusion. But this would only be if there was confusion.	Feb 15, 2011 12:43 PM
8	I found the feedback perfect and can't offer suggestions	Feb 15, 2011 10:39 AM
9	I appreciated the personal tone of the feedback and the sensitively phrased suggestions for improving my work	Feb 15, 2011 9:53 AM
10	A good discussion on the philosophy model of assignment would have been helpful & to be shown a sample.	Feb 14, 2011 10:00 PM
11	The feedback was amazing and helped me to understand where at times I have lost track of the question and answer it to the best of my ability. I felt this feedback was the best support I received during my whole time in D,C,U.	Feb 14, 2011 9:46 PM
12	no	Feb 14, 2011 9:28 PM
13	The layout of the feedback could be improved, in that the headings could be made clearer by being in a bigger typeface and the typed feedback would be better on portrait A4 paper, as it is difficult to read across landscape A4.	Feb 14, 2011 5:36 PM
14	Not really, I think it worked really well.	Feb 14, 2011 2:46 PM
15	This type of feedback was excellent and I really wish it was available in all my modules. I did find however it took a lot of my time in preparing the draft and then working on the feedback, which left not as much time to focus on the other 2 parts of the assignment. But overall I was extremely happy with how this module was organised and with the motivation and encouragement I received from the lecturer who I felt truly "Cared" about my learning as I felt this subject is a bit tricky to get to grasps with then others but i am glad I took part in it . Thank you	Feb 14, 2011 2:43 PM

Page 5, Q10. If you did not submit a TASK 1 draft why did you decide not to?

Page 5, Q11. Express your level of agreement with the following statements;

1	Assessment is most successful as a learning and improvement tool when done throughout the module but quality feedback of where improvement can be made is essential throughout to afford an opportunity to improve before further assessment occurs. Feedback after assessment is less valuable as performance is greatly improved when able to respond to the feedback and repeat the process.	Feb 16, 2011 1:12 PM
2	Assessment when ongoing, clarifies if there are problem areas for the student in the course at an early stage rather than waiting for the end and fail in an exam.	Feb 15, 2011 12:50 PM

Page 5, Q13. Has your views towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

1	I feel that a draft assessment mid way through the process was very beneficial and should be applied to other modules on this course. I fully support assessment in this format in place of exams.	Feb 16, 2011 11:41 PM
2	It reinforced the need for feedback before the final task is submitted.	Feb 16, 2011 7:29 PM
3	I always felt that the method used in this module with feedback given to assist improvement is the way it should be done as opposed to taking place at the end of the module where improvement for that module is not now possible	Feb 16, 2011 1:12 PM
4	Ongoing assessment is a real support to participants and motivated me to work harder on the module as I could see where I might have being going off the topic and I dont think months later I would value the feedback the same.	Feb 15, 2011 2:40 PM
5	I believe that continious assesment is better able to measure the knowlege which the student will carry away with them for the long term.	Feb 15, 2011 1:30 PM
6	i didnt realise there was so much to assessment and as a result it has changed my approach to assessment exercises	Feb 15, 2011 12:56 PM
7	Because of the opportunity to submitt a test document it gave me the opportunity to change, focus and gain more insight into the module, resulting in a higher level of understanding and knowledge gained in this module. Rather than just completing an assessment and hoping you ticked the right boxes.	Feb 15, 2011 12:50 PM
8	more mid way feedback would help in other subjects	Feb 14, 2011 9:36 PM
9	I think it was the only time assessment has been really positive - you have time to change. what is the point in getting feedback after the fact?	Feb 14, 2011 2:48 PM
10	I would be encouraged to use this type of assessment in my work if their was this possibility.	Feb 14, 2011 2:45 PM

Page 5, Q14. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES402?

1	No the instructions were clear, consise and covered the course content.	Feb 16, 2011 11:41 PM
2	No	Feb 16, 2011 7:29 PM
3	Personal meetings with the tutor to complement wtitten feedback	Feb 16, 2011 1:12 PM
4	I thought the assessment was really a great support and incentive to do better.	Feb 15, 2011 2:40 PM
5	Time permitting, incorporate a brief presentation on ones opinion. Alternatively hold a debate on 1 philosophical topic as a non-assessed formative exercise.	Feb 15, 2011 10:47 AM
6	More time for one-to-one discussion of feedback with lecturer	Feb 15, 2011 9:58 AM
7	The draft while a great help, was pressure due to the amount of assessments. 11 assignments (some modules broken into 2 or 3 pieces) made it a hugely time poor semester.	Feb 14, 2011 10:06 PM
8	no	Feb 14, 2011 9:36 PM
9	Really good module, interesting and the assessment was fair.	Feb 14, 2011 2:48 PM

1. We are asking for your voluntary participation in this research. Please read the following information about the project. If you would like to participate, please select the appropriate below. Purpose of the project: If you participate, you will be asked to: Time required for pa Potential Risks of Study: Benefits: How confidentiality will be maintained: If you have any c about this study, feel free to contact: Adult Sponsor: _____ Pho

Voluntary Participation: Participat study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participati time and you may decide not to answer any specific question. By signing this form I am att have read and understand the information above and I freely give my consent/assent to p o permission for my child to participate. I am aware that my reflections and responses to a questionnaire may be anonymously quoted in School of Education Studies evaluations and based papers. I also confirm my that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary and th no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research have been completed.

		Response Percent
Yes		92.9
No		7.1
answered question		
skipped question		

2. Please select your age category

	Response Percent	Response Count
31-45	30.8%	8
24-30	0.0%	0
18-23	57.7%	15
45+	11.5%	3
answered question		26
skipped question		2

3. How much experience do you have either designing assessment or assessing student learning?

		Response Percent	Response Count
10 years + experience		0.0%	0
5 years + experience		0.0%	0
less than 5 years experience		11.5%	3
Little or no experience		88.5%	23
answered question			26
skipped question			2

4. As a result of completing this module how much more confident are you if you were now asked to design and mark an Assessment?

		Response Percent	Response Count
0- 10% more confident		3.8%	1
10-15% more confident		3.8%	1
16-20% more confident		3.8%	1
21-30% more confident		11.5%	3
31-40% more confident		7.7%	2
41-50% more confident		7.7%	2
51-60% more confident		19.2%	5
61-70% more confident		7.7%	2
71-80% more confident		19.2%	5
81-90% more confident		11.5%	3
91-100% more confident		3.8%	1
not at all confident		0.0%	0
		answered question	26
		skipped question	2

5. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice.

Extremely Useful			Not useful	Not useful at all	Rating Average	Response Count
Task 1 - Design an Assessment Activity	50.0% (12)	41.7% (10)	8.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.58	24
Task 2 - Mark & provide Feedback to fellow student	54.2% (13)	37.5% (9)	8.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.54	24
Task 3 - Re-design and assessment activity and report on the changes	41.7% (10)	58.3% (14)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.58	24

If you feel that any of the above did not contribute to the development of your professional competence please explain why 3

answered question	24
skipped question	4

6. Please rate you level of agreement with the following statements

Strongly Agree Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
The assessment for this module is fair	20.8% (5)	50.0% (12)	29.2% (7)	0.0% (0)	2.08	24
The assessment for this module is clearly presented	20.8% (5)	45.8% (11)	25.0% (6)	8.3% (2)	2.21	24
The assessment for this module is clearly structured	25.0% (6)	50.0% (12)	20.8% (5)	4.2% (1)	2.04	24
The assessment for this module was aligned to the lecture content	26.1% (6)	73.9% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.74	23
I received support from the lecturer for the preparation of the assessment	29.2% (7)	50.0% (12)	20.8% (5)	0.0% (0)	1.92	24
Through responding to the assessment tasks I acquired a good understanding of the module content	37.5% (9)	45.8% (11)	16.7% (4)	0.0% (0)	1.79	24
Assessment has helped me to established a good relationship with the lecturer	8.3% (2)	58.3% (14)	33.3% (8)	0.0% (0)	2.25	24
answered question						24
skipped question						4

7. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the assessment structure;

Strongly Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
I was clear about the 3 tasks involved	29.2% (7)	29.2% (7)	41.7% (10)	0.0% (0)	2.13	24
This type of assessment helped me to develop my assessment skills gradually	25.0% (6)	70.8% (17)	4.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.79	24
I would used staged (portfolio) assessment(s) with my own future students Designing an assessment activity was a useful activity for my professional development as a potential trainer / teacher	33.3% (8)	54.2% (13)	12.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.79	24
I have a better appreciation how to design assessments	41.7% (10)	50.0% (12)	8.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.67	24
Understanding how to design and mark assessments helps me understand the learning process better	37.5% (9)	62.5% (15)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.63	24
answered question						24
skipped question						4

8. feedback varies significantly between markers. How difficult did you find it to receive feedback from another peer, maybe even someone you may know in your class?

		Response Percent	Response Count
not difficult at all		42.9%	9
quite difficult		28.6%	6
difficult		23.8%	5
very difficult		4.8%	1
answered question			21
skipped question			7

9. Express your level of agreement with the following statements related to the feedback task;

Strongly Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Feedback is fundamental to improve performance	73.9% (17)	26.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.26	23
Feedback half way a module is more beneficial for learning than at the end	69.6% (16)	30.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.30	23
I would like a similar approach to feedback to be used for other modules	43.5% (10)	43.5% (10)	4.3% (1)	8.7% (2)	1.78	23
Feedback motivated me to improve my performance	47.8% (11)	39.1% (9)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.65	23
answered question						23
skipped question						5

10. This year we introduced a team mate rating system based upon 5 key areas Contributing to the team’s work, Interacting with teammates, Keeping the team on track, Expecting quality, Having relevant knowledge skills and abilities The primary CATME instrument is a behaviorally anchored rating scale, which describes behaviors that are typical of various levels of performance in each of the five categories. Raters select the category of behaviors that most closely matches the actual behavior of each student on their team (including themselves). This system enabled the group to gain a mark as a whole for Task 2 then this mark was multiplied by the individual peer rating. This allowed each group member to gain a differing task 2 mark based on this process. (I know at times the rating system within CATME was a little to much and some questions irrelevant). But overall how would you rate this concept of encouraging group performance.

