

Vocational Training in the Performing Arts at Level III from 1987 -2002.

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Education

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX CONTENTS

1	Questionnaires	1
2	Questionnaire Responses	5
3	Tabulated Analyses	8
4	Revised National Diploma Unit Lists	18

Transcripts of the Interviews

5	Original Starters:		21
	OS 1	Former BTEC Officer	21
	OS 2	Independent Consultant	27
	OS 3	Head of Drama Conservatoire	30
	OS 4	Head of Performing Arts (F.E.College)	33
	OS 5	Retired Lecturer of Performing Arts	39
	OS 6	Retired Lecturer of Performing Arts	44
	OS 7	Retired Lecturer of Performing Arts	48
6	Front Line Troops:		52
	FTL 1	Head of Performing Arts Department	52
	FTL 2	Senior Lecturer Performing Arts	56
	FTL 3	Lecturer Performing Arts (Drama)	62
	FTL 4	Lecturer Performing Arts (Dance)	68
	FTL 5	Performing Arts Leader (School Based)	73
	FTL 6	Lecturer Performing Arts (Drama)	77
	FTL 7	Performing Arts Leader (School Based)	81
	FTL 8	Lecturer Performing Arts (Music)	86
	FTL 9	Senior Lecturer Performing Arts	90
7	New Developers:		95
	ND 1	BTEC Development Advisor	95
	ND 2	Northern Ireland DfES Official	100
	ND 3	BTEC Advisor	104
	ND 4	QCA Official	110
	ND 5	BTEC Advisor/Consultant	117
	ND 6	BTEC Advisor	125

Qualifications in the Performing Arts
Further Development Project

Staff Questionnaire

Please tick or circle your responses clearly

Do you think that a BTEC Programme in
the Performing Arts:-

		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	should provide students with training across a broad range of performing arts	●	●	●	●
2	should enable students to concentrate on their own particular specialised area	●	●	●	●
3	should enable students to concentrate on their own specialism but also offer some practical experience in each of the other performing arts	●	●	●	●
4	should enable students to concentrate on their own specialism but also provide information about each of the other performing arts	●	●	●	●

Give your opinions on the following statements:-

5	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by their ability	●	●	●	●
6	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by good luck	●	●	●	●
7	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by their ability	●	●	●	●
8	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by good luck	●	●	●	●
9	To achieve success in the entertainment business, training is essential:	●	●	●	●

Which of these programmes does your school/college offer?
(tick all which apply)

BTEC National in Performing Arts	10
BTEC First in Performing Arts	11
BTEC National in Popular Music	12
BTEC National in Music Technology	13
BTEC National in Media	14
GNVQ in Performing Arts	15
GNVQ in Media	16

Performing Arts courses are managed best

17	In Art & Design Department/Faculties
18	In General Studies/Humanities Departments
19	Other (Please state your ideal choice).....

Continued.....

20

How many years have you been teaching the Performing Arts?

21

How many years have you been teaching on BTEC Performing Arts Courses?

22

Gender: are you male or female? (Please tick or circle)

male

female

23

Have you ever been a professional performing artist?

yes

no

24

If so, for how long?

25

Do you teach on BTEC National in Performing Arts?

yes

no

26

Do you teach on BTEC First in Performing Arts?

yes

no

27

Do you teach on any other type of BTEC programme?

yes

no

28

Do you teach on any type of GNVQ programme?

yes

no

29

Are you familiar with the structure and content of the Performing Arts GNVQ?

yes

no

30

Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?
(tick only one)

drama

1

dance

2

music

3

performance technology

4

music technology

5

31

Which ONE of the specialised areas do you regard as your major subject?
(tick only one)

drama

1

dance

2

music

3

performance technology

4

music technology

5

Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?
(tick all which apply)

drama

32

dance

33

music

34

performance technology

35

music technology

36

37

Do you continue to be active as a paid performing artist in addition to your teaching commitments?

yes

no

Please use the space below to note anything which you consider will improve the Performing Arts Programmes.

Thank you for your patience and help!

**BTEC Qualifications in the Performing Arts
Further Development Project**

Student Questionnaire

Please answer each question by circling only one rating

General Information

1	Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?	M	F
2	On starting the course were you under 19 years old (U) or, 19 years or over (O)?	U	O
3	Are you attending a School (S) or a Further Education Institution (FE)?	S	FE
4	Is your course full-time (FT) or part-time (PT)?	FT	PT
5	Are you studying any GCSE or A Level subjects as well (Yes/No)?	Y	N
6	Have you already had experience doing paid work in some aspect of the entertainment business (Yes/No)?	Y	N
7	Were you or your parents responsible for paying the the tuition fees (Yes/No)?	Y	N
8	Were your fees paid for you by others such as the Education Authority or a scheme such as Youth/Job Training (Yes/No)?	Y	N
9	Are you being financially supported by yourself, parent, spouse or partner (Yes/No)?	Y	N
10	Are you being financially supported by means of some form of grant or allowance?	Y	N

Continue on the other side.....

Continued.....

11	Which ONE of the following careers are you preparing for:- 1. Acting, 2. Dancing, 3. Music, 4. Technical Support, 5. a Mixture or Other?	1	2	3	4	5
----	--	---	---	---	---	---

Give your opinions on the following statements:		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
12	Achieving international fame as a performing artist in my own special field is a realistic aim for me	●	●	●	●
13	Living the life of a performer in the entertainment industry is attractive to me	●	●	●	●

A BTEC Programme in the Performing Arts:-

14	should provide me with training across the whole range of performing arts	●	●	●	●
15	should concentrate on my own particular specialised career area	●	●	●	●
16	should concentrate on my own specialism but also offer some practical experience in each of the other performing arts	●	●	●	●
17	should concentrate on my own specialism but provide some information about each of the other performing arts	●	●	●	●

Give your opinions on the following statements:-

18	If someone offered me full-time work in my specialised area I ought to accept it and leave the course	●	●	●	●
19	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by their acting ability	●	●	●	●
20	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by good luck	●	●	●	●
21	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by their musical ability	●	●	●	●
22	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by good luck	●	●	●	●
23	Most of the artists who achieve success in dance, do so mainly by their dancing ability	●	●	●	●
24	Most of the artists who achieve success in dance, do so mainly by good luck	●	●	●	●
25	To achieve lasting success in the entertainment business, training is essential:	●	●	●	●

Thank you for your patience and support.

Questionnaire Responses

Student Questionnaire Responses

All Students

General Information

1	Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?			M	F
				138	282
2	On starting the course were you under 19 years old (U) or, 19 years or over (O)?			U	O
				367	53
3	Are you attending a School (S) or a Further Education Institution (FE)?			S	FE
		No Reply	8	126	286
4	Is your course full-time (FT) or part-time (PT)?			FT	PT
		No Reply	1	408	11
5	Are you studying any GCSE or A Level subjects as well (Yes/No)?			Y	N
				206	214
6	Have you already had experience doing paid work in some aspect of the entertainment business (Yes/No)?			Y	N
				170	249
7	Were you or your parents responsible for paying the the tuition fees (Yes/No)?			Y	N
		No Reply	9	58	353
8	Were your fees paid for you by others such as the Education Authority or a scheme such as Youth/Job Training (Yes/No)?			Y	N
		No Reply	13	269	138
9	Are you being financially supported by yourself, parent, spouse or partner (Yes/No)?			Y	N
		No Reply	1	359	60
10	Are you being financially supported by means of some form of grant or allowance?			Y	N
		No Reply	4	106	310

Continue on the other side.....

Continued.....

11	Which ONE of the following careers are you preparing for:- 1. Acting, 2. Dancing, 3. Music, 4. Technical Support, 5. a Mixture or Other?					
		1	2	3	4	5
		123	48	32	24	184
		strongly agree	agree	disagree		strongly disagree

		No Reply	9	123	48	32	24	184
Give your opinions on the following statements:				strongly agree	agree		disagree	strongly disagree
12	Achieving international fame as a performing artist in my own special field is a realistic aim for me	No Reply	8	115	192		90	15
13	Living the life of a performer in the entertainment industry is attractive to me	No Reply	6	222	152		33	7

A BTEC Programme in the Performing Arts:-

14	should provide me with training across the whole range of performing arts	No Reply	4	188	166	45	17
15	should concentrate on my own particular specialised career area	No Reply	9	110	157	129	15
16	should concentrate on my own specialism but also offer some practical experience in each of the other performing arts	No Reply	7	174	288	26	5
17	should concentrate on my own specialism but provide some information about each of the other performing arts	No Reply	8	114	188	96	14

Give your opinions on the following statements:-

18	If someone offered me full-time work in my specialised area I ought to accept it and leave the course.	No Reply	12	58	140	168	42
19	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by their acting ability	No Reply	6	62	187	140	25
20	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by good luck	No Reply	9	27	168	167	49
21	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by their musical ability	No Reply	9	81	203	106	21
22	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by good luck	No Reply	6	33	191	147	43
23	Most of the artists who achieve success in dance, do so mainly by their dancing ability	No Reply	7	166	219	26	2
24	Most of the artists who achieve success in dance, do so mainly by good luck	No Reply	7	23	121	207	62
25	To achieve lasting success in the entertainment business, training is essential:	No Reply	6	247	109	52	6

Thank you for your patience and support.

Staff Questionnaire - Responses

Please tick or circle your responses clearly

Do you think that a BTEC Programme in the Performing Arts:-

			strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	should provide students with training across a broad range of performing arts	No Reply 4	107	69	23	6
2	should enable students to concentrate on their own particular specialised area	No Reply 9	54	98	42	6
3	should enable students to concentrate on their own specialism but also offer some practical experience in each of the other performing arts	No Reply 7	88	88	24	2
4	should enable students to concentrate on their own specialism but also provide information about each of the other performing arts	No Reply 11	33	72	75	18

Give your opinions on the following statements:-

5	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by their ability	No Reply 14	45	117	29	4
6	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Drama do so mainly by good luck	No Reply 18	8	87	83	13
7	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by their ability	No Reply 22	34	97	52	4
8	Most of the artists who achieve success in Popular Music, do so mainly by good luck	No Reply 23	8	89	79	10
9	To achieve success in the entertainment business, training is essential:	No Reply 8	90	62	45	4

Which of these programmes does your school/college offer?

(tick all which apply)

BTEC National in Performing Arts	10	197
BTEC First in Performing Arts	11	102
BTEC National in Popular Music	12	70
BTEC National in Music Technology	13	31
BTEC National in Media	14	71
GNVQ in Performing Arts	15	36
GNVQ in Media	16	51

Performing Arts courses are managed best

17	In Art & Design Department/Faculties	No Reply 90	46	42	18	13
18	In General Studies/Humanities Departments	No Reply 136	6	14	27	26
19	Other (Please state your ideal choice).....					

Continued.....

20

How many years have you been teaching the Performing Arts?

21

How many years have you been teaching on BTEC Performing Arts Courses?

22

Gender: are you male or female? (Please tick or circle)

No Reply

3

male

106

female

100

23

Have you ever been a professional performing artist?

No Reply

2

yes

157

no

50

24

If so, for how long?

25

Do you teach on BTEC National in Performing Arts?

No Reply

4

yes

190

no

15

26

Do you teach on BTEC First in Performing Arts?

No Reply

22

yes

88

no

99

27

Do you teach on any other type of BTEC programme?