		Response Percent	Response Count
I think using a team rating system to ensure all members work equally is fair		77.3%	17
I think using a team rating system to ensure all members work equally is unfair		22.7%	5
answered question			22
skipped question			6

11. What of the following comments best describes your reaction to the feedback and mark you received from your peer assessor (you can tick more than one box)

		Response Percent	Response Count
I was pleasantly surprised by my result and how I was able to respond to the task		21.7%	5
I was disappointed with my result and how I was able to respond to the task		30.4%	7
I appreciated the level of detail in the feedback I received		26.1%	6
I was upset by the tone of the feedback I received		26.1%	6
I was more puzzled after receiving feedback than before		17.4%	4
I agreed with the feedback comments and clearly saw where I could improve		30.4%	7
I found the level of detail in the feedback off-putting		17.4%	4
I felt I did better than I was given credit for		30.4%	7
The feedback I received was not helpful		21.7%	5
Other (please specify)		8.7%	2
answered question			23
skipped question			5

12. How much were you able to transfer some of the advice / feedback received (from your Peer) in your Task 1 to the final Task 3?

		Response Percent	Response Count
All of it		8.7%	2
More than 50%		56.5%	13
Less than 50%		30.4%	7
None of it		4.3%	1
answered question			23
skipped question			5

13. Express your level of agreement with the following general statements related to assessment;

Strongly Agree			Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	65.2% (15)	30.4% (7)	4.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.39	23
Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.	65.2% (15)	34.8% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.35	23
Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.	38.1% (8)	52.4% (11)	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	1.76	21
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.	31.8% (7)	63.6% (14)	4.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.73	22
Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.	40.9% (9)	50.0% (11)	9.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.68	22
Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	59.1% (13)	40.9% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.41	22
Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.	50.0% (11)	45.5% (10)	4.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.55	22
The assessment of student learning begins with educational values: We measure what is most important to our mission and goals.	36.4% (8)	63.6% (14)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.64	22

which of these statements would you most agree with?

11

answered question

23

skipped question

5

14. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		86.4%	19
No		13.6%	3

In what way has your perception or attitude changed?

14

answered question	22
skipped question	6

15. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES204?	
	Response Count
	22

answered question	22
skipped question	6

16. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES204?	
	Response Count
	22

answered question	22
skipped question	6

17. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?

	Response Count
	22
answered question	22
skipped question	6

18. What aspect of the this module did you find LEAST useful?

	Response Count
	22
answered question	22
skipped question	6

19. Do you think this kind of assessment method (experiential, constructivist, dialogical & staged) helps you understand the concept of Assessment better?

		Response Percent	Response Count
yes		95.5%	21
no		4.5%	1
	answered question		22
	skipped question		6

20. Do you think there is too much assessment in this module?

		Response Percent	Response Count
yes		36.4%	8
no		68.2%	15
	answered question		22
	skipped question		6

21. Are you always aware of the learning outcomes for each module you participate in?

		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	19.0%	4
Sometimes		47.6%	10
	Rarely	14.3%	3
	No	19.0%	4
answered question			21
skipped question			7

22. Are you aware of any trends or developments in Assessment (curriculum reform) in Higher Education in Ireland or the European Union that could help or hinder learning in higher education?

		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	19.0%	4
	No	81.0%	17
If yes (please specify)			3
answered question			21
skipped question			7

23. As a learner studying teaching & training: How much would your views or experiences of assessment influence the way you might assess your trainees / students now or in the future?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Influence them a lot		71.4%	15
Some influence		28.6%	6
Little influence		0.0%	0
Not influence them at all		0.0%	0
answered question			21
skipped question			7

Page 3, Q5. Rate the usefulness of the portfolio tasks in developing your professional competence/skills in relation to assessment practice.

1	For the simple reason that because the class size was so small, most students knew who was marking what and did not remain anonymous. Therefore, I found out that the student I had marked had his paper delayed, as our group did not mark the paper proficiently (received an email from a lecturer discussing his opinion of the marking) which dented confidence.	Feb 9, 2012 6:57 PM
2	Marking with a group was a lot more stressssful than marking omn my own. Whereas it was interesting to compare our marks, especially the gaps in marking, and the resons behind the gaps, only one person in my group made it to all the group meetings organised to collaborate our task 2. So in my case, it did not serve a real purpose to have this activity completed as a group I could have come to the same conclusions and marking system on my own.	Feb 8, 2012 6:04 PM
3	Really usefull experience although I thought the instructions from the lecturer were a lllittle abstract	Feb 8, 2012 5:05 PM

Page 5, Q13. Express your level of agreement with the following general statements related to assessment;

1	Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.	Feb 22, 2012 4:52 PM
2	Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic	Feb 22, 2012 1:34 PM
3	I really feel that assessment works best when it is ongoing	Feb 14, 2012 8:59 AM
4	Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experience that leads to those outcomes	Feb 10, 2012 9:11 AM
5	Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. This I feel is true as I have learned most effectively through this method.	Feb 9, 2012 7:14 PM
6	assessment works best when it is ongoing.	Feb 9, 2012 6:59 PM
7	Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic	Feb 9, 2012 4:13 PM
8	statement 2: assessment works best when the programmes it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes	Feb 8, 2012 10:35 PM
9	Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated and revealed in performance over time.	Feb 8, 2012 6:33 PM
10	Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.	Feb 8, 2012 6:09 PM
11	Assessment works best when it is on going, not episodic	Feb 8, 2012 5:08 PM

Page 6, Q14. Has your perception and attitude towards assessment changed as a result of undertaking this module?

1	I have a greater appreciation of what assessment, marking and feedback entail.	Feb 22, 2012 4:58 PM
2	the amount of detail needed.	Feb 22, 2012 4:41 PM
3	This method is used by our lecturers in our other modules and I understand how they have to mark our assignments after completing this module. So when I receive my marks for an assignment I can go for feedback and understand where I gained and where I lost marks. There is a greater appreciation and understanding of assessment.	Feb 22, 2012 3:12 PM
4	i can see a clearer relationship between what is being assessed and making sure the course content supports these goals	Feb 22, 2012 1:44 PM
5	I see it is not that easy to mark a paper and give feedback. It is also very time consuming	Feb 14, 2012 9:06 AM
6	Did not realise marking was so structured.	Feb 14, 2012 8:11 AM
7	I now question my own abilities and I'm less confident in my work	Feb 10, 2012 9:17 AM
8	I now strongly believe that assessment is vital to learning.	Feb 9, 2012 7:21 PM
9	I am more clued in to the importance of Assessment within Education and Training.	Feb 9, 2012 7:04 PM
10	I now see how assessment can be used as a tool to promote learning.	Feb 9, 2012 4:56 PM
11	i didn't realise what went into picking assessments for different modules everyone had different kind assessments that worked or may not of worked in the modules designed you had to take in to count why you were picking the assessment and if they would they cater for the different learning styles	Feb 9, 2012 12:51 PM
12	i can appreciate the value of feedback more	Feb 8, 2012 10:39 PM
13	Designing an assessment was difficult because it's so thought provoking - what exactly is being assessed and why?! I find myself looking at the assessments for all our modules now to see if they fairly assess our learning.	Feb 8, 2012 7:01 PM
14	Able to see the other side of how an assessment is designed	Feb 8, 2012 5:11 PM

Page 6, Q15. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES204?

1	I found it to be impossible to get a grade over 80%. no matter how good the assessment was I felt I couldn't get the grade I deserved	Mar 6, 2012 9:53 PM
2	Avoid feedback that is solely from peers.	Feb 22, 2012 4:58 PM
3	no	Feb 22, 2012 4:41 PM
4	No.	Feb 22, 2012 3:12 PM
5	yes i believe there was a lot of ambiguities around what was to be done for eg lecture notes/instructions didnt match course module book which was unnecessarily confusing. maybe change the names of the tasks as there were similiar titles on different parts of the tasks which was again off puttting	Feb 22, 2012 1:44 PM
6	Provide clearer instructions at the beginning of the module regarding the tasks involved to avoid misinterpretation	Feb 22, 2012 12:47 PM
7	clearer instructions	Feb 16, 2012 10:26 AM
8	I think the mock marking should be done in a group but I feel the task would be better if a group of students worked on marking the same assessment individually	Feb 14, 2012 9:06 AM
9	Clearer instructions. There seemed to be some confusion.Notes on guidelines differed to the hand-out given in class for task 3. Word count changed from 100 to 300 for response to feedback for task 3 Would strongly recommend more interaction with students and a variety of methodologies.	Feb 14, 2012 8:11 AM
10	No	Feb 10, 2012 4:07 PM
11	More positive feedback and to make sure people understand whjat the task is so they know what they are marking	Feb 10, 2012 9:17 AM
12	No	Feb 9, 2012 7:21 PM
13	Yes. Ironically, I felt the assessment was unclear, not to the fact of WHAT to do but the lecture and moodle did no coincide. I had an injury, which, unfortunately made me unable to attend some final lectures and therefore, relied on moodle. However, according to classmates, the assessment criteria in moodle was far different to what was given. For example, feedback was told to be 300 words on a feedback sheet, so I accepted that. Then I was notified it had to be annotated. Then the final assessment where we evaluate and reinforce the feedback given, the word count was 100 on moodle, yet the word count given was 300.	Feb 9, 2012 7:04 PM
14	Perhaps it may be useful to allow learners a more definitive of gauging the accuracy of their marking. As part of the mock marking task students can compare their recommended marking with peers and then finally with those marks allocated by an experienced marker (i.e. the lecturer). However; groups of students allocate marks to peer submissions as part of task 2 but are not given further guidance as to whether or not the marks that they allocated were accurate/ in-line with the marks that the submission deserved (i.e. according to an experienced marker). Therefore; students cannot really be sure that their marking in effective/ has improved as a result of group work/ co-operative learning as part of task 2 (even though marks may be deducted for poor marking, which the student cannot address by form of redraft).	Feb 9, 2012 4:56 PM

Page 6, Q15. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the quality of the assessment format for module ES204?