No Reply

21

yes

60

no

128

28

Do you teach on any type of GNVQ programme?

No Reply

14

yes

39

no

156

29

Are you familiar with the structure and content of the Performing Arts GNVQ?

No Reply

9

yes

114

no

86

30

Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?
(tick only one)

No Reply

6

drama

1

116

dance

2

37

music

3

31

performance technology

4

14

music technology

5

5

31

Which ONE of the specialised areas do you regard as your major subject?
(tick only one)

No Reply

6

drama

1

116

dance

2

36

music

3

31

performance technology

4

15

music technology

5

5

Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?
(tick all which apply)

drama

32

111

dance

33

43

music

34

53

performance technology

35

24

music technology

36

11

37

Do you continue to be active as a paid performing artist in addition to your teaching commitments?

No Reply

14

yes

90

no

105

Please use the space below to note anything which you consider will improve the Performing Arts Programmes.

Thank you for your patience and help!

Biographic Characteristics of the Student Sample

Question		Response	
No. 1			
Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?		138 M	132 F
Percentage		33 %	67 %
No. 2			
Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?		88 M	135 F
Percentage		33 %	67 %
No. 3			
Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?		50 (M)	102 (F)
Percentage		33 %	67 %

No. 4			
Under 19 years old (U) or over (O)		367 U	53 O
Percentage		87 %	13 %
No. 5			
Under 19 years old (U) or over (O)		216 U	32 O
Percentage		81 %	19 %
No. 6			
Under 19 years old (U) or over (O)		15 U	1 O
Percentage		99 %	1 %

No. 7			
Full-time (FT) or part-time (PT)		408 FT	11 PT
Percentage		97 %	3 %
No. 8			
Full-time (FT) or part-time (PT)		258 (FT)	10 (PT)
Percentage		95 %	4 %
No. 9			
Full-time (FT) or part-time (PT)		150 (FT)	1 (PT)
Percentage		99 %	1 %

No. 10			
GCSE or A Level subjects as well (Yes/No)		206 Y	214 N
Percentage		49 %	51 %
No. 11			
GCSE or A Level subjects as well (Yes/No)		100 (Y)	168 (N)
Percentage		37 %	63 %
No. 12			
GCSE or A Level subjects as well (Yes/No)		106 (Y)	46 (N)
Percentage		70 %	30 %

Profiles of career aims of the student sample.

Sample 1		
paid work (Yes/No)	176 Y	249 N
Percentage	41%	59%
Sample 2		
paid work (Yes/No)	97 Y	171 N
Percentage	36%	64%
Sample 3		
paid work (Yes/No)	75 Y	78 N
Percentage	48%	52%

Sample 1		
Acting	123	29%
Dancing	48	11%
Music	32	8%
Technical Support	24	6%
Mixture or Other	184	44%

Sample 2		
Acting	71	27%
Dancing	31	12%
Music	9	3%
Technical Support	13	5%
Mixture or Other	137	51%

Sample 3		
Acting	52	34%
Dancing	17	11%
Music	23	15%
Technical Support	11	7%
Mixture or Other	47	31%

student questionnaire item 14	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	188	166	45	17	
Further Education Students	126	99	28	13	2
Specialist Students	62	67	17	4	2

student questionnaire item 15	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	110	157	129	15	9
Further Education Students	72	90	92	10	4
Specialist Students	38	67	37	5	5

student questionnaire item 16	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	174	208	26	5	7
Further Education Students	116	131	16	2	3
Specialist Students	58	77	10	3	4

student questionnaire item 17	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	114	188	96	14	8
Further Education Students	76	109	68	10	5
Specialist Students	38	79	28	4	3

Students career intentions

student questionnaire item 18	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Students	58	140	168	42	12
Further Education Students	51	127	77	10	3
Specialist Students	11	60	63	15	3

student questionnaire item 20	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	27	168	167	49	9
Further Education Students	13	100	107	45	3
Specialist Students	14	68	60	4	6

student questionnaire item 21	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Students	81	203	106	21	9
Further Education Students	62	132	58	10	6
Specialist Students	19	71	48	11	3

student questionnaire item 22	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	33	191	147	43	6
Further Education Students	17	107	101	39	4
Specialist Students	16	84	46	4	2

student questionnaire item 23	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	166	219	26	2	7
Further Education Students	109	141	13	1	4
Specialist Students	57	78	13	1	3

student questionnaire item 24	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	23	121	207	62	7
Further Education Students	15	67	130	53	3
Specialist Students	8	54	77	9	4

student questionnaire item 25	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	247	109	52	6	6
Further Education Students	158	73	29	4	4
Specialist Students	89	36	23	2	2

student questionnaire item 18	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	58	140	168	42	12
Further Education Students	40	87	108	27	6
Specialist Students	18	53	60	15	6

student questionnaire item 12	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	115	192	90	15	8
Further Education Students	77	113	62	11	5
Specialist Students	38	79	28	4	3

student questionnaire item 13	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All students	222	152	33	7	6
Further Education Students	149	94	16	5	4
Specialist Students	73	58	17	2	2

Biographic characteristics of the Staff sample:

Staff questionnaire items 22 -23

22	Are you Male (M) or Female (F)?	No Reply: 5	106 (M)	100 (F)
	Percentage		51 %	49 %
23	Have you ever been a professional performer or artist?	No Reply: 2	15 (Y)	20 (N)
	Percentage		75 %	24 %

Staff questionnaire items 32 - 36

32	Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?	111	Percentage 45.9%	100%=242
33	Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?	43	Percentage 17.8%	100%=242
34	Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?	53	Percentage 22 %	100%=242
35	Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?	24	Percentage 10 %	100%=242
36	Which of the specialised areas have you worked in as a professional?	11	Percentage 4.6 %	100%=242

Occupational characteristics of Staff sample:

Staff questionnaire items 25,26,28,29.

25 Do you teach on BTEC National in Performing Arts?	190 (Y)	15 (N)
No Reply 4		
Percentage	91 %	7 %
26 Do you teach on BTEC First in Performing Arts?	38 (Y)	99 (N)
No Reply 22		
Percentage	42 %	47 %
28 Do teach on any type of GNVQ Programme?	39 (Y)	156 (N)
No Reply 14		
Percentage	19 %	75 %
29 Are you familiar with the structure and content of the Performing Arts GNVQ?	114 (Y)	86 (N)
No Reply 9		
Percentage	55 %	41 %

Staff questionnaire items 30

30 Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?	116
Percentage	55.5 %
30 Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?	37
Percentage	17.7 %
30 Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?	31
Percentage	14.8%
30 Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?	14
Percentage	6.7%
30 Which ONE of the specialised areas do you teach most?	5
Percentage	2.4 %

Staff questionnaire items 31

31	Which ONE of the specialised do you regard as your major subject?	Percentage	116 58.5 %
31	Which ONE of the specialised do you regard as your major subject?	Percentage	18 17.2 %
31	Which ONE of the specialised do you regard as your major subject?	Percentage	31 14.3 %
31	Which ONE of the specialised do you regard as your major subject?	Percentage	15 7.2 %
31	Which ONE of the specialised do you regard as your major subject?	Percentage	5 2.4 %

staff questionnaire item 1 (comparison with student questionnaire item 14)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	107	69	23	6	4
All Students	188	166	45	17	4

staff questionnaire item 2 (comparison with student questionnaire 15)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	54	98	42	6	9
All Students	110	157	129	15	9

staff questionnaire item 3 (comparison with student questionnaire item 16)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	88	88	24	2	7
All Students	174	288	26	5	7

staff questionnaire item 4 (comparison with student questionnaire 17)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	33	72	75	18	11
All Students	114	188	96	14	8

Staff questionnaire item 5 (comparison with student questionnaire item 19)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	45	117	29	4	14
All Students	62	187	140	25	6

Staff questionnaire item 6 (comparison with student questionnaire item 20)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	8	87	83	13	18
All Students	27	168	167	49	9

Staff questionnaire item 7 (comparison with student questionnaire item 21)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	34	97	52	4	22
All Students	81	203	106	21	9

staff questionnaire item 8 (comparison with student questionnaire item 22)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	8	89	79	10	23
All Students	33	191	147	43	6

Staff questionnaire item 9 (comparison with student questionnaire item 25)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
All Staff	90	62	45	4	8
All Students	247	109	52	6	6

Edexcel BTEC National Diploma in Dance

Eight Core Units

- Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
- Unit 2: Production Techniques
- Unit 3: Performance Workshop
- Unit 4: Background to Theatre
- Unit 5: Special Subject Investigation
- Unit 6: Performing Arts Professional Practice
- Unit 7: Production Process
- Unit 8: Production Project

Choose Eight Option Units

- Unit 11: Dance & Health
- Unit 12: Contemporary Dance
- Unit 13: Classical Ballet
- Unit 14: Popular Dance
- Unit 15: Compositional Skills
- Unit 16: Art Forms - Their Relationship to Dance
- Unit 17: Dance Appreciation
- Unit 18: Jazz Dance
- Unit 19: Contemporary Development
- Unit 20: Dance Improvisation
- Unit 21: Choreography
- Unit 22: Physical Theatre
- Unit 23: Arts in the Community

Edexcel BTEC National Diploma in Drama

Eight Core Units

- Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
- Unit 2: Production Techniques
- Unit 3: Performance Workshop
- Unit 4: Background to Theatre
- Unit 5: Special Subject Investigation
- Unit 6: Performing Arts Professional Practice
- Unit 7: Production Process
- Unit 8: Production Project

Choose Eight Option Units

- Unit 23: Arts in the Community
- Unit 24: Acting Techniques
- Unit 25: Media Performance
- Unit 26: Introduction to Musical Theatre
- Unit 27: Musical Theatre Performance
- Unit 28: Singing
- Unit 29: Vocal Skills
- Unit 30: Movement Skills
- Unit 31: Directing
- Unit 32: Devising Theatre
- Unit 33: Script Writing
- Unit 34: Variety Performance

Edexcel BTEC National Diploma in Technical Theatre

Eight Core Units

- Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
- Unit 2: Production Techniques
- Unit 3: Performance Workshop
- Unit 4: Background to Theatre
- Unit 5: Special Subject Investigation
- Unit 6: Performing Arts Professional Practice
- Unit 7: Technical Production Process
- Unit 8: Technical Production Project

Choose Eight Option Units

- Unit 23: Arts in the Community
- Unit 35: Lighting Skills
- Unit 36: Lighting Design
- Unit 37: Sound Skills
- Unit 38: Sound Design
- Unit 39: Set Construction & Painting Skills
- Unit 40: Stage Design
- Unit 41: Costume design
- Unit 42: Costume Making & Wardrobe Man.
- Unit 43: Crewing
- Unit 44: Stage Mangement
- Unit 45: The Stage Manager
- Unit 46: Front of House
- Unit 47: Venue Management
- Unit 48: Design Method

Edexcel BTEC National Diploma in Music

Eight Core Units

Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
Unit 2: Language of Music
Unit 3: Performing Arts Professional Practice
Unit 4: Special Subject Investigation
Unit 5: Aural Awareness
Unit 6: Performance Studies
Unit 7: Production Process
Unit 8: Production Project

Choose Eight Option Units

Unit 12: Composing
Unit 13: Applied Performance Skills
Unit 14: Aural Skills
Unit 19: History & Analysis of Music
Unit 20: Arranging Techniques
Unit 21: Improvised Music
Unit 22: Jazz & Contemporary Improvisation
Unit 23: Functional Harmony
Unit 27: Arts in the Community

Edexcel BTEC National Diploma in Popular Music

Eight Core Units

Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
Unit 2: Language of Music
Unit 3: Performing Arts Professional Practice
Unit 4: Special Subject Investigation
Unit 5: Aural Awareness
Unit 6: Performance Studies
Unit 7: Production Process
Unit 8: Production Project

Choose Eight Option Units

Unit 9: Introduction to Music Technology
Unit 10: Sound Recording Techniques
Unit 15: Keyboard Skills
Unit 16: Singing
Unit 17: Twentieth Century Music
Unit 18: World Music
Unit 19: History & Analysis of Music
Unit 25: Media Music Production
Unit 26: Music Publishing
Unit 27: Arts in the Community

Edexcel BTEC National Dip. in Music Technology

Eight Core Units

Unit 1: Performing Arts in Context
Unit 2: Language of Music
Unit 3: Performing Arts Professional Practice
Unit 4: Special Subject Investigation
Unit 8: Production Project
Unit 9: Introduction to Music Technology
Unit 10: Sound Recording Techniques
Unit 11: Music Software Applications

Choose Eight Option Units

Unit 28: Live Sound
Unit 29: Music Technology in Performance
Unit 30: Sound Design Techniques
Unit 31: Sound Recording Production
Unit 32: Studio Organisation & Management
Unit 33: Sound & Multimedia
Unit 34: Sound for Film & Television
Unit 35: Computer Technology for Music
Unit 36: MIDI Sequencing with Media Sources
Unit 37: Audio Electronics
Unit 38: Audio Engineering Workshop Skills
Unit 39: Digital Audio Principles
Unit 40: Introduction to Acoustics
Unit 41: Musical Instrument Technology

Titles Approved by QCA for Introduction in September 2002

(Total = 37)

BTEC National Diploma in Music Practice
BTEC National Certificate in Music Practice
BTEC National Award in Music Practice (Community Music)
BTEC National Award in Music Practice (Composing)
BTEC National Award in Music Practice (Performing)

BTEC National Diploma in Music Technology
BTEC National Certificate in Music Technology
BTEC National Award in Music Technology (Acoustics)
BTEC National Award in Music Technology (D.J.Technology)
BTEC National Award in Music Technology (Events Support)
BTEC National Award in Music Technology (Music for Media)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Acting)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Acting)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Acting)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Arts Administration)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Circus Skills)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Costume)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Dance)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Dance)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Dance)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Design)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Design)

BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Makeup)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Makeup)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Performance)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Performance)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Production)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Production)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Set Construction)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Stage Design)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Stage Management)

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Technical)
BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts (Technical)
BTEC National Award in Performing Arts (Theatre Technology)

'Original Starters' Interview Transcript Number 1

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started

There were two approaches, one was a visit by [OS 4] who came up to BTEC and suggested that BTEC might get involved in Performing Arts courses. I think his particular worry was that there were a number of courses dotted around the country, awards from different bodies, there were a number of colleges getting involved one way or another and it seemed to be a recipe for disorder, particularly lack of standards. In other words the diplomates of these courses - students were likely to go out and people would say what is this? what level is this? That was the first approach, BTEC didn't do anything about that immediately because at the time I was the only part time advisor in that area. I think I can say I listened and made notes and I reported to the chief. He was inundated with other developments at that moment so we agreed that we should look at it, it was pending file. Not all that long, at a guess, about a year later, [OS 2] and [OS 5] came and they wanted to develop Performing Arts. I said OK bring your proposal to BTEC and we will have a look at them and talk about them, and this we did. Their proposal in fact was Performing Arts and Media. I thought this, straight away, was too wide, so I suggested that they chop off the media straight away, otherwise they would have more than a course there. I think they were generally happy about that and we started to go through that in quite some detail because that was quite a detailed document.

(Did you have a group together at that point looking at it or was it just yourself?)

No it was just myself at that stage.

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

(My next question you have already named these people)

Yes they were the two separate approaches and it was quite interesting because having suggested that they took away the media, we then had quite a, if you like, germ of a very sound idea what with [OS 4] idea, [OS 2] and [OS 5] in much more detail I thought well, here we are, it is probably time to pick this up and run with it. The same time we had a number of different people ringing in saying are you involved in this and so on are you going to, in the end 'the chief', who was the decision maker, said OK let's go ahead with this.

(What was his role by the way in the organisation?)

He was, I don't know what his full title was, chief officer and in charge of a number of BTEC boards. They took I think five boards each and 'my chief' was in charge of board six and the scheme eventually developed under the board six. I say that now and I will take the point up because it is quite significant this about structure. I think at the same time you should be aware that [OS 2] and [OS 5] came to me because they had already approached the Arts and Design board and really got nowhere. I don't know why, whether it was a clash of personalities, which I suspect there might have been, or whether Art and Design didn't consider performing arts their area really, and certainly up to that point I don't think it had been, they weren't really interested at all, very much static art. I was developing the idea with the association with theatre and leisure and that's why, I thought OK we might be getting a little bit far out in an extended argument for it, but, let's at least look at the idea. I got Jeff's agreement to set up a formation committee, advisory committee.

(You pulled a team together?)

Yes we got the group together.

(As far as I remember [OS 2] had been around the country visiting colleges and in fact almost had a ready made team)

He had, when we started the group up, I don't know how much detail you want, but let me just ramble for a second. When we set up the group and brought its first meeting together, oh no sorry just before that, I became aware that of something called the NATFHE Group, now I didn't know anything about this, I knew NATFHE of course, the NATFHE group for Performing Arts, and this turned out to be ***** and other people.

(So you pulled them all together?)

Yes. I don't know if it was the first meeting but a very early meeting we brought them all together in the usual way at a residential weekend, and it was a sticky weekend, and I couldn't get any agreement between [OS 2] and [OS 5] and ***** group the NATFHE group.

(It obviously came right in the end?)

Saturday night I remember saying "Well look we are going to have a BTEC qualification whether you agree or not." I tried to list the things they had agreed on and the Sunday went quite well. The two groups got together and we hammered out early thinking and I don't think it would be any thing more than that. But what we did agree on were, I think, important things like, what were the performed arts, and that of course led on to a mixture of our music, dance, theatre and stage craft and that idea came up very early on. To come back to your first question who were the early movers and so on and what was the first approach the answer is [OS 4], [OS 2], [OS 5] although he might have approached the board for art and design and been rejected before they go to me, and they were also the innovators.

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

(You did mention Art and Design there. Did you have any personal experience managing or teaching in the old BEC and TEC, wasn't there a DATEC?)

There was a DATEC, that was Design and Technology. I think I am right in saying DATEC was brought into TEC and then TEC and BEC joined into BTEC. That was I think you will find, through department pressure, government pressure through the what was then the DES. But yes they were certainly DATEC originally.

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

We did little qualification because [OS 2] had done, he did come up with quite a lot of evidence of discussions and also of course when we managed to involve ***** and the NATFHE group they had had at least two meetings, public if you like, general meetings of anybody who was interested in joining the group.

(So there had been consultation there?)

There had been very wide consultation. What I did in fact, do you remember ***, the assistant, she wasn't a technical assistant really.

(No I don't remember actually?)

Well shall I say within house somebody saw a member of the Musicians Union that was later.

(But that was when it was in pilot isn't it?)

That was, that's right yes you said before. I went to see the music advisor, I cannot remember his name, at the DES.

(The must have changed at that point then)

I think so yes he was reasonably fresh in office, I can't recall his name Jim. I went to see him two or three times, at the very early stage when we were just kicking the idea around what were the performed arts. By then I think we had formed the idea that a BTEC course of this nature should be aimed at group performance for young people and again that influenced the design. He was quite interested, the chief inspector, on why it should become board six, in other words why was I involved and I said well, our approach is that it is performance and it is an extension of leisure, that is why you haven't got the heavy emphasis on personal level of achievement at instruments or acting or whatever, but more the ability to put on a performance in a team and survive commercially.

(After the first year of running it you gathered together people who were active and also had some share in the design and revised the course?)

Yes, I don't recall major revision.

(Yes but there were things like changing the name of stage craft to performance technology and writing single units instead of some double ones)

Yes

(But it was never published)

No in fact a number of the revisions weren't published.

(Was there an overall reason for that?)

Not really no. The general method of working was to let the drafts run for three years and then do a revision and then publish the full version of the guidelines.

(That never happened did it?)

No it didn't

(Can you elaborate on that? Is there any known reason for this?)

Not really, we did review it I don't think we reviewed it quite as thoroughly as some courses were reviewed. I think at that time a lot of the BTEC courses were way behind in being reviewed and I know that things like the old institutional management, which was another one that I got involved in, that was about two years over the three years revision, about five years old. So I don't think there was a reason for putting it aside, I think it was more that it was in the queue but was possibly left.

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

By then we were being, we had to prepare a guideline more in achievable objective format, measurable, achievable objectives.

(Is this from NVQ?)

Yes

(Gilbert Jessop's book and such like?)

Yes, you couldn't really say it was NCVQ because I don't think they had started it at the time.

(Therefore who was putting pressure on BTEC to move along this path or won't you know that?)

Oh yes, I wasn't involved but it was clearly government pressure. It was DES.

(DES was taking this up?)

If you think of BTEC - half the council were DES appointees!

(That's interesting yes)

I think it was 49%. Government appointees. Now it was always true that BTEC was independent but when you have got half your council -

(Yes you don't have to tell me)

.. you know that government policy would always come through, it might not be fully accepted but it always came through. You also had HMIs in attendance at all council meetings and of course they would always be fully briefed on where things were going. They always had a mind to the future, and I think there was considerable pressure at that stage to start preparing BTEC documents in the format that NCVQ was likely to take. Bear in mind of course that NCVQ was not set up by DES it was set up by the Department of Employment this was half the row between DES and the Department for Employment.

(I wasn't aware of that)

We are getting into politics Jim.

(Well I don't mind that)

It was seen by quite a lot of people in DES I think, this is a personal view, I think it was seen by a lot of people in DES as a slight. As a slight to the DES, in other words why should they be asked to set up a qualification body, NCVQ, when we have already got a DES which has been awarding qualifications for ages. What would be the future roll of BTEC and indeed City and Guilds under this newly created body. Quite a lot of this delayed the normal BTEC development. I think one of your later queries is about Higher Nationals, why was it never printed well the answer was as far as I was concerned, the answer was that there was an awful lot of discussion going on as to how the HND was going to integrate with the degrees and also with GNVQ - that level had never been developed.

(And of course this is still an issue with the new foundation degrees)

So I gather.

(But that is outside the remit of this?)

Yes

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

It was the approach that we were looking at younger people coming, trying to get into the industry, they were knocking on many college doors for different reasons and they were interested in different parts of performing arts. Therefore we want a fairly broad sweep, particularly we want to arm them, prepare them against people who may 'rip them off' in a very early stage when they were forming a group and so on. There was a lot of evidence that this was happening.

Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

Not in the design group, I think there was obviously quite a few of them with a thought of it but the philosophy was generally accepted and that was cross discipline. This is why there was heavy emphasis for instance present in assessment on group performance and initially we used to insist that the assessment displayed, stage ability, performance ability and so on, even if you were a musician you had to do a certain amount of acting and so on. I think you caught the end of that.

(The popular music one came out of that lot didn't it?)

Yes it did

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

Of the national yes I was. I liked the frame work, liked the philosophy because it was not duplicating what I thought was very adequately catered for and that is the personal performance level of playing instruments or acting and so on, or dance.

Were there any alternative titles for the course?

No not really, but having said that I think we played around with one or two words, but certainly not in concept and it was all based on performance, whether it was performed arts or performing arts that was all.

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

The national was really a grouped course it had a core and options and although it was based on units with the core you got almost a grouping. Now I know this was the old BTEC unit and group division one reason for going for core and options, closely associating core units which I saw very much along the lines of group anyway, and that would get it through board six which was very much a group orientated board.

(So in fact you were looking to what was normal in that particular unit, particular board in order to get the things through?)

Yes I think, *****, ***** and I had to be a little bit careful because we were putting something to BTEC which was very unusual for BTEC to take on. There were questions about the assessment and whether it would work and one question I remember clearly being asked was, "Why are you putting on courses for the highest unemployed rate in the country?" You answer that with -

(You get the statistics)

You give everybody an opportunity and if you are going to regulate people going into the industry through education then you have to be very careful you have got the right people going in and so on, on other words it's not really an argument. All that was taking place within the board therefore we had to try and prove to the board that we could fit in with BTEC although we were putting rather an odd ball through.

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

Do you mean whether it was a 1, 2 or 3?

(No I am meaning where you had objectives, the indicative content?)

That was a standard BTEC.

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

(That was standard too?)

That came along later, although there was always a skills element the formal common skills, I think it came along as a later requirement.

(It was in the original document, yes, it was 2 units worth of common skills)

Was it?

(So we assume that was a given at the time?)

The reason I say that is an interesting question you asked there. I think common skills are a very good idea and very necessary for the youngsters going into the industry particularly. But, I saw performing arts courses as already developing a lot of those skills in the natural path of performance. The team building, the communication, working with other as team building and so on. A lot of that was already naturally in the performing arts courses. That kind of query was 'why common skills here?'. But the policy then was to put common skills into all BTEC courses, that again bounced right back through the DTI and so on, the youngsters are going into industry without any skill and that was where the root of where common skills came from.

What I had to do was put common skills in eventually although we had written skills into the original drafts I think I am right in saying, a lot of it was there any way it didn't really bother me if they thought it was appropriate.

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience *(Difficult to find enough places in the performed arts)*

There was quite a lot of discussion and colleges weren't too happy about this. I maintained that the work experience was a vital part, it was always a part of the BTEC ethos. In performing arts it's the first knock, rejection, the trouble you get into financially or legally, that starts opening you eyes and there are a lot of people seem to be going into these different 'gigs' especially and coming out on the wrong side of agreements and so on. Therefore I thought let's get them out as much as we can, certainly make one session compulsory and they will learn an awful lot from that and they will start to

answer the questions that a lot of the students were raising, of why we are learning about the law, the law of contract. The answer was they were going to come up against the laws of contract and they come up against financing and they were going to be able to carry out simple budgeting. A lot of students, from going round the colleges in that first year, a lot of them didn't really realise the point of that. I think we got even more insistent on colleges carrying out work experience for that reason.

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided? (Was it decided by the group or was it handed down as a BTEC given?)

Well the assessment fitted in with the BTEC guide lines for assessment

(They had a booklet for assessment?)

Yes they had separate documents which moderation used to issue and it fitted in with that. I didn't see any particular problems in the normal BTEC guidelines so that is really where it came from.

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

No not of the policy. I think part of the strength of the national was that we had a very clear aim for it the policy of BTEC was still very clear at that time, it didn't really affect us except in terms of format when we had to start writing the achievable

(Yes, for the first award?)

That's right. No I wouldn't say that the advent of NVQ really altered that except as I said before delaying the Higher National.

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested?

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

Yes, this was one I don't think I satisfied myself fully, I would have liked to see a five year run done on this. I think all we could say is little more than stating the obvious - it is not a TEC course which is highly measurable. It is one where you have probably got to look at things like improvement, particularly things like team work, because that is an essential part of the course. You have got to be much more neutral than you probably would be as a normal assessor and moderator. Beyond that it was very difficult to go because as you know it is a like-and-dislike thing and that is very difficult.

(Very subjective?)

I didn't really hear any, I had one appeal which I got involved in and I thought the assessor had done a very good job, I thought he had been very neutral and it was a very fair assessment, the college thought it was a bit heavy, but the college's standard wasn't all that good anyway and yes I was happy the assessment was working.

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended for students 16 – 19 as a preparation for work or for further study?

Both. We at that time trying to write the nationals so that they would provide this dual exit. They would provide a clear link with a higher national and also sufficient practical and theoretical grounding for employment. When I say that the effect it was that we would always consider at some stage, roughly, what would be in a higher in other words where do we finish. Also the obvious consideration of what is needed for employment but that was our starting point usually when setting the objectives. But, the answer is that they were drafted to try and satisfy the needs of both and I think in most cases they did.

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (eg matures)?

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

Yes it wasn't very satisfactory in my opinion Jim, we created a national, we created a first, in other words we created a progression and as we have just said the path of the objectives of the national was to lead onto a higher, but then we didn't provide the higher. There were a number of colleges that represented themselves quite strongly to BTEC, well why haven't you filled in this top rung of the ladder because we have now got quite a lot of the students having gone through the national, or just about finished national who want to go on and you have got nothing there. Well again at that stage for

reasons I have said before and I won't repeat, BTEC weren't terribly keen on developing new higher nationals because what was it going to be and how was it going to fit in to the structure for education.

(Well as you may or may not know they have guidance out for higher nationals and such like now)

Have they well I am very pleased actually because that was one thing I was rather sorry there it was an incomplete job, but what I did manage to do with ***** then was to, well board six had gone by then, that's right, that was the other thing and if you remember BTEC abolished the boards

(Do you remember when that was?)

No

(You couldn't put a date on it?)

No

(I will get it from BTEC library)

Yes BTEC will tell you. So we had lost really the support of the board but what I did manage to get was their approval to send out some guidance which as you know was really saying if we had higher national this would be the general philosophy and rough structure but it would go no further than that.

POLICIES

Was there any policy steer from authorities, external, or internal to BTEC?

(Well I have deduced that there was from some of your earlier comments)

Yes there was always a guide, a gentle push in some cases from DES and we did, we had to answer a number of colleges who would say why don't BTEC launch out by themselves they are independent, they can award qualifications. Of course the answer to that is always financial that if it was struck off the support list of DES, the courses they were prepared to pay for, then it has to be privately, they should have to pay their own fees. Now that is where we came in because one of the purposes of devising the national was to extend opportunity to students who couldn't afford to go to all the private schools. In other words it was becoming a cheque book profession. So really although the colleges would have loved us to have gone independent we had to fit in really with the government guide lines otherwise they wouldn't pay for any courses and the students wouldn't get any grants. Yes that was the way of the government pushing policy through.

What was the nature of this?

What professional organisations were consulted during the development process?

Were any of these organisations particularly helpful?

Were any of these organisations particularly antagonistic?

The private theatre schools, drama schools were to a varying degree, it wouldn't be right to say they all were, but quite obviously they saw the HND particularly as a challenge to what they were doing. They were really saying you are taking the bread and butter out of our mouths. I never saw it that way, because going by the numbers which we had collected, Jack had collected, DES had collected there seemed to be a large number of applicants for a fairly small number of places in the drama schools.

(So we were providing a service?)

Yes. We were not taking their students, or it was unlikely that we were taking their students, but we were extending the availability, opportunity should I say.

END NOTES

Please mention any issues or interesting facts relevant to the development process that I have omitted to raise.

(Have I missed something important?)

No I don't think so. I think I have mentioned as far as BTEC was concerned it was rather an unusual development, particularly on thing like, how you were going to assess it, why you were creating these courses for an area where there were far too many people applying anyway. There had to be a lot of policy arguments and convincing people and that took time, I think that is why it probably why it didn't get off the ground quite as quickly as a lot of other courses. On the original approach to the guidelines there is a lot more argument in those cases. Other than that I don't think there was anything really exceptional about it. There was virtually no expertise within BTEC incidentally.

(But you managed to pull it together)

I am not a performing arts man and never was, so I very much saw my task as listening and sifting and sieving and saying what does that mean in BTEC-speak.

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

At the time colleges were running a 2 year full time performing arts course which was a combination of students that were doing a number of A levels, perhaps theatre studies, English literature or communication studies and following 10 hours of college devised performing arts course, which was not of course accredited. We felt that the whole course itself needed to be accredited in order to help students progress into either higher education or to drama college that's why we made the approach to BTEC

(When you say 'we' there was yourself and [OS 5])

And ***** or ***** as she then was.

(Where was she from?)

Shewas at that time a lecturer at ***** college where I was

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

(The 3 of you would then regard yourselves as the innovators in this)

Yes

(You approached BTEC)

Yes

(What was their reaction?)

They were quite receptive, they agreed that there certainly was a need for such awards at national diploma level, I think were initially concerned as to who was going to develop that provision. We right from the start and right throughout the development worked closely with [OS 1].

How did you become involved in the process?

How was the development team brought together?

[OS 1], we were a team of individuals predominately who [OS 5] knew either directly or indirectly through the FE sector under the coordinating chairmanship of [OS 1].

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

Yes, I had had previous experience at Oldham college, I was tutor for the National Diploma in Computer Studies and I had taught on the National Diploma in Business Studies course .

(When you went originally to [OS 1] did you ask for a Performing Arts course or was it a different title?)

Yes I think we used that as a generic term it needed to be a national award in performing arts the decision that needed to be taken was, that obviously subdivided into drama, dance, music and stage craft was whether there were four separate awards or one generic award which was differentiated in terms of the range of options being offered.

(How was this reconciled? There must have been opposing views here?)

Well we actually did quite a bit of research in the world of Performing Arts itself, with different organizations and institutions that we approached, really to do two things, first to confirm the need for such a set of national awards and secondly as to how they should be structured. The prevailing view that was coming out was that there shouldn't be too much specialisation at that level, the specialisation to occur at the higher level.

(Can you remember any of these organisations that you approached? Was the Conference of Drama Schools one of them?)

It was yes, some of whom saw it as a threat to what they were doing. No, I cannot remember specific names.

(But you do remember there was a mixed reaction to what you were putting out?)

Yes there was because of course the drama schools accredited their own course. That was really part of the problem, there was a plethora of these courses which differed they were effectively self accredited, there needed to be national standards which would have been nationally assessed and nationally accredited.

(And you would get this from BTEC?)

Yes that is right

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

I wasn't around for that, after me.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

Yes, I am sure that there were, I cannot remember the names of the individuals concerned. Yes there was a debate as to whether there were four separate national awards or one national award where the specialisms were defined in the range of options available.

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

Yes, bearing in mind my own back ground, I have a limited experience in performing arts, my own back ground was such that it was better to take advice from people like ***** and [OS 5] who were full time in theatre programme area. They had a much clearer idea better experience as to what the structure ought to be and the content ought to be.