15	just making sure students understand what it is they need to do i was unsure myself and everyone had their own understanding i was over thinking it. but also i get students need to listen a lot of the younger students where unsure of what they where to do to	Feb 9, 2012 12:51 PM
16	more clear instructions	Feb 8, 2012 10:39 PM
17	I would have liked to do more on the designing of rubrics - I thought I understood the process until it came to designing my own. At that point I would have liked to go back for another class on it!	Feb 8, 2012 7:01 PM
18	Feedback should be given in maximum detail	Feb 8, 2012 6:28 PM
19	Yes; if there is a mature student in the class who thinks they can do Task 2 alone, let them!	Feb 8, 2012 6:11 PM
20	More insight on how to design an assessment earlier in the semester.	Feb 8, 2012 5:30 PM
21	Thought the instructions for the 3 task were too long and abstract could be more concise and clearer	Feb 8, 2012 5:11 PM
22	Clearer guidelines as to what have to do	Feb 8, 2012 4:39 PM

Page 6, Q16. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES204?

1	I think feedback should be done individually as I was left with most of the work in my group and found it very unfair.	Mar 6, 2012 9:53 PM
2	Offer feedback samples to accompany the marking guidelines	Feb 22, 2012 4:58 PM
3	no	Feb 22, 2012 4:41 PM
4	You explained in lectures how to give appropriate feedback. But I was very disappointed and offended with the peer feedback I received. Maybe a small guide on what you can and can't do in order to give constructive criticism and not just criticism!	Feb 22, 2012 3:12 PM
5	maybe more time could be spent in actively allowin students to experience its advantage, i believe the cookie excercise worked well for that exact reason	Feb 22, 2012 1:44 PM
6	No.	Feb 22, 2012 12:47 PM
7	better examples	Feb 16, 2012 10:26 AM
8	I think extra feedback shoul be given by the lectured, the amount depending on the qualityb of the feedback given by the students	Feb 14, 2012 9:06 AM
9	lecture with Francesca very helpful	Feb 14, 2012 8:11 AM
10	No	Feb 10, 2012 4:07 PM
11	Make sure everyone completely understands the task in hand and any unsurities are delt with.	Feb 10, 2012 9:17 AM
12	Students should be given clearer direction about the use of the overview booklet about the assessment. Many students became worried and stressed about the tasks before reading the booklet and this led to conversations that led to confusion.	Feb 9, 2012 7:21 PM
13	Some way of improving confidentiality. I appreciate that the module does try it's utmost best but it is off putting.	Feb 9, 2012 7:04 PM
14	Although arguably it may defeat some of the principles around which the module is designed (i.e. autonomy, Independent learning etc) if may be useful to provide a more structured template to formalise how the feedback is completed and ultimately presented (back to the student who designed the assessment task). Perhaps a blank sheet which outlines various headings/ criteria to be completed by each group. This will help to standardise how the feedback is presented, avoid excessive subjectivity and ambiguity and make the assignments easier to mark (for the lecturer). Similarly; it is imperative that students are given instructions to remove any elements which may lead to their personal identity being disclosed (i.e. removal of initials from the comments in word etc.).	Feb 9, 2012 4:56 PM
15	i didn't feel comfortable answering questions about how well i did in the group.	Feb 9, 2012 12:51 PM
16	no, i found that even within my own group many people assessed our material poorly therefore their feedback was worth little	Feb 8, 2012 10:39 PM

Page 6, Q16. Can you offer suggestions for improving the quality of peer feedback for module ES204?

17	I felt unqualified to give feedback. I felt the same when I read the feedback I received - the comments made no sense to me. Are we giving feedback on a subject we don't know enough about? Again, it was one of those things that you felt, yes, I understand, I know what I'm doing - until you started to do it. How to improve the quality?	Feb 8, 2012 7:01 PM
18	It should clearly state where issues lie instead of being general	Feb 8, 2012 6:28 PM
19	No	Feb 8, 2012 6:11 PM
20	I felt this area was very good.	Feb 8, 2012 5:30 PM
21	Took away alot from the feedback	Feb 8, 2012 5:11 PM
22	Not to be done in groups	Feb 8, 2012 4:39 PM

Page 6, Q17. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?

1	Task 1	Mar 6, 2012 9:53 PM
2	The opportunity to redraft your original work.	Feb 22, 2012 4:58 PM
3	re doing it in task 3.	Feb 22, 2012 4:41 PM
4	Peer feedback. Giving us to chance to mark real students work made me want to Mark it fair and efficiently and not rush through it.	Feb 22, 2012 3:12 PM
5	knoeing how to use rubrics which i feel helps the honing of skills and allows focus on the specific objectives of the course	Feb 22, 2012 1:44 PM
6	Feedback provided halfway through the tasks	Feb 22, 2012 12:47 PM
7	task 3 using feedback	Feb 16, 2012 10:26 AM
8	I found the mock really helped with the actual task. I also think getting to redraft our designs was a good idea if the feedback was good.	Feb 14, 2012 9:06 AM
9	The rubric system of marking	Feb 14, 2012 8:11 AM
10	task 3	Feb 10, 2012 4:07 PM
11	I liked the assessment part as it gave me an insight in to structured marking sytems	Feb 10, 2012 9:17 AM
12	evaluating the work of others	Feb 9, 2012 7:21 PM
13	Designing an Assessment	Feb 9, 2012 7:04 PM
14	In terms of constructive alignment; I found the structure of the assignment tasks promoted and compounded learning in a uniquely innovative and highly effective way. The experiential and co-operative learning approaches used helped me to develop skills and acquire knowledge to a level deeper that gained through traditional methods. Also; having 3 formative assessment components facilitated a more manageable approach to completing the assignment.	Feb 9, 2012 4:56 PM
15	that when it comes to marking the assessments in a group everyone has their own understanding of how the assessment is marked what is important and what's not, it is great to brianstorm and all agree to the marking system you learn more that way seeing things from different points of view also just showing how you would approach designing an assessment give you an in sight what will be expected of us as educators	Feb 9, 2012 12:51 PM
16	having the opportunity to correct my work had value however, this was devalued by a lack of good feedback and lack of faith in the quality of my peer's marking	Feb 8, 2012 10:39 PM
17	Although I found giving feedback very difficult, it was the task I learnt most from. It lead me to believe that feedback should be given first without a grade, and the grade given at the end when the student has had a chance to work on the feedback given.	Feb 8, 2012 7:01 PM
18	The marking of a fellow student	Feb 8, 2012 6:28 PM

Page 6, Q17. What aspect of the this module did you find MOST useful?

19	Designing the assessment	Feb 8, 2012 6:11 PM
20	Redesigning the assessment because you have a better knowledge of how well your assessment is interpreted.	Feb 8, 2012 5:30 PM
21	The experience of designing my own assessment and marking criteria	Feb 8, 2012 5:11 PM
22	Marking papers	Feb 8, 2012 4:39 PM

Page 6, Q18. What aspect of the this module did you find LEAST useful?

1	Task 3	Mar 6, 2012 9:53 PM
2	Peer feedback, this only works if accompanied by the lecturers view of what is useful.	Feb 22, 2012 4:58 PM
3	having to do the feedback and annotated feedback.it would have been easier just having one or the other.	Feb 22, 2012 4:41 PM
4	None.	Feb 22, 2012 3:12 PM
5	i really found the written instructions confusing and i believe if these were corrected this course would be improved (clarity of instructions, grammar)	Feb 22, 2012 1:44 PM
6	Nothing	Feb 22, 2012 12:47 PM
7	nothing	Feb 16, 2012 10:26 AM
8	Trying to redraft with little or no information on how to improve	Feb 14, 2012 9:06 AM
9	What was required from us was not always very clear. Environmental constraints ie the awful room Too lecture based	Feb 14, 2012 8:11 AM
10	i thought it was all useful	Feb 10, 2012 4:07 PM
11	Feedback I found very demoralizing	Feb 10, 2012 9:17 AM
12	Clarity of assessment was poorly displayed and led to confusion. I would suggest letting students focus on one task before they know what the next task is.	Feb 9, 2012 7:21 PM
13	The over reliance on giving a mass of feedback. Realistically, you never receive nearly 800 words of feedback. The educator simply would have no time.	Feb 9, 2012 7:04 PM
14	The group work element demanded a lot of time; i.e. consideration of various individual schedules, availability of group members etc. which was problematic in light of demands in place by assignments for other modules. However; this is an unavoidable dynamic of group work and the learning which occurs as a result of co-operative approaches, for me, off-sets any negative impact on time...in fact it forced me to improve skills (such as time management) beyond those taught directly as part of the module itself.	Feb 9, 2012 4:56 PM
15	marking people in my class because everyone was talking about what they did their assignment on and the thought of classmate looking at mine	Feb 9, 2012 12:51 PM
16	the assessment notebook, it often differed from assessment criteria stated by lecturer	Feb 8, 2012 10:39 PM
17	The feedback I received from my peers. I would have preferred it to come with feedback from the lecturer too.	Feb 8, 2012 7:01 PM
18	The lecture from a guest speaker as it was all repetition	Feb 8, 2012 6:28 PM
19	Working in a group to mark /complete Task 2	Feb 8, 2012 6:11 PM
20	The groups I think it would be more effective if the students organised their own groups.	Feb 8, 2012 5:30 PM

APPENDIX E.1

INTERVIEW: RESPONDENT 'A': 3RD STAGE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Line/page	Timecode	Category /	Theme	subthemes
The Bologna process, it's a strange process in many ways, because it isn't politically driven in the sense that many European initiatives are. On the one hand, it has its origins in a desire for reform from the institutions, on the one hand. And the original declaration, was it Sorbonne Declaration and then the Bologna Declaration, a lot of that was rooted, actually, in the higher-ed institutions. And some of it was going back to that university ideal in Europe, particularly something that has become dissipated since the Middle Ages, really, of the sort of that network of scholars across Europe. It was to try and revive that. [1:56] But then other interests came into it, political interests. The commission had been involved and gotten involved in certain areas, where you had the notion of a European higher-education area that would compete with America and other parts of the globe. And again, you have the idea, then, of education as a driver of economies and so forth. So that element is there.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	1/17-29	0.54	European Influence	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
There was also a movement developing from the '90s around quality assurance, for example. And some of that was driven by individual states setting up their own agencies, and all of these sort of things have come into the Bologna process. And you see that in the ministerial declarations every two or three years. You have all these action lines, and they all reflect all these different interests. And the Bologna process is quite interesting, in that it is very much like academic institutions, a kind of an alliance of interests, but there isn't one, single driving force behind it.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	1/30-36	2.34	European Influence	Bologna Declaration / Process	EU & QA
Certainly, that's the way it started off. As things went on a bit, the Bologna Follow-Up Group became more of a driver and a sort of a pariet and a secretariat in between. Even though it has that central drive behind it, they're still more coordinating all these different groups. So you have the Quality Assurance line, and you have all these agencies, and you have the European Association of Quality Assurance, ENQA, and all the agencies, and they were linking in the	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	1/37-42	3.22	European Influence	Bologna Declaration / Process	EU & QA