*(How did ***** get involved?)*

***** was heading up at the time some other group which was looking at something like a foundation in Performing Arts, and he, this group of drama tutors in different colleges I think met 2 or 3 times a year in order to look to progress that development.

(Had they approached yourselves or had they approached BTEC?)

No. BTEC knew of their existence I approached them because I knew ***** in the early 70's

Were there any alternative titles for the course?

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

You mean a foundation. Yes they had because I have just remembered there was another individual whose name I forget but he was a programme manager in Art and Design at Rochdale college and the structure that he favoured was identical to what was then the structure of the foundation course in Art and Design. We felt it was not appropriate would not achieve what we had set out to achieve. What was needed was a well defined structure which was nationally implemented rather than being interpreted at local college level.

(Were you still involved when they started to actually write the units?)

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

Bear in mind they weren't starting with a blank sheet of paper. What they looked to compass within the unit was the content and the skills which was then being delivered through the college devised part of college performing arts course, so in things like that there would have been performance theory, there would have been workshop etc. A lot of the subsequent content of the units actually came from stuff that was being taught at the time.

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

That I cannot remember very much at all. I certainly wasn't involved with the development of that part of the course component at all. I do know of course that common skills at that time triggered in all of the BTEC courses.

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience

That was an obvious inclusion because, of course, the college courses included a significant element of performance itself, the people running the courses actually put on certainly one performance a year if not two and that was considered an integral part of assessing.

(But you are seeing therefore that as the work experience, it was a simulation of work experience isn't it?)

That's right it's similar to what happens in catering courses where they are done in training restaurants on college sites.

How were decisions made regarding unit value (some are 1.00 and some are 2.00 or even 3.00)

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided?

That I couldn't help with the detail on. Obviously there were two forms of assessment on the then current courses, there was the 'college devised' for the 'college-devised component' and obviously then there was the A level. The A level really was an assessment on content rather than skills assessment, although I do remember that we wanted the national diploma to have much greater proportion of skills development and there by skills assessment.

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing-NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

Yes the development actually ended up before that body. The industrial lead bodies as they were called at the time weren't they. There was one that was set up for performance and it became just a political arena where by those from the drama schools were turning around and saying there was no need for this development they we re already doing it etc.etc.

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested? We wanted then to have the following characteristics we wanted them to have national validity, we wanted then to be transparent, we wanted them to be assessed by a nationally recognised body rather than the drama schools doing their own little thing.

(So in fact you are more or less saying that the Drama schools were a bit against what was happening?)

They saw it as a threat to what they were already offering.

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

No major problems I can recall, in fact quite the contrary we felt that the assessment structure and regime which BTEC had had significant experience in running and operating lent itself very appropriately.

(You are talking about the assessment regime that you were presented with in their guidance booklet?)

Yes that's right

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended as a preparation for work or for further study?

We would have said at the time it had to satisfy both aspirations. But, thinking about it seriously neither from the previous college based Performing Arts course or the new BTEC was it really realistic to expect students to progress straight into work for the majority of the student. You would expect them to progress into higher education and thereafter into employment.

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (eg matures)?

Certainly the students who were on the Performing Arts courses at the time were predominantly but not exclusively adolescent. We would certainly have not wanted it to be seen as exclusively for that age range but open really to both adolescents and adults.

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

My only involvement was getting a group together to progress that and that was then taken on by BTEC.

POLICIES

Was there any policy steer from authorities, external, or internal to BTEC?

Not that I can recall. There may have been but I was unaware of them at the time.

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

It's origins were in the work done by the NDT who set up a working party to develop a diploma in acting and it looked as though it would be linked into NVQ's .

(The had just come out at that time hadn't they?)

Yes . Then we found that the NVQs we didn't think were suitable. It was far too fragmented and not sufficiently holistic and it was never turned into a diploma but when the government decided to set up the dance and drama awards there was work done by the NDET & CDET dance education and training and they built the diploma based a lot on that work and other work that they did. Then that eventually was taken over by Trinity College (of Music) as a recognised body who could give a qualification.

So it all had it's roots in the work of the NCDT working party for a diploma.

(How did it get across to BTEC?)

In what respect

(Well we are talking of the BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts)

Nothing to do with it. I thought you were talking about the DADA I thought you were talking about the Dance and Drama awards.

(No do you remember the working party that [OS 1] had. So I am trying to explore how the National diploma in performing arts which we all put together how that got started? so really what you have just told me isn't anything to do with that ?)

Well it all had it's roots in that, everything that we contributed came from that and it led to a degree to that BTEC

(So there was something going on at BTEC so it was found that they were covering each others patch)

Something like that but don't forget the dance and drama awards all came much much later than did BTEC but as I can remember it the original work was done with the NCDT working party and it gradually grew out of that.

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

(In terms of the BTEC qualification do you recollect who the prime movers were the innovators?)

No

How did you become involved in the process?

Through the NCDT

How was the development team brought together?

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

No

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

Don't know

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

No

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

No because I didn't really have much to do with it I was in on just the beginnings of it all.

I haven't been involved in BTEC at all.

We haven't been involved in BTEC at all, that's not true there have been one or two contacts. Did it as regards to stage management but and their might have been another odd stage management but I don't think otherwise schools being involved in BTEC it wasn't a continuing development at all.

(Were you in on the original course structure?)

No

(So you wouldn't know how they decided upon the nature of the structure which was core units and options and such like)

No

(What about the assessment regime I wonder if you would like to comment upon how the assessment regime was put together)

I don't think that I am going to be very helpful.

(You are thinking we are talking about 2 different things?)

Yes I think we are talking of two different things. We have been the line of development from the drama school end that went through the NCDT and that went to the department of education and the

FEFE sector and the HE sector simply absorbed all the degrees and included them in the DADA scheme, with special funding arrangements and with regard to the schools that didn't have degrees they went in the DADA scheme in the HE sector. So it went from the unions the management the drama schools the NCDT and then eventually fed itself out to the government really through the arts council who did the interim funding scheme that was the link.

(Yes now we are talking about the middle of the 1990's here aren't we?)

Right, so it was the arts council that picked up the problem and ran with it and we had what was called the interim funding scheme which they ran, lottery money and then that was running out because it was only run for about 2 or 3 years on lottery money then it was picked up by the department the minister and that required a qualification or a degree and that line of development which probably started off parallel to what spawned out to the BTEC but it certainly separated very early.

(I understand now but it is still very interesting for me what you are saying because it's not an area that I have been following through but it certainly will be of some benefit. Do you recollect when we met, I remember coming to your office this was for the HND's. In order to get a bit more benefit out of our conversation I wonder if you would like to comment upon the assessment processes and the problems of assessment for performed arts of any kind)

I think the problem is trying to break what is essentially a holistic process down into very small segments of criteria.

(You don't think that that is a very successful thing to do?)

Well I know generally, well it is actually happening at the moment that the Trinity college, in fact a telephone call today said the body which accredits them said they were having to look at their criteria

(This would be QCA would it?)

Yes QCA was too heavily segmented and far too detailed and you needed a broader brush stroke which actually happened I believe in NVQ. The problems that we are hitting is breaking things down into such tiny little elements which may be fine for a mechanical process but although part of acting is mechanical, involves the human body which is mechanical, never the less isn't as easy to break down into tiny parts as possibly something very technically based like engineering or plumbing.

(Are you saying that when you were talking to Trinity college people today that they had been told not to break it down into little bits by QCA or is that otherwise?)

They were told, I don't think it is breaking a confidence, to have a look at their criteria because they are far too a) a lot of them were too descriptive and b) far too many of them.

(So they are losing site of what it is all about?)

Yes and also of course every time you break things down into smaller amounts it increases the administration and increases the time spent on it and does the result justify the means really. So that is something we found as a problem and also the fact that everybody has got to do everything in the performing arts. You may have people with great ability in one sector of the job but severe imperfections in another but they would still be employed because they are so good at that one thing, and the thing that you should pass everything doesn't possibly reflect that real situation in training for the business.

(You yourself therefore from what you have just said it would appear that you would be more keen on separate qualifications in drama in dance in music than you would be for a generalist qualification across the lot?)

Yes

(At what stage do you think generalist taster kind of course would cease to be effective?)

17 or 18

(So in fact as far as the original intention here the BTEC nationals which were for the 16 to 19 year olds do you think it was reasonable for them to be doing a broad course?)

Oh Yes. We obviously audition thousands of people and some of them have taken the BTEC courses some are extremely good and some are extremely bad.

(But that is the same anywhere isn't it?)

Same anywhere it depends on how the course is run, what the leadership is like and what the qualities of the tutors was like and their ability to see and select talent. It is variable as all those factors.

We are hitting this sort of problem because the only way the money will now travel (this is what it is all about isn't it) assessment and moderation, if you are not careful you can kill the goose that lays the golden egg because it has the freedom to do it. Obviously in the past there has been the system has been abused in certain cases but the danger is that you can create a system to prevent any form of abuse of the system and overload and drive out a lot of the creative energy in it.

(We have got to keep our eye on why we are there in the first place)

Yes

(Yes I would agree with you there as a musician I feel exactly the same)

And in the end people start saying well is it worth a charge at something smaller on my own on the side and get some creative pleasure out of it. One expects the reality and you have got to manage things etc. This has been a move in the last decade to excessive visualising, assessment etc. so much energy and something has to give and what gives is the creative energy the drive that's getting the product off the ground and improving it developing it and inspiring it.

(The of course you will always get someone coming along and saying well if you have someone with the right amount of artistic talent you can't stop them)

Oh no of course you can't. So that is the difficulty that we have had in these forms of assessment and they tend to spawn one organism seems to spawn another, and the other organism lives on the organism that it spawns and so you finish up with, you have got the NCDT DfEE and they are all asking the same question and then you have a valuation committee to prove to government that they have spent their money wisely and the evaluation company is wanting to evaluate what is happening at the ground roots and you finish up with 5 organisations asking the same question in slightly different ways it means a completely different process and completely different paper work.

(All checking up on each other)

Yes all checking, on the backs do bite them "fleas have little fleas upon their back" that I think is a management structure which is, got top heavy. I think it really eventually comes from over, highly centralised government it's a long way away from the work place.

(Of course the performed arts despite their economic importance, because they are not understood and they are not four square, not like business studies they are always left until last)

And yet they do generate a lot of income.

'Original Starters' Interview Transcript Number 4

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

My recollection is that my own college, in common with one or two others, was running a Foundation Drama course and I have been trying to think how I heard, it was through *****, whether it was through a circular or phone call but there was just this feeling that the A level was too restrictive they wanted to develop the idea of a non A level specialist 2 year Foundation Drama course. That is my recollection of how it all started.

*(Can I ask you did you in fact therefore know ***** and what he was up to before then?)*

No, not at all.

(Did you meet him before or after you had approached BTEC?)

No I didn't know anything at all about *****.

(Well whether you know it or not you were the first person)

Well one of the early ones, I am just trying to think whether it was [OS 1] or.

(No, you approached [OS 1] according to him)

It could have been or whether I had a call from somebody else.

(You remember that you and I met at Lady Margaret's Hall in Oxford and you had made some kind of application to BTEC because you jumped off in the middle of the meeting to go and meet them)

I did.

*(And that I had already had started a Music Technology course with them which was mentioned at that meeting, but don't worry if you don't remember that. What I am going to ask you. there was a group that ***** was leading now [OS 5] told me that you might know the name of that group.)*

No I don't

(On the other hand [OS 1] said that it was a NATFHE group)

The NATFHE drama section was involved at some point.

(That may well have been correct then?)

Yes, it could be I have a recollection that the NATFEE drama group may have had something to do with this.

(OK so the impetus originally came from drama?)

It was definitely drama, foundation drama yes.

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

How did you become involved in the process?

(You made an independent approach to BTEC?)

I think that must have been triggered by something or by a phone call from somebody and I have been trying to think and I can't really think who.

How was the development team brought together?

[OS 1]

*(***** was the officer at BTEC at the time and he pulled them together?)*

Right

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

I had heard of them

(In other departments of the college?)

Yes that's right, but no nothing because there weren't any.

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

I seem to remember we got a copy of it. Pretty sort of hazy on this one.

(Copy of what?)

The guide lines

(Yes but I mean we haven't got the guidelines yet you are going to be doing them)

Yes I don't know.

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

*(When the team got together and produced the guide lines after running them for a year and I presume that you did them at ***** as we did at Newcastle)*

And they are still in draft

(We will come to that in a moment. There was a revision after one year I don't know if you remember that but there was a revision and we were called together to see if we could re write some of the bits. This happened on two meetings and I wondered if you know why that revised draft was never published?)

I don't.

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

(Remember when we started writing the 'First' there was a full team and we met at that place in Retford)

That's right I remember it.

(Then you and I sat together in the Connaught Hotel and in the bar we wrote some of the music units, now that having been said, do you remember the changes (still in) the unit specifications of the First as compared to the Nationals?)

Not sharply, only that I recall that the feeling was that the spec. were very open and non prescriptive in the National.

(But in the First they had things like competence objectives and things like that and they are still there)

The CO 1s and 2s were more competence based.

(Yes where do you think that that came from?)

I assume it was from BTEC.

(And who gave it to BTEC. I am probing very strongly here?)

Yes. Don't know, pass.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

I think it was from [OS 1] because the original group was definitely Foundation Drama and my recollection is that [OS 1] came in and said the official line BTEC is lets look at Music Dance Drama Technical Theatre.

*(Did you have in fact two different groups of people there? As far as I have learnt so far there was ***** group who were a drama group of colleges who were into drama but there was also a different group from [OS 2] and [OS 5], is that right?)*

I mentioned to you that my recollection is that [OS 2] was pursuing his own agenda.

(A fixer isn't he?)

Yes and he had other ideas and there was certainly tension and he was there because he didn't want to miss out on what was going on.

(Yes I could believe that yes)

I think he was seen very much as the opposition to what we were trying to do had his own firm ideas.

(And [OS 5] of course was part of his scene)

That's right and I can remember talking to ***** after some of the meetings and think it almost got to the point, and I am a bit hazy on this, where you know resolution had to be made to sort of find a way through

(There was definite antagonism was there?)

Yes

(And you being a musician was standing apart from this in a way?)

Well, yes I can remember in one of the meetings ***** took one team and I took the other sort of co chairman to get things written. My memory is not as good as it should be, you are telling me things. Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

I don't remember that there was.

(They all went for the broad brush approach?)

I think so once it had been accepted we were working towards a Performing Arts Course qualifications I don't recall there being any strong, well we want drama we want specialist dance I think the feeling was within the over arching qualification that we would achieve what degree of specialisation we wanted.

(Which is what the original structure came out with?)

That's right.

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

Were there any alternative titles for the course

I have been thinking about that, I think there probably were but I can't recall any.

(I remember [OS 2] coming up to Newcastle to see me with this proposal for an Expressive Arts Course does that title ring any bells?)

Not really

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

My recollection is and personally talking to my Art and Design folk they felt that it was a very complex structure and that the various stages

(This was at the time?)

Yes, and I think that within our group we looked at that and threw it out

(That was the group structure or the unit based?)

The grouped, the stages and grouped Art & Design

(So you thought in fact that the unit based structure which was eventually decided was a good one?)

Yes

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

I seem to remember that this was again from [OS 1] the structure for BTEC qualification.

(You think in fact that [OS 1] had a fair bit a big hand to play in this?)

He did definitely, yes.

(Because he is very reticent in this himself you see he more or less says he responded to what was going on a tried to reconcile the differences)

I think in a sense he did and I have got notes on that later on but he established certain boundaries within which we worked.

(Sounds like he was a very good chairman?)

Oh yes he was excellent, but he wasn't a Performing Artist himself

(But perhaps that was to our advantage?)

Oh yes absolutely and I think he found it very innovating and very rewarding being involved in that, but I think that sort of basic structure of core plus options as far as I can remember was a BTEC

(It was handed down?)

Yes I think so.

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

(Was that handed down as well?)

I think so. Obviously the assessment, well we will come onto assessment, the overall structure, I don't remember looking at that.

(It wasn't a big issue?)

No

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

There was absolutely no disagreement we were all in favour and again I think it was a requirement and we all saw the value.

(And there was no worry about the means of delivery and such like?)

I don't think so there may have been discussion I don't think there was any major disagreement on that.

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience

No problems not that I can recall

(Despite the fact that there is not much of an industry out there to be able to go and get experience with?)

No I think the concept was agreed, in a vocational nature, I remember talking to somebody who was antagonistic saying well how am I going to arrange work experience? I have nothing near me at all, there was a recognition that for some centres this would be more difficult and complicated than others, but as a concept I think we were with that.

How were decisions made regarding unit value (some are 1.00 and some are 2.00 or even 3.00)

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided?

I think it was BTEC

(Because you remember that at the same time there were the beginnings of NCVQ whose job it was to oversee the development of the new Government inspired NVQs)

I don't remember that impacting on our discussions

(I would imagine that because it was really known only to those who were already fiddling around with that sort of thing)

Absolutely

(So the team was prepared to accept the standard BTEC?)

think they were.

(You remember those orange books that they had?)

Yes that's right.

(It is difficult to get hold of one of those now by the way)

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested?

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

I think there certainly were.

(What would you say they were?)

Well I can remember very prolonged exchanges on grading criteria and how you squeeze out any sort of subjectivity and how do you measure an actor's performance and I think the group as a whole recognised that there were particular issues in..... in Performing Arts that didn't appear anywhere else. How you measure those, yes I remember some very interesting yes quite exciting discussions on getting a reliable set of assessment criteria together.

(Where there any people in the group who were particularly interesting on this?)

***** certainly had some ideas on this

(Particularly in terms of the dramatic elements?)

Theatre and Drama yes he did, I recall him having quite a strong voice in that.

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

I always thought circular 17 was general guidance.

(It was something that came round all colleges and it pertained to all of the BTEC courses. It was a kind of preset of what the guidance booklet had said. Guidance booklet said more or less that you had to be using criterion reference testing and that you had to grade things as either pass, merit and distinction or referral and fail, but you all accepted that?)

Yes

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended as a preparation for work or for further study?

Further study.

(That was the general consensus of opinion, I mean could you go into work as an actor, straight at the age of eighteen?)

In general terms the biggest weakness of the development of this qualification was the lack of involvement from the profession

(Why was that?)

I don't think they were ready for it they had their own patterns of education and a lot of this is still true today that the NVQs that are being developed. You go into a theatre, what sort of recognition do they have. I remember talking to [OS 1] and the difficulties that he had of getting anybody really from the profession to inform and advise the development of this and I think that was a weakness. We had [OS 3] from, he was an educationalist he was speaking from a particular view point which was very valuable obviously. But getting people in from the music business, the theatre, recording industry was very very difficult.

(You think they wanted to pursue their own agenda?)

And I dare say it is probably true today

(You are probably right)

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (e.g. matures)?

Interesting question that, I think we probably were aware in those early days of the widening participation and I seem to think we did say that this might be attractive to a non-traditional A level type of student. I think probably my answer to that Jim was yes we were aware that it might appeal to others other than the normal A level type student.

(Did you as a departmental manager find that you were surprised by the broad range of students that came forward for the first tranche of students that you had in this?)

Yes we certainly had some who wouldn't have come on a traditional A level course.

(I know that a number of people that I have spoke to felt this and that was my experience as well)

I think perhaps even more so in the First diploma in a funny way.

(Strange isn't it because they didn't have the necessary things to get on the National)

That First Diploma was a way back into education for large numbers of students, a lot of mature students came.

(So you think they had a great value there?)

Oh yes

(This isn't on my list of questions but between you and me the First Diploma is in limbo at the moment)

It's disappearing

(You saw it as a means to get in?)

Yes very much so.

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

We didn't go for any Higher Nationals at ***** but I do remember the letter of guidance.

Having to phone up four or five times to get it and track it down. I think it probably put us off a bit.

Had it been an off the shelf approved qualification they might have been more interested in it, but the pressures of time.....

POLICIES

Was there any policy steer from authorities, external, or internal to BTEC?

No, absolutely nothing, the policy steer came from a group of far-sighted individuals who spotted a need in vocational training in the 16 to 19.

(But you didn't find or did you find that people who were interested in what was going on in other subject areas were actually trying to impose themselves and their structure and ideas upon yourselves or they hadn't got around to it?)

No not at all. It all came from within and we set the agenda and we set the policy in a sense.

(Well in terms of business it would have been seen to have been market led, you needed it and you asked for it?)

Absolutely, yes.

What was the nature of this?

Was there a conscious reason for leaving the original guidelines in draft form until 2000?

I have asked that question, I have asked the subject officers and [OS 1] and I have got no sensible answer.

(Well I think I have got the reason but that is part of the thesis that I am writing, I think I could give an explanation for that but it would skew this interview if I were to, so I will leave it)

What professional organisations were consulted during the development process?

Very very few

(Do you think there was any before the team got together?)

I don't think there was. I think, [OS 1] will know better than I. I think BTEC tried to get on board reps and industry, professionals and so on but I know they found it very difficult.

(Because they didn't want to know do you think?)

No, just apathy a lack of understanding

(They had their own agenda?)

I guess so, I can't remember any one organisation but as I say [OS 3] who represented the Drama Schools was strong and a supporter but in terms of the actual business side I can't really remember.

Were any of these organisations particularly helpful?

Only the national council, NCDT through [OS 3] they were very interested and supportive.
Were any of these organisations particularly antagonistic?
Not antagonistic just wondering what it was all about and what the point of it was.

END NOTES

Please mention any issues or interesting facts relevant to the development process that I have omitted to raise.

Have I missed something important?

Only that it was heady times and the feeling that we were breaking new ground.

(You are still involved [OS 4], how do you think the way things are going?)

I think Edexcel have made a complete mess of it and I don't attach blame.

(In what way?)

Having gone for the new spec. and having to alter them and then having to alter them again for next year to get in line with QCA and I think that is partly the rapid turn over of staff in the area.

(You think it is too much change too quickly?)

Yes and there is a lot of confusion out there.

(Would you have been happier to have had an update of the original structure?)

I think in hind sight yes I think the going for the separation was premature.

(The original structure hit the spot?)

Yes I think so

(Just to bring it up to date would have been the thing?)

I think so and make it, put it under more competence based.

(But it sorted out the assessment thing. What's your opinion about the external assessment?)