EUA.							
And there's a lot of politics around all of this. I mean, when the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance were developed, you had the EUA, you had EURASHE. This was the representative directors' body for the non-university higher-ed institutions. The Students' Union were involved, and then ENQA, the Association for Quality Assurance. And they developed and they agreed the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. So it was a give-and-take between the agencies, the institutions, the students and so forth. And you got this, then, a decent enough compromise, and that was adopted by the ministers, and then it's up to each participant to move ahead with that.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	2/43-51	3.58	European Influence	Bologna Declaration / Process	EU & QA
But a lot of the thinking around aspects of what would become qualifications very much was going on in Bologna, the notion of what's a bachelor's degree, what's a master's degree, what's a doctoral degree.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	2/54-56	4.42	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	
But, as we were developing the framework, a lot of stuff has gone on in Bologna, and they collided and merged.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	2/59-61	5.14	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Qualifications Frameworks
But there was a lot of stuff going on in the context of the Bologna process, around bachelor's, master's, doctorates, and then the idea of having qualifications frameworks, and then, ultimately, these overarching frameworks that would sort of link qualifications together, which would support one of the great Bologna aims of easy recognition of qualifications within the European higher-education area.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	2/64-69	5.45	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Qualifications Frameworks

And I suppose it's the idea of having a European higher-education area, which, in some sense, is quite idealistic; people are just moving around. But it is going back to that old idea, the notion of the universities. That has sort of hardened into the notion of the frameworks and the three cycles of Bologna and the national frameworks, then, that link into those three cycles and allow us better recognition. And there's a whole set of tools and instruments around the diploma supplement and recognition activity, with the ENIC/NARIC. All of this. And it's joining up all of these different things that were in, maybe, their own little silos under the Bologna rubric.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	2/72-80	6.30	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Progression, Recognition, movement within and outside of EU
If you take Bologna, it's only talking about higher education, and it only talks about national higher education for the works. And then the Bologna framework itself only refers to higher education. So three cycles, you can have intermediary qualifications within the cycles, but it's clearly higher-ed. In some countries, where the divide between higher and non-higher education is very, very strong, the higher-ed community will only want to engage with Bologna.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	3/87-93	6.30	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	
Now, side by side, the Bologna process, then, was looked on by the commission as something that was very interesting, and the commission was kind of participating in it as a stakeholder. They were also saying, "Why don't we do something for VET, vocational education training, something similar, which is much more disparate?" So you had the Copenhagen process, as a process hasn't got as much traction, but there are initiatives that have come out of it that are developing. And there's the European Quality Assurance for VET, EQAF. And there's a whole set of E's around that. EQAVET...	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	3/95-102	8.37	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Vocationality EU & QA
ECVET and so forth, for credit. But, one of the things that the commission wanted to do, and we were quite encouraging of this	26th May	Interview with	3/104-111	9.16	European	Bologna	Vocationality

and we were one of the active parties in Ireland, when we were in our pump. Our framework was a lifelong-learning framework from the outset. Bologna isn't. Though it's not against lifelong learning, but it doesn't span all of educational training. So the commission pushed this idea of a lifelong-learning framework, but it came more from the VET side. In Europe, you have, often the way education is structured, you have ministries of VET and ministries of higher education on it too.	2011	Respondent 'A'			Influence	Declaration	Lifelong Learning
What the commission had been trying to push through EQF, greater permeability between systems, this is having a huge impact and debate in Europe: in countries like Germany, Austria, where they have the dual system, a VET and then a firm dividing line between higher ed. [10:32] EQF, then, was set up with eight levels. From the off, conceptually, it wanted not to be something that would not be compatible with Bologna, so it was. When the recommendation came out of the European Parliament and Council, it was declared that the three cycles of Bologna were compatible with six, seven, eight, three upper levels of the EQF.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	113-120	10:07	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	European Qualifications Framework
Now interestingly, I could be wrong, but looking at the way things are panning out, EQF is an EU initiative, so it doesn't cover the entire European Higher Education Area. That's 47 countries. The EQF is the EU members of states, 27 plus the accession countries. EQF is politically driven, and it's arguable that it might be getting more traction. National frameworks, now, are being developed, lifelong learning frameworks across most of the member states.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	3/121-126	11:01	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	European Qualifications Framework
Again, we were the first country to reference our framework to EQF. We were involved; we wrote a lot of EQF, actually. While we're absolutely, fully supportive of the Bologna process I would predict, I could be wrong, that EQF, ultimately, will take over. But the Bologna thinking, that's in the Bologna framework, will be very much part of EQF, the higher education values and so forth. Notions will be	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	4/127-132	11:54	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	European Qualifications Framework

embedded within it.							
But, by the same token, it's arguable that it might not, because the debate on permeability and lifelong learning, in some of the European countries is very difficult. Education and training, in certain countries, is highly regulated. Qualifications are linked to jobs, and rates of pay	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	4/133-136	12:31	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Progression, Recognition, movement within Europe Lifelong Learning
] If the EU comes under increasing strain, there is a notion abroad that frameworks are very much the product of the anglophone countries, and some of the southern countries; Italy, Spain. They just don't seem to be able to bring it together	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	4/137-139	12:57	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Qualifications Frameworks
Italy or Spain, they're part of the process, but there's no real evidence. Italy has published it's higher education framework, but they haven't gone through the verification process. It's arguable, that there is this structure of a higher education framework in Italy. There's a script, for example. But whether it has any buy-in in the regions ...	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	4/143-147	13:37	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Qualifications Frameworks
Spain are supposed to use it, but they're, again, struggling to implement it. But other countries in northern Europe are, the Dutch, the Nordic countries, Flemish Belgium, and so forth.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	4/151-153	14:13	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	
Well, I suppose the fundamental thing around this is the use of learning outcomes. It's a contested area as you well know. Part of the problem is that as it's being implemented, I suppose for some	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	4-5/164-169	15:17	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform

higher-education institutions or individual academics, they see it as an external thing being imposed upon them. [15:51] The idea really originated in an educational environment. It was never a case that someone in the department of education all over the world, "Let's impose."		'A'					
Part of it has to do with, this has been going on in Europe, from an academic perspective with tuning which is very much owned by academics.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/175-176	16:35	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
And the use of learning outcomes as a way of tuning, the word as Charles Kirby, not harmonizing curricula. [17:00] So that's a process of reform, if you want to use that term, coming from the institutions.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/177-179	17:00	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
One of the things I've always found amusing., you might have seen in the Hunt Report that one of the things we threw into the mix, we were looking for the development of subject guidelines based on learning outcomes, as a kind of a piece of infrastructure that would go underneath at sort of the top level in the framework to help people and get it down to a disciplinary level, writing learning outcomes at a disciplinary level.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/181-186	17:06	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Disciplinarity / modular use of Los Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
That's what it is, yeah. But we were - one of the things we found amusing was that a lot of the individuals have been involved in the tuning subject guidelines and kind of do that as an individual research activity. And they go to meetings in two's and four's. They don't tell anyone about it, absolutely no one. [18:16] I've spoken to some of them. The idea of doing that and going to do it out in Europe is fine if you're so predisposed. But no interest in doing it at	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/188-193	17:46	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Disciplinarity / modular use of LOS

a national level.							
But I suppose the interesting issue is really about whether there's the outward academic engagement, what's going on in Europe and globally.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/199-200	18:57	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
There's a kind of philosophical element to that as well where academics have to buy into an understanding of what is going to come and what they really are about.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/201-203	19:19	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Idea of the University & Nature of academia Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
Yeah. See what has kind of happened with learning outcomes is that it is ultimately, it can be traced to institutions and academics. But then it came into the Bologna process and then it got sort of traction, then, from officialdom as well.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/204-206	19:31	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
And for those were nowhere within - in terms of its origins in academia, it seems, then, like it's an imposition.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	5/207-208	19:51	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Idea of the University & Nature of academia Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform

I have found that from my experience. They had set up four or five fellowships, AFI, and we were there to guide and advise. A lot of them had come from the education side, because we had experience with that. But any time we mentioned this, they'll look like it was an imposition coming from outside, rather than something internal. [20:29] A lot of people did buy into it, and understood it, but then some people went to the other extreme, where it became very mechanistic. Respondent 'A': [20:36] That's the danger. [20:38] From their point of view. We were going, "Well, if you measure too much", my background being assessment, "then you lose something." I'm trying to get that balance. I suppose that's what I'm trying to explore: is there a way of doing that	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	6/211-220	20:04 20:36 20:38	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform Assessment
If you take our role, for example, in terms of the qualifications framework, I don't think we could be accused of coming in with jackboots. We've tried to work with institutions. We set up the IUA framework implementation network very much to exchange good practice, and to encourage elements [21:25] What we've been trying to do, where we can, you do see people who are interested in it, and they can become champions to some degree for it, but there's no attempt to force their stuff. It does get into the area of, I suppose, academic autonomy. How autonomous? Is it absolute autonomy?	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	6/221-228	20:57	National Qualifications Framework	Bologna Declaration	Idea of the University & Nature of academia Institutional Implementation / curriculum reform
There is an appetite amongst learners. I've never met a student who would disagree with the idea of learning. None. Never met one. We've had every USI president for the past eight years on our board. All European level students, when we meet them in quality reviews, are all absolutely for it. And, as a parent, my son was applying for	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	6/229-233	21:52	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Institutional Implementation /

university two years ago, trying to find material on the actual programs.							curriculum reform
							Lifelong Learning
[22:31] What is the objection to having some sort of statement about what's expected of the learner, and some sort of thinking about how that's going to be assessed	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	6/234-235	22:31	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Learning Outcomes Assessment
To the employer it's crucial, absolutely.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	6/237	22:44	Graduates , Employment & work	Bologna Declaration	Learning Outcomes
. I think it's linked in to EQF as well. At the moment, centrally, there doesn't seem to be any letup, but it will all depend on the individual states and countries that are involved in the Bologna process, how pro-active they remain. [24:23] Without naming names, there's some countries that are just doing it because they want to please Europe, maybe some of the accession states. Some countries are doing it in a cranky way, because they're big nations. Then there's a whole mix.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	7/253-259	23:57	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	European Qualifications Framework
I I suppose a lot of this is unpredictable. I'm an historian by training, and historians always look backwards, in hindsight, and you can analyze what was unpredictable in hindsight. But looking forward I think a lot of it is unpredictable. But I'm an optimist by nature and I think there's a lot of good stuff in the Bologna process. I think it's very, very imperfectly realised both within individual countries and	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	7/260-265	24:41	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	

across Europe.							
But there is a lot to be said for having common notions of what qualifications are, what basic quality assurance should be in place in Europe	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	7/266-267	25:21	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Qualification Frameworks
And it is harkening back to an older tradition where you did have this sort of mobility of scholars.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	7/267-268	25:21	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
Yeah. We do that and sometimes the institutions forget when their students are gone. Out of sight, out of mind. We did this bilateral higher education framework aligned with New Zealand recently. And we did it. And that ultimately started because a student from our top university couldn't get recognition for an honors bachelor's degree as being equivalent to an honors bachelor's degree in New Zealand. [26:58] I was in talking to one of the schools in [REDACTED] and they were asking, "Why should we do all this?" And this was the strongest argument. I said, "You might think that you're well-known in this parish or you might think that you're world-renowned, but you're not necessarily. It's a big world and your students leave your institution and they don't all work in Ireland."	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	7/279-288	26:24	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Progression, Recognition, movement within and outside of
They're now coming to us now 10 years after they actually came to Ireland with their qualifications. So this stuff isn't going to go away, recognition and mobility. And as you say, for Irish graduates of whatever type of education and training they've gone under, with migration outward increasing it's critical.	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	8/296-299	28:03	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Progression, Recognition, movement within and outside of

And it's going to be more difficult for us. I was part of the group in DCU was setting up at RPL Policy and we're only doing it at night this year. That's still not perfect. I still don't think it's perfect. But this is...	26th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'A'	8/320- 322	29:57	European Influence	Bologna Declaration	Progression, Recognition, movement within and outside of

APPENDIX E.2

INTERVIEW: RESPONDENT 'B': 3RD STAGE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Page/Line	Timestamp	Category /	Theme	subthemes
Well, I suppose we have been very lucky in DCU, insofar as with the funding that we've got through the strategic initiatives, and because, I think, of the fact that we're very, I would say, focused on what's happening at the European level.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	1/7-10	0:17	Bologna Declaration / Process	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
And you probably know, we are having a conference that is, actually, particularly on the Bologna process, which is coming up on the seventh and eighth of June.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	1/11-12	0:31	Bologna Declaration / Process	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
I think, perhaps - and this is why the conference is being held -there's a need to make people generally aware within the system about the importance of that, on the compliance and the need for it. And I think, if you look at the European context, it's absolutely essential.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	1/21-24	1:08	Bologna Declaration / Process	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
I think what we have to be very, I suppose, smart about is ensuring that we're compliant, but also that we have flexibility within that system to develop some of our own ideas. So it's balancing that that's important	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	1/25-27	1:35	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	Institutional Implementation	

						(of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
I think the other angle that's very important is the way that students now learn. They're continuously learning because of the media and the approaches that they're using all the time, be it from the web or from a whole variety of different chat systems and everything that doesn't always go with what they're learning but it certainly is there.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	2/37-42	2:15	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Learning Outcomes	Shift from Teaching to Learning (learner centeredness)
And, again, this was mentioned at the last conference we had: [2:42] "Challenging the Unchallenged." This is [redacted] set of lectures. One of the things, again, the point was made that many of the jobs that are going to exist, say, in 2020, we don't know what they are yet.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	2/45-48	2:40	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
So we have to, all the time, be aware of the necessity to realign our knowledge and our approaches to what is going to be important for, if you like, the next tranche of jobs or the next tranche of occupations.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	2/49-51	3:00	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
I think the old days, that you had a job for life, are well gone. And I think, within any of these systems that we have now, if you're not flexible, you're not going to survive. You can see	18th May,	Interview with Respondent	2/52-55	3:14	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /	Graduates /Attributes / Employment &	

this with companies, you can see it with technologies, you can see it with products, and you can certainly see it with people. I think one of the problems that we've had in Ireland, perhaps, because we're starting at such a low level with education, people felt that when they had achieved a certain aim, that was it.	2011	'B'			Curriculum reform /AFI	Work	
Respondent 'B': [4:33] Yes. Can I address that in two ways? First of all, I think the whole idea of learning outcomes is very different from what people had before.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	2/70-71	4:33	Learning Outcomes	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	
People before looked on modules and their assessment, not so much in learning outcomes - although you could couch them in that area - but more in terms of content and seeing if people understood it and knew it.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/72-74	4:42	Learning Outcomes	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	
Now I think we're looking in a slightly different fashion. We're looking at what are the attributes, if you like, and what are the things that they should come out of in a whole program of elements. The content is obviously important, but it'll vary across programs.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/75-78	4:54	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	
And this is where the graduate attributes picks up, because	18th	Interview	3/79-81	5:08		Institutional	

we're seeing, for example, for DCU, you could have a set of attributes, or for a particular program you have a set of graduate attributes.	May, 2011	with Respondent 'B'			Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	
I think it's the balance between both of those, because you can't do everything within one module.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/82-83	5:17	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Disciplinarity and modular of use of Learning Outcomes	
I think you obviously have to start with a module, but I think it's very important that when you're looking at the overall, it's really the program that you do that makes you different, because you could very well have the same particular content and the same learning outcomes with individual modules going across a number of different modules.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/84-88	5:22	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Learning Outcomes	Disciplinarity and modular of use of Learning Outcomes
The key thing is to ensure, to align, I would say, the program with the graduate attributes on an overall basis	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/89-90	5:38	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Learning Outcomes	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work
And really, I think the alignment of the outcomes of the overall program is going to be key, and they must be aligned with the credentialed attributes. Otherwise, what does it	18th May,	Interview with Respondent	3/95-97	6:02	Graduates /Attributes / Employment &	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /	

mean to be a DCU graduate?	2011	'B'			Work	Curriculum reform /AFI	
We would have said that they had a good, basic knowledge of the academic basis of whatever the course was. We would have said that they were analytical in their approach and those other elements. And we've brought some of those. Not all of them. We've brought some of them into the new learning outcomes of our system.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/101-104	6:23	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Learning Outcomes Bologna Declaration / Process	Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts
But our new ones, for entrepreneurial - I always say, in DCU, when I came here, it was DCU, was HEA at the time, would have been the organization or the university or the institute of the job.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	3/105-107	7:39	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work
So you were harnessing people to go into jobs that were available, or should be available, to make the economy work. That's changed, because, A, the types of jobs have changed much more.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	4/108-110		Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
And that reflects back on producing within our programs people who won't be expecting to be given a job or to fit into	18th May,	Interview with	4/114-116	7:10	Institutional Implementation	Graduates /Attributes /	

a system that's there, but they can generate their own, and that they won't be afraid to do so.	2011	Respondent 'B'			(of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Employment & Work	
So I think it's a bigger level of empowerment. I mean, having given people a set of attributes that allowed them to get a job was richly empowering those individuals, and it allowed us to bring in all the multinationals and to develop out that end.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	4/117-119	7:21	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
But the next level won't be like that, because if it's a knowledge-based society, then those individuals, a large percentage will probably have to make their own jobs, because multinationals in certain areas will not be coming to Ireland anymore, because the content and the cost element, the cost content of whatever they're doing, can probably be achieved more easily in other places.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	4/120-124	7:35	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	Progression, Recognition / Movement within and outside of EU
Well, this is where you're talking to the professional bodies. We've gone through this quite a lot, and one that I'd be most aware of would be Engineers Ireland, would be the professional body, and then looking at what the engineers are doing. And I'd also be very aware on the nursing side.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	4/128-131	8:08	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
In many ways, they reinforce each other. And I think the key element is, if there is a professional body that has these requirements and we have a program, the really successful programs can marry both of those, because the requirements of both ensure that the individual who comes out is a better	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	4/132-135	8:24	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	

professional.							
I think the Academic Framework for Innovation, they were linked, there was no doubt about it, because you know, there's about 2,500 modules had to be rewritten and the outcomes had to be done. So that's cost.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/144-146	9:19	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Learning Outcomes Bologna Declaration / Process	
And as you know, there were fellows involved in that. There was buyout of the associate deans, for example. There were a number of initiatives, and they're ongoing, to try and achieve that as well as possible.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/147-149	9:31	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
So I'd say we've done very well in DCU in getting all of that done. I think that, in that day, was structured to work around that, because this is on top of what everybody else was doing in any case. But the concept of, I suppose, learning outcomes, et cetera, would predate that.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/150-153	9:40	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Learning Outcomes	

But I would say, in a sense, that the SIF funding, in particular, gave us a mechanism to achieve that, which probably could have been achieved if the university hadn't that, but it would have taken longer, and it would probably not have allowed such an informed process.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/154-157	9:58	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	
Well, I think, in a sense, you could say there were a number of phases. One of them was to inform people. So that would be the appointment of fellows, getting the associate deans involved, and generally having a lot of activities that would make people aware of what was best practice and the approaches to take. I think that's been largely completed.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/164-168	10:38	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
The second tenet around that would be making all the systems that we have that could dovetail to do that. Course Builder would be an example of that. That's still an ongoing process because Course Builder still has to prove itself in every sense first, because there are some issues there. That is still ongoing.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/169-172	10:57	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
[That has to be completed and whether it's Course Builder or some other system that's there that will achieve that. Because really you want to have all your systems interlinked and, I suppose, informing each other and we're not there yet. That's one angle that we still have to work on. We're testing it	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5/173-176	11:14	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Bologna Declaration / Process	

all the time and we're developing it.					reform/ AFI		
I suppose because this was new and we've really acted in many ways, in this particular area, as the pilot group developing that with the company who was involved. So, as in any system, we're developing the prototype and we're doing the testing and a lot of that here.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	5-6/177-	11:33	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes
But I think the good thing now is that we have a very clear view and it's gone through all the various mechanisms in the university. It's been looked at by executives. It's been looked at by academic council, by heads, by all the academics and by academic council.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	6/185-188	12:02	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
Really now there's pretty well, although there's still it's being refined a little bit more still, there's a very clear key set of these graduate attributes. So that gives us, if you like, where we need to be.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	6/189-191	12:17	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Graduates /Attributes / Employment & Work	
We have also, all of the modules realigned with the various elements of learning outcomes smaller dose. The key thing then would be to align those together and that's a work in progress.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	6/192-194	12:29	Learning Outcomes	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	