Well I am quite pleased with the external tests proposed, certainly the AVC I think the original fears that many people had have just been multiple choice tick box and those have gone. There are still some issues on how you police the initial 12 hours of preparation but I think it is a concept I like.

'Original Starters' Interview Transcript Number 5

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

Basically it arose from pub conversations between [OS 2] and myself. We used to meet socially because our wives, he worked in one college and I worked in another, just happened to be because our wives knew each other through the children. The social thing, things sort of just arose and we started to. At our college we had been running A levels but with Open College Federation certificates, which were OK as far as they went but they were somewhat unsatisfactory because the students there weren't really rated by employers there was something desperate between the A levels which were primarily academic therefore didn't suit the average FE kid and the MOCS were generally practical as courses, but never the twain shall meet. What seemed to be required was something of a totality. I don't know who made the first move but I think [OS 2] spotted that I probably had the kind of practical know how in theatre and obviously keen. I always looked for opportunities when they arose and [OS 2] was an operator in terms of knowing, he had already worked with BTEC as a moderator, and he knew a lot of people like [OS 1] and others. He made some initial enquiries with BTEC and before any official move was made we kind of thought around who else we might contact. I think for some reason [OS 2] had bumped into a guy called ***** who was head of Expressive Arts at ***** College of Art. As it turned out Tim Jones's philosophy came very much out of Art College, as I say it was called Expressive Arts that course, and we discovered that when we got down to the real nitty gritty that his ideas were not really going to cut the mustard with BTEC because they were quite wishy washy. They were all sort of totally processed based so much so there was very little relevance to specific jobs. But the three of us put together some paper work, submitted it to [OS 1] who was then in charge of leisure courses and catering type courses. The other two names are hazy to me but there was a guy who I think has subsequently left BTEC quite along time ago who was in charge of the arts side and then there was BTEC's chief of staff whose name at that time escapes me. But the three of us met the three of them, we actually had about four pints before we entered the room, we were sort of plucking up courage, you know we needed that bluster so we could get a foot in the door and basically, the guy from the Arts section walked out of the meeting he was appalled by the notion, he was very threatened by the notion that the visual arts, he didn't want anything to do with it which was of major significance because it meant that any future BTEC development would not take place within the Art domain and therefore Tim Jones's concept of the Expressive Arts thing was dead in its tracks which meant it wouldn't actually survive.

(So that was the start?)

Yes, so the two [OS 1] and the Head of BTEC then entrusted ***** and I to start industrial visits you know, which there were many and several. Meantime back on the ***** front there was an organisation which I think you will already have the name of but my paper work I think I will have thrown it out, I did actually try and look for this but couldn't, I don't think I have kept much in the filing cabinets here it's probably in the theatre office. There was a body that was starting to meet, they had a committee, it was primarily North of England based but there were some people from elsewhere, I think that fellow ***** was involved, not the ***** at the Victoria Theatre Stoke but the fellow who I think is still the chief examiner of the A level Theatre Studies. There was a group that had already approached BTEC about the idea of doing what I was doing with the GMOCF which was a supported course, you know certificates to support the A. level but BTEC didn't want to know about.

(What is GMOCF?)

Greater Manchester Open College Federation. The ***** group, [OS 2] sort of swore me to secrecy but when I look retrospectively at some of these things I think that [OS 2] was interested in his own career and therefore [OS 2] motivation was to get as much power as he possibly could in that early stage and didn't want to tell anyone about it. BTEC had made it semi secret they didn't want it spread around they just wanted us to go do the job and see if there was the evidence that there was a course there. So it wasn't in BTEC's interest to spread it around and it wasn't in [OS 2] interest because [OS 2] wanted to be in a position of some strength but when he came out of it he would be smelling of roses, he has been associated with a major innovation and it is all hunky dory.

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

How did you become involved in the process?

How was the development team brought together?

There was a meeting a Melton Mowbray chaired by *****. This was that self same group that I was talking about, we need to find out the name of that group.

(Was it anything to do with NATFE?)

No, it was primarily drama teachers, it was almost exclusively drama teachers I would say and they were motivated by just developing provision at the A level standard. As I said they had already made an approach to BTEC for certificates but they had been given a complete no by BTEC. They hadn't tried to get a National Diploma they simply made this general enquiry and BTEC suspected them because possibly quite rightly they had put the wrong hat on put the A level hat on and BTEC didn't want to know. Now what happened was [OS 2] tried to. Somehow ***** got wind of the fact that we were involved, he made some late enquiries before this meeting at Melton Mowbray, he invited [OS 2] and I to his college in ***** on the eve of the meeting at Melton Mowbray. [OS 2] already knew ***** from his previous college or something or through his moderation so he had a lot of dealing with him, but it didn't really resolve anything on the eve of the meeting at Melton Mowbray and what happened was the meeting at Melton Mowbray created quite a lot of bad feeling. Because [OS 2], in his own inimitable style sort of crowed about the fact that we had already got the Crown Jewels and that we had been entrusted with it and we had already been in five star hotels which didn't go down well with the corduroy and jeans lobby of the drama teachers. [OS 2] came across as senior management and they didn't like that, because [OS 2] was already a scale 5 head, I of course because I was a friend of [OS 2] and also because I had been involved in the development I couldn't change sides in that sense so what happened was when the way it worked so that when BTEC made the decision, when we consulted loads of people through the industrial liaison BTEC then set up an advisory panel, but in order to set it up they had to invite, I think at one point [OS 2] thought he was trying to stop it, I think that was a somewhat naive view but he had to invite ***** and one or two other people.

(So in fact what we are saying here is that they brought the development team together by pulling all of the various people?)

That's right, the Chairman was ***** because [OS 1] took the view he needed a rather, he needed a blander less partisan chair because he realised that ***** would come out of one stable and that [OS 2] and I would come out of a different thing.

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

Yes I taught both the Art, Day TEC and I had helped with communication teaching with engineers.

(So you knew the TEC business?)

I knew a little bit about it.

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

Granada Television, Penguin Books, Etcetera

(So you sent them letters and things?)

Yes we went to see them

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

It was all curious to me why it never got published

(You are not able to help me by telling me why?)

From what I understand it was a combination of probably accident rather than design I would suspect it was just to, inefficiency at the heart of BTEC and they had other preoccupations at the time. That all coincided with a lot of change .

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

When the writing panel set that up, which I was involved in the Firsts as well, the structure of that was such that it was linked to the competencies that they actually have a different way of framing courses, so they framed that. It forced the people writing it to think much more tightly about what was being assessed. One of the criticisms of the BTEC national even though it had some strengths has been that some of the language, all be it very noble, has been very hard to assess.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

(From the people you consulted what did they feel?)

I think they thought it was necessary to have a certain rigour in terms of a focus on a vocational area so that there should be some credibility about subject, subject base and there was a debate which I can't discuss. You probably heard of the legendary near walk out of ***** at the first writing group which was held at Knutsford, where it took all of [OS 1] nerve and skill to keep him in the meeting

because he was threatening that his members and the body he represented their philosophy was not being adhered to. I think what we ended up was a clever piece of work really because we ended up with what we wanted anyway.

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

Yes. I think the BTEC National Diploma historically was a major push forward for the Arts in FE colleges for Performing Arts, for all its faults and it does have faults and its critics but I think it have been proven that it was a bit of a catalyst because whatever has come out of it and there has been different developments hasn't there and probably all those other developments wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for the BTEC National.

Were there any alternative titles for the course

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

It had to be made up, we had to thrash it out at the heart of it was a major debate, I think it was partly a personality thing that ***** wanted to make sure he had his input. Over it. I think it came down to semantics in the end because I think we actually ended up with, it made some logical sense the course did, but there are debates about it and there still will continue to be debates about it. I was reasonably happy with the ideas behind it I think the assessment needed to be worked out better.

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

The first requirement, this is of course before I did a different set

(This is in 1986/87)

Well those initial common skills were so vast weren't they? it was ludicrous that somehow teachers would have the time or the skill. My comment was pretty well off the record but at least two thirds of my own staff could not pass the common skills requirement for one reason or another (working as a team) well not necessarily as working as a team but certain basic skills they would have difficulty with.

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience

I think the problem about that is it is more to do with where colleges are situated and the links they have got. (Thinking of work experience in terms of Performing Arts aren't you there?) some colleges are better situated and can provide more meaningful or relevant experiences than others because of where they are placed. We were forced to put kids in primary schools something like that, although having said that they probably got quite a lot of good life skills and probably did do quite a lot of Performing Arts things in primary schools.

How were decisions made regarding unit value (some are 1.00 and some are 2.00 or even 3.00)

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided?

This is cloudy, my memory. Some of the things were handed down I think Common Skills is a good example that was handed down. But there were a number of things that were handed down in terms of working practice what other courses had done like what had the leisure courses done in relationship and how did they assess. Of course initially we weren't talking about competencies we were talking about objectives, and we were talking about assessing those objectives and of course some of those objectives can only be assessed by the student demonstrating through some degree of knowledge and then we had this list of indicative content. But there was not tie up between the indicative content and the objectives, where as of course in the later BTEC first objectives the content and the competencies were tied weren't they.

(You know when you are talking of competences here this is a policy which came from the newly developing NVQ's at the time, was there any talk of NVQ's? were you appraised of what they were all about?)

As I say I think that this is the interesting thing for you to debate in your thesis, did the BTEC National diploma did we get our foot in the door just in time before the door was shut, in other words did we get our foot in the door, if that had been a year later, because a year later NVQ's were beginning to raise their head, had it been just that little bit later when it was being pushed for there was a chance there that it would not have been given any serious consideration.

(Because they would have had to wait until the new systems came in.)

We can't cope with this and anyway it would have been an excuse for governments and colleges to reduce provision because we started moving into unit based funding didn't we soon afterwards They would have seen this as a beautiful area not to expand and certainly to use as cuts. So that it was crucial that we got our foot in the door, so there is the irony of it. That truth was that no we weren't given any appraisal, we weren't appraised, I don't think [OS 1] himself, I can't speak for him. All he had in his brief was what he had been accustomed to deliver through his Leisure and Catering Courses and he wasn't familiar with that domain, he certainly extended his knowledge of that and applied it to Performing Arts.

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested?

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

I think we all scratched our heads in a slightly mystified fashion but I think the truth of the matter is the main players round the table probably that includes [OS 4] as well, we were so excited about the prospect of getting this course that we were prepared to wash and rub over some of those hazy and doggy areas because we wanted to make sure that we got the course, and any way we were only following the guidelines, we could only respond to what information we were getting from BTEC. There is no offence to [OS 1] because I thought he did a wonderful job in his own way it is not his fault you know.

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended as a preparation for work or for further study?

I think we were aware that there was that dual purpose, but I think we were also aware that most people who got employment in Drama had to go on for a higher study in order to get any jobs that were that would be really quality jobs, they might get work as extras and stuff. There were some and you do hear of some that get onto Coronation Street and stuff but the norm is that they have to go on to do some sort of H.E. training. Now then in music it's slightly less, a bit fuzzier because there are various people who get a lot of very lucrative work who have never been near a classroom since 15 or 16.

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (eg matures)?