In some cases that might mean this thing... In a sense we're saying, "Here's where we want to go. This is what we have." There's always going to be some meshing required to get that there and we're right in the middle of that I would say now.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	6/195-197	12:41	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
Right. Well, I suppose you're probably well aware now that we have a number of modules that are now going to be delivered, one of them is learning online and delivering online. The next one is assessment online. They're all associated with this. [14:39] The longer term view is, we'd love to have a suite of programs. And what's been good, because we developed this through the Dublin Region of Higher Education Alliance, that basically this has given us access to expertise in other institutes and universities. Because, as you know, we're of limited, all of us are in terms of our resources.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	7/221-228	14:26	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Disciplinarity and modular of use of Learning Outcomes	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform) Assessment
I think there would be a lot of people like that, whereas I'm very interested in the teaching, the learning side of things so I probably delved into it perhaps more than other people, perhaps not. But I think, again, we're asking people to do these things so we have to provide them with the tools to inform themselves. [16:56] Most academics are really delighted when they see a good methodology of transferring some information. I think we've got very talented people here who help developing that. Your own school, I think, is a mecca for this information.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	8/254-260	16:40	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Idea of the University & Nature of academia	

But I suppose it goes right back to the first thing that you said, the realization that this is lifelong learning and that whatever you're doing, there's a set of tools that could help you and inform you as to how to do it as best as possible.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	9/301-303	19:53	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	Lifelong Learning	
I suppose, if you were to go to the doctor and you found out that he wasn't qualified in the area that he claims to be, that would cause you a lot of issues. And in some ways sometimes we have people, particularly universities we have people who have a role, a very strong role in education, that they don't have those extra qualifications.	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	9/304-308	20:05	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Progression, Recognition / Movement within and outside of EU	Progression, Recognition / Movement within and outside of EU
Correct. The other angle that's very important, obviously, as well, I think if you look at the quality agencies and a variety of other elements, they're going to look in the future very closely at performance of teaching. But also, I would say, in	18th May, 2011	Interview with Respondent 'B'	10/330-333	21:42	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum		EU & Quality Assurance (EU & QA)

any of those instances, from that develops.

reform/ AFI

APPENDIX E.3

INTERVIEW: RESPONDENT 'C': 3RD STAGE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Line/page	Timecode	Category /	Theme	subthemes
OK. I think it's difficult. Difficult, obviously--to... I don't know how to say... that there is a measurable impact at this stage. So. It obviously is probably act or talk. If that's what... in your lesson?	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/34-36	1:40	European Influence	European Influence	
] It's certainly had an impact, in terms of making people rethink their teaching practice. So. The very fact that we ask them to articulate their modules in terms of learning outcomes? And then align that with assessment. Certainly, I think that's got people thinking. [2:10] Again... and this was not necessarily part of [inaudible]. But we were asking people to provide details, more sort of descriptors	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/38-42	1:51	European Influence	European Influence	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform
So. Again, perhaps articulating things that much weren't listened. But making those explicit. And forcing people to make those, put those down in paper. And again, it's moving into the public realm, as well. So. A lot of that would have been private to the individual academic.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/44-47	2:17	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		Idea of the University & Nature of academia
But that's out there now. And can be viewed by colleagues. So. Again, there's an option of... an option, too, for reflection there. And for colleagues to look. To come together, to think about curriculum now, as a team. Now. That would have been happening in certain circumstances already.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/49-52	2:35	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		Idea of the University & Nature of academia

But it's providing a more formal mechanism for that to happen.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/54	2:49	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
No. Not... I suppose it's cyclical. Isn't it? It's happening at certain periods of time. So, for example. A program review. That kind of certain period in time.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/56-57	2:55	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
That's when... that was when it would happen in a more formal way. But... no, not entirely... it's certainly not embedded.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	1/59-60	3:06	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
So, part of my job was to try and convince the rest of my department, that this was a good thing. And it was... actually, in a way? It was kind of an easy sell. Because learning outcomes themselves were there, really, before AFI mentioned it. Because we...	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/68-71	3:23	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	Learning Outcomes	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes
Respondent 'C': [3:40] Yes! And particularly in education.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/72	3:23	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	Learning Outcomes	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes

So. It wasn't too difficult a sell. But for the ones who weren't coming from a pedagogic background? They come from a subject based background. And then we weren't teachers. They'd find that quite difficult to... and I don't think it was concept of learning outcomes themselves. But... it was more that... they were being told what to do with their... with what they teach.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/79-83	3:46	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	Learning Outcomes	
Respondent 'C': [4:06] Yes! Yes, yes, yes!	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/84	4:06	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
Because people could say to us, "See?" This is a threat to their own autonomies. So. What I was talking about earlier, at making what we do explicit	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/91-92	4:20		Idea of the University & Nature of academia	
Put it down in paper. And it being accessible across the university community. On one hand, you can see it's advantageous. It's making things more transparent. But on another? We don't let each other into each other's classrooms. And then, suddenly, this is what I do, it's actually there for everyone to see, which is difficult, I think.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	2/94-98	4:26	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		

] Absolutely. It has gone off the radar, for a number of reasons. So yes, it has. I think, to me, in fact, I know there was confusion as to what AFI was and is and how learning outcomes fitted into AFI, because learning outcomes is something that we needed to do anyway. [5:40] We were glad to do it under Bologna. We had chosen to package that up with AFI, which, of course, is a much bigger curriculum-reform, change-management process in DCU. So from the layperson's perspective, I don't necessarily think that what we wanted to do was that well-articulated, and it's not surprising, I think, that there may be confusion.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	3/106-133	5:15	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration / Process
Because the Bologna compliance elements that a university had to buy into, some of that was quite easy in terms of structures. We had them already there, and the credits and modules were there, so that part was relatively easy. So then, if I'm right, AFI was a vehicle to help some of that compliance happen, but also bringing in other things...	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	3/114-118	6:02	Bologna Declaration / Process	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	
Respondent 'C': [6:26] Exactly. You put it very well. Yes, yes, yes.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	3/119	6:26	Bologna Declaration / Process	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	
I'll do the alignment part. The alignment part, I suppose there are mixed views in DCU as to the degree to which that has happened. My view would be that we still need to do a QA piece on that, and	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	3/126-129	6:52	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /		

also that it becomes embedded into practice. So it's not that we've done and then we've finished; we need to continually review.					Curriculum reform		
I think everyone has made a good stab at alignment, but we need to revisit. So in terms of where that is at, we're hoping that over the next year we will be able to roll out a procedure where we offer support within individual schools, where we can work with colleagues to ensure that that alignment happens. [7:34] With regards to the wider AFI project, I'm probably not the best person to ask. Various aspects of that have stalled at the moment, partly funding, partly the IT infrastructure that we have is deemed not to be sufficient for what we want to do in AFI.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	3/131-137	7:13	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
I think it's really important, actually, because in DCU, we've sold something called AFI. Now, an individual academic hasn't necessarily got time to familiarize themselves with Bologna. They just need to know what they need to do and why.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	4/153-156	8:26	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
One of the things that they said was missing or dropped out of the mix was this idea of student-centered learning and the teaching mission of higher education, because you had the EHEA and the Bologna, and the two sort of working hand-in-hand together. And some bits, there was that element there. That's the bit I'm interested in.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	4-5/169-172	9:40	Bologna Declaration / Process		

I suppose that's connected to lifelong learning as well, which was quite a strong strand. It originally then disappeared again, and I think it's coming back again. But do you think, with Europe as well, the whole Bologna process is slowing down, the momentum is slowing down, because of similar circumstances, kind of more on a macro level? And DCU is funding, is definitely doing it, and structure is doing it, but momentum is important.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	5/174-179	10:03	Bologna Declaration / Process		
Respondent 'C': [10:30] It seems to be the case. And again, that would be, I suppose, an anecdote. I really couldn't say that definitively, but it seems to be that sort of feeling. There are other pressures which are overtaking this, other directives and so on. Particularly in Ireland, we're focusing, I think, more at a national level as well.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	5/180-183	10:30	Bologna Declaration / Process		
] Yeah. And that's really the first stage, isn't it, thinking about it? But then we want to know about action. So you need to think about it, but what has happened?	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	5/199-200	11:58	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
] Yeah. Going back to your question, I would be looking for some tangible evidence. So, this is the way I used to do things, and this is how I do them now, or this is how I plan to do them in the future. This is the type of assessment I had, and this is why, I've	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	5/202-207	12:07	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Assessment	Assessment

changed my learning outcomes, perhaps, or I've realized that the type of assessment wasn't aligned with learning outcomes, and this is what I do now. [12:29] So, more tangible evidence, I suppose					reform		
I see AFI as a project in time, and AFI will end, but what we hope to achieve in terms of AFI has to be embedded.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	6/223-224	13:24	institutional implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		
So this continual, cyclical thinking about teaching, learning and assessment has to become embedded, both in individuals' practice, but also in curriculum design at the program level as well.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	6/230-232	13:42		Assessment	Assessment
So we need to ensure that there are structures at the program level that support that, to ensure that that happens, because, yes, there'll always be people like yourself and Francesca who are interested in what we have.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	6/230-232	13:53	institutional implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform		Assessment
But other colleagues don't necessarily have the time nor, they don't see it as a priority, and we have to make it a priority if it is a priority for DCU	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	6/234-235	14:04	Idea of the University & Nature of academia	Learning Outcomes	

I think the problem isn't, a lot of colleagues who took the same view is, colleagues do their Ph.D. already. They come in very qualified, and then we ask them to do another qualification. The pressures that they're under, how are they supposed to do that? But we do need some sort of structure. I suppose, in light of the researcher development type framework, where people can progress at different levels. Like that always leads to promotion, also.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	7/247-252	15:02	Idea of the University & Nature of academia		
I think there's no harm. And we do need to, in academic institutions we need to have a critical eye...	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	8/292-293	17:59	Idea of the University & Nature of academia		
were the outcomes, yeah, they can be very useful. But we also know that there are problems with the whole learning outcomes paradigm.	31st May 2011	Respondent 'C'	8/295-296	18:06	Outcomes		

APPENDIX E.4

INTERVIEW: RESPONDENT 'D': 3RD STAGE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Phrase/word/term	Date	Subject	Page/Line	Timestamp	Category /	Theme	subthemes
Yeah, I mean, I suppose, if I go back to where . . . when I came to DCU, I had done the alignment of programs with the NFQ in the institute sector, and it was mandated and there was quite a specific process, and it had to be done in a very short time frame, et cetera. [2:07] And they were required to actually demonstrate alignment, so they couldn't just say, "This is a six or a seven or an eight," they had to actually prove that they were, and it actually required them to rewrite programs, like there were hiring certificates that had to have additional modules or had to be firmed up, if you like.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	1-2/33-38	1:50	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI		
And so when I came to DCU, I was quite taken aback that we had such a low level of knowledge and of interest in it.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/39-40	2:25	Bologna Declaration / Process		
And in fact, there would have been people here in DCU when I came in 2005 who were questioning whether the NFQ applied to us at all, and they were saying things like, "Well, the university sector doesn't have to do that."	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/41-43	2:34	Bologna Declaration / Process	Qualification Frameworks	
And I actually remember putting a call in to a kind of friend of mine, a former colleague in HETAC who had been involved in setting up the NFQ originally, and saying, "Clarify please."	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/44-46	2:45	Qualification Frameworks	Bologna Declaration / Process	National Qualifications Framework
And he said, "Well, the way it's worded is, you know, the HETAC sector must and the institutes or the universities are strongly encouraged to adopt. But," he said, "The bottom line is there's	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	2/47-49	2:55	Qualification Frameworks	Bologna Declaration / Process	

one national framework of qualifications."		'D'					
So I think from the university sector's point of view, it was, as many things were, it was kind of light touch, so you were encouraged and hoped that you would, but it wasn't mandated. I mean, you kind of, ultimately you were going to have to, but that's not what they were saying.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/50-53	3:09	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
[3:27] So, I mean, a very good example of that is that when UCD did the Horizons program and moved to learning outcomes, they used the Dublin descriptors, not the framework.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/54-56	3:27	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
3:37] And the Dublin descriptors are only supposed to be for aligning frameworks with each other, so they're supposed to be at the meta-level, but they were never designed to be used at the program level or the org level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/57-59	3:37	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
There was the review of modularization reported, the Modularization Working Group. There was the first strategic plan, which made a very definite statement that DCU would review, revise or retire its entire portfolio.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/62-64	3:53	Bologna Declaration / Process	Modularisation	
I suppose, internally, we played up the need to align with the NFQ in order to sort of, I suppose, prompt it to happen.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	2/65-67	4:06	Qualification Frameworks		
Prompt . . . we would have said a lot of things like, "We have to demonstrate alignment with the NFQ," whereas we knew all we	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	2/68-70	4:22	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /	Qualification Frameworks	National Qualifications Framework

had to do was place the awards in the framework.		'D'			Curriculum reform /AFI		
We also realized that when you actually got into comparability of qualifications, it was never going to be sufficient just to say something was a level eight or a level nine. You really do . . . and I mean, ultimately, that's what's happened.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/72-76	4:40	Qualification Frameworks		
So, I mean, about three years ago, the qualifications authority set up the Framework Implementation Network, and that was to try to get the universities and the NUI sector to evidence alignment with Bologna and with the NQF. So we were ahead of that.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/77-80	4:53	Bologna Declaration / Process		National Qualifications Framework
Yeah, so that was, again, because of the way it was worded, it was all very kind of persuasive and negotiated, but it was quite clear, and I think we were actually right. [5:21] And we were thoroughly in ahead of everybody else in terms of saying, "Look, we have to do this. Let's use it as an opportunity."	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/84-87	5:12	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
No, FIN came from a grouping of . . . that came through the IUA, the Irish University Association, the Qualifications Authority, and the NUI. [5:46] It was basically, I think it was probably originated by NQAI, the National Qualifications Authority, because they saw, first of all, that the universities weren't kind of demonstrably aligning.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/89-93	5:32	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	
They were just saying, which was really all they were asked to do, but also, I guess, what had happened was when the universities did start to place the qualifications in, there were a whole pile of qualifications that didn't fit.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/94-96	5:58		NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	

So there's a whole pile of qualifications which, although the NQAI would say the university sector were invited to participate in the development of the framework, but chose not to. As a result, the framework probably maps much better onto HETAC qualifications at the third level . . .	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3/101-104	6:26	Bologna Declaration / Process	Qualification Frameworks	National Qualifications Framework
The level six to ten, than it does for the university qualifications. So that a whole pile of outstanding items, there was the issue of the universities not actually necessarily using program outcomes, using module outcomes, just saying their programs are level eight, nine, ten, et cetera. [7:02] And so the NQAI kind of prompted this grouping to try to accelerate the adoption of the framework and the award descriptors and that by the universities and the NUI colleges, so that was really where FIN came from.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	3-4/106-109	6:42	Bologna Declaration / Process	Qualification Frameworks	National Qualifications Framework
Well, it was set up with the registrars under the IUA, so each of the registrars were . . . Well, the NQAI did a lot of sort of research beforehand. [7:27] They came and met, say, people like myself in the different institutions, to find out what did they see as priorities, what did they see as barriers to adoption, et cetera.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/114-117	7:19	Bologna Declaration / Process	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	National Qualifications Framework
The universities that all, promptly at that stage, with the exception maybe of Trinity and Maynooth, started along the road of curriculum reform but it was very variable, it was very slow.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/118-120	7:37	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
[7:47] In many cases, it was quite voluntary, so people were told, "You have to have program outcomes," but they weren't given any support in writing them.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	4/121-122	7:47	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Bologna Declaration / Process	

		'D'			reform /AFI		
Yeah, or the institutional . . . no, the registrars were the ones who kind of signed up to having representatives. [8:03] So the representatives in the first round, they decided on three kind of major areas. So there was assessment and learning outcomes, there was tightening of awards, tightening and naming.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/124-127	7:55	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI		Assessment
And then the third one was kind of a look at disciplinary learning outcomes, disciplinary descriptors. And on the basis of . . . those, three projects were decided on from the interviews I did with people before setting it up.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/128-130	8:16	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration / Process	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes
And on the basis of that then, the registrars kind of nominated representatives from their institutions for these and then, some of those representatives have changed, but it was more . . . and some of the projects, the second wave, the projects changed that they focused on, with kind of recognition of prior learning and that sort of thing.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/131-134	8:29	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
I mean, it has worked quite well. We have produced a few publications and that, but what it really did was it gave us an opportunity for each of us to kind of disseminate what we were doing to give support, give advice, and for the NQAI then, through the meetings and that, to try to get a sense of where everybody was at.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	4/138-141	8:56	National Qualifications Framework	NQIA / IUA / FIN /HEA (National reform)	
Yeah, I mean, it was funny because certainly when it came to the assessment of learning outcomes stuff, we very much wrote that report as a sort of handbook or a guide to help people.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	5/146-250	9:23	Learning Outcomes	National Qualifications Framework	Assessment

[9:35] But for whatever reason, it wasn't really disseminated widely. I think it might have been because we're all in the sort of coaxing and negotiation		'D'					
[9:45] It might also be to do with the stage of development, and I think one of the big . . . I felt myself that we were too early with the assessment. I still think there was a huge amount of work to be done on learning outcomes	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	5/151-153	9:45	Learning Outcomes	National Qualifications Framework	Assessment
and I can see it with AFI is we put so much effort into writing the learning outcomes, that there almost isn't the appetite for the assessment piece. And as you would know better than me, the assessment is what they're going to stand or fall on.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	5/155-159	10:00	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
I'll tell you that my impressions, and obviously, I haven't done anything empirical on this, although I'd like to, but my impressions, for example, there's a whole language now that people use which was alien to them five or six years ago. [14:26] So people talk about learning outcomes; they talk about curriculum.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	6-7/216-219	14:14	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
And I think the curriculum piece is really interesting and what you said there about thinking about curriculum and curriculum alignment	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/220-221	14:33	Learning Outcomes	National Qualifications Framework	
You go back, when I came here first, in fact, in my first year here, the business school asked me to go over and do a presentation on Bologna.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	7/222-223	14:40	Bologna Declaration / Process		

		'D'					
And I didn't know, for example, that . . . like in the HETAC sector, you have a five year programmatic reviews. So every five years, root and branch re-accreditation effectively with an external panel of your program.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/224-226	14:48	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
So you're never more than five years away from programmatic review. So as you're teaching your modules, you're all the time thinking about the changes you're making and you would have quite a lot of program perspectives where even yearly you'd be saying, "Well, I'm thinking of changing this" or "I'm thinking . . . " whatever. [15:13] So there tended to be a very strong program focus all the time. And when I came here, I was just astonished that outside of professional body accreditation, nobody really thought about the program, let alone the curriculum.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/228-234	15:00	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
And I remember doing my workshop in business school, and kind of saying, "But how do you know you're BBS is still a BBS?" Because I just couldn't understand that.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/235-236	15:26	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
[15:36] And I suppose part of the difficulty is that curriculum, even though probably most people didn't, except people in education studies, didn't even name it.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/237-238	15:36	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
And it was such . . . there was so much academic freedom associated with it, and there was so much autonomy.	18th May	Interview with Respondent	7/239-240	15:45	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /	Bologna Declaration /	Idea of the University & Nature of

	2011	'D'			Curriculum reform /AFI	Process	academica
I couldn't believe, for example, like again in the HETAC sector, if I wanted to change the . . . I couldn't change, say, the breakdown between [indecipherable 15: [15:52] 48] assessment and exam without going back to HETAC for permission. In a single module, you couldn't do that.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/241-244	15:48	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia
You could play around with elements of the program. There was a rule of thumb, like about 20 percent you could get away with. Beyond that, you wrote to inform them. And if it went up to about 50 percent of a program, you had to be re-accredited.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/245-247	16:05	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
I was amazed that people could actually change the balance between continuous assessment and exam year in, year out in a module. I was just astonished that that was possible, if you can imagine it.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	7/249-251	16:17	Bologna Declaration / Process	Learning Outcomes	Assessment
And they think more, now this is a very, it's a real generalization, but even the biggest skeptics will talk about learning outcomes and they will, even if they don't do anything about it, they know there's a very definite sort of cause and effect between assessment and learning outcomes.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8/254-257	16:41	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration / Process	
There's a good sense, I think, of the way assessment drives the curriculum and drives what the students learn.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8/258-259	17:00	Learning Outcomes	Assessment	

So, first of all, I think there's a very definite awareness or realization of what curricula means, and I mean, even in the literature, curriculum isn't well-defined. And that, as you know, is especially at third level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	6/260-262	17:07	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
But there's a sense that there is such a thing as curriculum, and that teaching, learning and assessment methods and that all contribute and all sort of go into the mix or whatever. And I think there's a much more consciousness of that sort of shift from teaching to learning, even though everybody doesn't accept that	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8/263-266	17:19	Learning Outcomes	Shift from Teaching to Learning (learner centeredness)	Assessment
And also, even though I don't think learning outcomes has caused as much of a shift from teaching to learning as we'd like to pretend it has, I think the teacher is still very much in control. But I think there's much more awareness.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8/267-269	17:40	Learning Outcomes	Shift from Teaching to Learning (learner centeredness)	
And I think knowing that assessment needs to be appropriate, even if we haven't got there yet. It's out there, so I mean, I do think there's a whole culture and a language around curriculum that we just didn't have before.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8/270-272	17:52	Learning Outcomes	Assessment	Shift from Teaching to Learning (learner centeredness)
No, but we have INTRA modules now worth for anything for five credits up to, in one case, 60 credits worth, a full year out. [19:03] And there were real problems. Most of our INTRA modules have no module descriptors in CourseBuilder, there's no learning outcomes associated with them, et cetera. But there was a big fear among people that . . . well, I mean, how . . . people felt that the learning outcomes were inextricably linked with quality of the [indecipherable 19: [19:13] 24]	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	8-9/286-293	18:55	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process Learning Outcomes	Learning Outcomes

experience.							
So there were huge problems about even going there with learning outcomes and having a module descriptor.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/290-292	19:24	Learning Outcomes		
. And how can we expect the student to achieve the learning outcomes if the employer doesn't give them a good quality experience, if they have them making the coffee? [19:41] So from working with . . . I mean they had a valid point, because that's the way it was always done.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/296-299	19:32	Learning Outcomes	Graduates / Employment & Work	
And what we've done with them is gotten them to decouple the learning outcomes from the work experience.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/302-303	19:50	Learning Outcomes	Graduates / Employment & Work	
So, for example, if you have . . . if one of your learning outcomes is that you can critique and reflect on your work experience, well, that doesn't . . . you can achieve that whether it was really bad or really good.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/304-306	19:56	Learning Outcomes	Graduates / Employment & Work	
So we tried to decouple that. We actually now have inter-level descriptors that will apply to someone who has to stay in DCU and do their experience in a lab or someone who gets the best placement in the country. [20:18] Now, obviously, they'll get a different experience. [laughs]	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/308-311	20:06	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	Graduates / Employment & Work	

But learning outcomes are only a statement of the minimum learning that all students will gain. So in that context, I think . . .	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/312-313	20:22	Learning Outcomes		Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts
That learning outcome would be about their ability to critique their work experience, and, in most cases, we'd be trying to give workshops around reflective practice. [20:43] But other things would be, for example, being able to discuss career paths from their . . . Others would be to critique the functioning of the company. So they're very of relevant INTRA but they're achievable, regardless of the spread.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/316-320	20:31	Learning Outcomes	Graduates / Employment & Work	
But again, I think people recognize. First of all they'll say, "Oh, it's this learning outcomes thing that's making us do that," but then they say, "Well, actually, there's opportunity here because, really, [clears throat] we couldn't stand over this."	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	9/323-325	21:03	Learning Outcomes		
So, I do think there are tangible cultural shifts. It wasn't big bang, but I think it's maybe more valuable than big bang because it's much less surface, it's starting to go more deeply.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/328-330	21:25	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
But I would still say we're maybe 20 percent of the way along getting a culture of real awareness. I think things like program review are going to make a huge difference when they come in.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	10/331-333	21:40	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Bologna Declaration / Process	

		'D'			reform /AFI		
I think things like teaching quality evaluation and enhancement and that. I think there are a number of things that are going to coincide.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/334-335	21:51	Bologna Declaration / Process	EU & Quality Assurance (EU & QA)	EU & Quality Assurance (EU & QA)
But most of those, I think, you would find it really hard to do if we hadn't had the building blocks of AFI, and I still think of AFI as the foundation.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/336-337	22:01	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
It's not the house; do you know what I mean? [laughs] It's very much the underpinning.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/338-339	22:10	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
I would certainly ask the academics. My only hesitation around students is that, in a way, [clears throat] the whole process should be invisible to students really. [22:34] The ultimate for them should be that they get a quality experience. The other thing is, as students go through in a relatively short time frame, it would be very difficult to find students who you could get to do a before and after.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/342-346	22:24	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
But certainly, from the point of view of [clears throat] the academics, I would ask everybody. [22:56] And again, AFI was designed so that there was almost nobody in the place who wasn't required to be involved in some shape or form because,	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/348-351	22:48	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Bologna Declaration / Process	Idea of the University & Nature of academia

ultimately, every academic here pretty much teaches something.					reform /AFI		
And if you're teaching something, you have to be aware of the learning outcomes and the assessment and how they're achieved and all that kind of stuff.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/352-353	23:07	Learning Outcomes	Bologna Declaration / Process	Assessment Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts
I suppose I would ask them things like almost the before and after perspectives from their point of view in relation to, say, the perception of their modules, how that fits into a program, how they perceive curriculum. What do they know before, and what do they know now.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	10/354-356	23:07	Learning Outcomes	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes	
on the dynamic curriculum. [24:27] And it's this ideas that, all we've really done, I think, is initiate a process of continuous curriculum development, which is not so much what we are all about.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	11/377-389	24:30	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
The other thing I didn't say a lot about the AFI and DCU, I suppose it has given us the opportunity to sort of take a holistic view of curriculum.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	11/382-383	24:48	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform /AFI	Bologna Declaration / Process	
But to have every module have the same look and feel even. To use the same terminology . . . When I started working with the Fellows in the beginning, I remember having one group of	18th May	Interview with Respondent	11/386-389	23:05	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) /	Learning Outcomes	Disciplinary and modular of use of

Fellows, and there were three or four different understandings of what a course descriptor was.	2011	'D'			Curriculum reform /AFI		Learning Outcomes
Some people thought of it as a module description like you'd have up on the Web. Some of them thought of it as the course overview you're given your first class	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	11/390-391	25:21			
Your discipline has the autonomy to decide what are the program outcomes, what are the modular outcomes, how they should be assessed. Don't let anyone else tell you how to do it.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/395-397	25:48	Learning Outcomes	Modularisation	Assessment
That's the bit. Who cares if we're all settling on terminology for module descriptor, or course descriptor, or word descriptor or whatever? What you need to be protective of is where you genuinely have academic freedom and for God's sake ring-fence it.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/398-401	25:57	Bologna Declaration / Process	Graduates / Employment & Work	Disciplinary and modular of use of Learning Outcomes
That became a huge issue around contradiction. There are contradictions at the national level where we're pushing for a modular structure, and yet the whole system from pre-school right up to PhD is structured around award. [27:13] Francois says a very interesting distinction of this in relation to differentiating between the award and the program of study, et cetera.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/411-415	26:58	Bologna Declaration / Process	Modularisation Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	
If you're going to have a truly modular system, you can only have very generic program descriptors, or award descriptors or whatever way you want to put them.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent	12/416-417	26:58	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum	Modularisation	

		'D'			reform/ AF		
In fact the NFQ descriptors are very generic. This is another one of these unanswered questions. No, you're absolutely right. I think there's a series of unanswered questions around Bologna and learning outcomes.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/418-420	27:28	Qualification Frameworks	Bologna Declaration / Process	National Qualifications Framework
The classic one for me is the interaction between the grading scheme, and achievement of learning outcomes.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/421-422	27:45	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AF	Bologna Declaration / Process	Assessment
In many contexts learning outcomes are binary. You either achieve them or you don't. And yet we need to give a mark to reflect the degree of achievement of the learning outcome. I spoke to Jenny Moon one time, who is supposed to be an expert in this area about that.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/423-426	27:55	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AF		Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts

[28:08] I got a very disappointing answer which is, "You should just treat them as separate." "But your average academic, they're inherently linked." Learning outcomes originated from competencies. You either pass your [Indecipherable 28: [28:12] 23] test or you failed.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/427-428	28:08	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	National Qualifications Framework	Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts
It wasn't nuanced at all. There are a number of very much . . . again, do you write them a [Indecipherable 28: [28:26] 33] threshold level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	12/431-432	28:26	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AF	National Qualifications Framework	Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts
[28:35] In the early days in DCU, there were a number of people who were of the view that you wrote the learning outcomes to the A standard, and worked backwards as opposed to . . . like to the one- one, as opposed to the pass level.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	13/433-435	28:35	Learning Outcomes Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	National Qualifications Framework	Learning Outcomes / Competences and Threshold concepts

[28:47] The modular structure with the way we've developed the NFQ. They don't fit. There's an ultimate; there is a clash there.	18th May 2011	Interview with Respondent 'D'	13/436-437	28:47	Institutional Implementation (of Bologna) / Curriculum reform/ AFI	National Qualifications Framework	Modularisation