I think we were quite clear about one thing we were fairly clear that we were aiming to attract a different clientele to the clientele that we were attracting for A level courses. We thought that we would attract hands on type practitioners who would have been fazed out by doing academic work and there is a clash there because obviously some of those kids would not be capable of going onto Higher Education but they would be able to do a BTEC National, that we were aware of. I think I was aware of something else but it didn't think it happened, which was that, in theory, Performing Arts had a great opportunity through this development to become almost an equal bedfellow to the Visual Arts they have a massively important role in both primary, secondary and further education through to degree courses, I kind of perhaps thought if we got a BTEC National rolling there is no reason at all why, given the media profile of the Performed Arts that we can't actually be of as equal importance and I don't think that has happened, it hasn't happened for a number of reasons some of which are out of FE hands like government policy about national curriculum..

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

POLICIES

Was there any policy steer from authorities, external, or internal to BTEC?

There were in many ways, but I think you would have to put your question in a different, *(Just leave that one)*

I mean my answer is that I am sure there were

(You might not have been aware at the time?)

No not necessarily but I am usually aware of gremlins in the woods.

What was the nature of this?

Was there a conscious reason for leaving the original guidelines in draft form until 2000?

What professional organisations were consulted during the development process?

(I am thinking of the Conference and Drama Schools what was their opinion helpful antagonistic?)

I think we didn't get a no-go, we got a few question marks from them but they recognised that they wouldn't stand in the way of a development which improved the practical skills of people coming through to them.

(They saw this as another source of supply for themselves?)

I think so. They were also quite precious and they weren't very helpful in the Dance side particularly it was all a bit, they could have done a lot more, there was a debate about Dance of course. The other thing that has made the BTEC National a somewhat odd mixture of things is that the dance elements are more what I would describe as creative and educational dance as opposed to actual practical dance where people get work in dance.

(Vocationally oriented?)

Yes it wasn't so much modern stage dance so there should have been more elements. The problem is what the skills of teachers were and we had to be aware of that reality.

(Wasn't there a feeling that the last thing that they wanted was to have P.E. teachers teaching dance?)

Well yes that is true, there was that and that was a danger because of course there was a lot of these teachers who would be quite good at tap dancing and a bit of ballet, they would have a few of those skills which they probably got quite a lot of exam qualifications for but they wouldn't necessarily be

(They wouldn't get work?)

No

Were any of these organisations particularly helpful?

Were any of these organisations particularly antagonistic?

END NOTES

Please mention any issues or interesting facts relevant to the development process that I have omitted to raise.

Have I missed something important?

(Something I would be interested in and you kept mentioning but you couldn't remember the name of the group. If you can come up with this can you ring me and let me know?)

I am trying to think of somebody who would definitely know this. ***** who I think is still the head examiner for Theatre Studies would almost certainly know it is possible that [OS 4] would. The other person I don't know if he is still head of drama at Melton Mowbray but he was certainly someone who might remember the name of the group. The FEU document which quite interestingly never went beyond the draft, 'Towards an Integrated Curriculum', remember [OS 2] and I did this FEU thing and we held one or two conferences nationally.

(No I don't know about that)

Well I have got it in front of me.

(Well tell me what it is called and where to get it from?)

It's called 'Developing an Integrated Curriculum' and you will get them from the FEU date 1997/98/99 about 2 years after the BTEC thing got under way. There is a section in it called 'The Momentum for Change' at the end and I am just wondering. The first thing it has got background history and rationale you ought to have that really. I have got all this, you see we tended to edit out any reference to any specific groups of people in this because it was more of a guidance document. The actual document does deal with assessment. It has got a whole a whole section on that.

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

I am not sure which was the chicken and which was the egg from my memory, the way that I remember it is that possibly two things happened coincidentally at the same time. One was that BTEC had in mind the idea of a diploma in Performing Arts, so were scouting around looking for interested institutions and people who might be involved in that process. That is partly a guess I cannot remember exactly.

(So in fact what you are telling me is that it came from above?)

I am not sure about that, I am not certain.

(But that is how it presented itself to you?)

This all seems like a long time ago I have to say, I haven't got any documentation with me. My own experience at the time was that I was working on a college based Performing Arts course, we were looking for an accrediting body. That I know to be a fact and I assume that other colleges and institutions were doing the same thing and my guess would be that all those things were happening at the same time and came together.

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

Well again I would have to say course leaders in various institutions around the country.

(Yes but in terms of the team that put the thing together?)

You mean names?

(Yes don't worry about using names)

I am not certain who the innovators were. I came along as it were on the coat tails.

How did you become involved in the process?

I think what happened was I was recommended to the initial group or BTEC by my course leader, *****. I seem to remember then I was then actually invited kind of formally to get involved.

(That's right you get a contract)

So I would regard myself as the second row as it were.

How was the development team brought together?

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

I had done a couple of years teaching what basically was business English, something like people in communications.

(That was a BEC course was it?)

Yes. That was all that was the only experience I had.

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

I can't remember anything about that.

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

I had forgotten about that, but thinking about it I do remember it now quite clearly, I don't remember the answer to the question why it wasn't but I certainly know that I was aware that the revised guidelines were never published. I can remember a feeling of anger and irritated at the time because I think we had put a fair amount time and work into the revisions. I have no idea, my vague memory is that there was something happened at BTEC but I don't know what that was.

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

I wish I could, but sadly my memory fails me and as I haven't got the examples in front of me I can't remember what the stages were.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

I think there was an educational sort of philosophical reason partly, that was driving that was about something being quite broad based and avoiding too much specialisation early on.

Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

I am not sure about preference, I suspect that always the music elements, were the elements that which found themselves to be most uncomfortable, if you like, in the whole performance group, and I think all the way through there were times when the music specialist wanted to be a specialism and found it

quite difficult to do some of the other elements. I think that applied right the way down from lecturers to the students themselves.

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

I was satisfied in the sense that I believed in the educational philosophy behind the way that the course was designed. I think that there were practical difficulties for individual students or individual routes through just because of the nature of making up the number of units and things like that. It certainly wasn't a perfect structure but my own personal feeling was that it was probably more or less kind of about the best we could have done at the time.

Were there any alternative titles for the course?

I have no idea I don't remember anything about that.

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

I have no recollection of any conversation about that.

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

I do remember the meeting where this was discussed at great length and all these ideas were thrashed out and there was a very strong feeling that there should be a core to the course that everybody took. Then there should be some specialism allowed increasingly perhaps as students went through the course.

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

As far as I can remember I think that was a given format by BTEC.

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

I think at the time there was some resistance to that, again as far as I can remember again that was a BTEC requirement that there should be some common skills. I think with a lot of these things because I personally and lots of us didn't have a lot of experience of how those things worked, until we had got the nitty gritty, until we had got the wording and could see how it was actually going to work out in a practical way were quite resistant to some of those things. I think common skills is the forerunner of key skills and they are very, very basic transferable skills that everybody has now. Yes I definitely think they had a place there.

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience

I personally thought that was a good idea. A very sound idea in a vocational course which is what it was, again very often the practicalities of setting up work placements were quite difficult particularly in Performing Arts areas. I think that certainly I would say that the experience of students on the whole was that it was a very valuable experience even if perhaps individuals didn't perhaps get really useful placements or they were difficult or whatever.

(Do you remember anything being suggested for those areas and colleges that couldn't actually get them into the Performing Arts as work experience?)

I don't remember thinking around those things, I can't remember exactly what we came up with at the time. I can speak more from the point of view of being a course tutor and having to deal with some of those areas.

(Well how did you deal with it?)

For instance the students not being able to have their first choice of activity for instance, like wanting to perform. I think we had to very often guide or steer students into working in areas where they would get like experience I suppose I might describe it. I cannot think of some precise examples. Something that would sort of mirror the type of activities that they might do even if they weren't actually in performance. For instance there might be something that involved working with other people or type of range of work that they might have done.

How were decisions made regarding unit value (some are 1.00 and some are 2.00 or even 3.00)

I would guess that the three was the performance workshop

(It was)

As far as I can remember that decision was made because the performance workshop was seen as the central core unit that should kind of hold everything else up, be the centre of the course, be the focus. On the one hand I think the unit values were arrived at to reflect some kind of, sort of cooperative emphasis. I also have to say that I can certainly remember conversations happening and us having to work around the fact that all these units had to add up to a certain number of units. There was some number crunching and juggling and sort of fitting quarts into pint pots or the other way round.

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided?

I have no idea I don't know anything about that.

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

I was interested in this question. I don't remember anything about that.

(It may well be part of the policy making procedure I never attended this group you see)

My recollection is that I didn't become aware of NVQs until later.

(Yes I can understand that but they were around)

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested?

Again my memory fails me on this

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

Yes I can say something about that. There was a great deal of disquiet about whether it was possible to quantify qualities such as creative or artistic qualities or activities of that sort. Which was felt at that time was how could you give a mark out of, or how can you give objectives and so on to that type of activity.

(It was a point of great discussion?)

It was

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

(Did you all have copies of the guidance booklet?)

I think I must have done at the time but I can't actually remember anything about that.

(Well that's OK because this is a memory job isn't it)

Yes

Looking at the question before that was any advice offered to resolve the assessment problem. I do actually remember again that the advisors from BTEC and in particular [OS 1] were actually very helpful and smoothed ruffled feathers and helped the team to put into language, my memory was of the language being very frightening and off putting and that when that had been put into a form or explained we were given examples or shown how to do it, then it became a little easier to see how to make the assessment work, as indeed I think it probably did in the end. It was partly a matter of learning a system and learning how it could be made to work.

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended as a preparation for work or for further study?

From the point of view of working on the courses I would have to say both definitely.

I am not sure if that was the original intention, I think it probably was. Certainly I had students who went onto further study and into work so I think both things did actually happen.

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (eg matures)?

We certainly got mature students but I am not sure that was anticipated at the beginning, certainly my expectations, lots of the institutions colleges already had cohorts of student who were doing college based diplomas or A level Performing Arts, and I guess that part of the reason why these courses were developed in colleges was to satisfy the groups of students who already existed and to provide them with a course. On the whole I think they would have been the ordinary, if you like 16 to 18, 19 year olds further education students. We did get quite a proportion of mature students and I am not sure if that was expected at the time.

(Did you get that proportion right the way through when you were teaching it or did it, was it different at one point of the course to another?)

Well I changed and taught at two different institutions and from memory I would guess there were more mature students at the beginning. Now we wondered if we were doing some mopping up of people who might have done a course like that much earlier if one had been available. I think that probably was the case.

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

I do seem to remember looking at a higher national award but I remember so little about it.

No I don't remember anything about policies

END NOTES

Please mention any issues or interesting facts relevant to the development process that I have omitted to raise.

Have I missed something important?

No. I really wish I had kept copies of my papers so that I could have been more precise, it seems such an extraordinary long time ago. 1986.

ORIGINAL DECISIONS

1. Describe how the development of the ND in Performing Arts got started?

A number of colleges were running their own Performing Arts courses which were validated and assessed internally. The students would get a college achievement certificate or something of that sort. It was felt it would be of more value if there could be some external accreditation and this would also help with standardising so you would get rid of variable standards and that there would be less of a question mark over progression I think..

(How do you think it got to BTEC?)

I think it got to BTEC through personal contact through memory. I think that is how it got to BTEC and I am not sure of the route of that I think it was something to do with personal contact or people getting together and saying wouldn't this be a good idea if this was validated externally how about trying this BTEC

Who was/were the innovator(s)?

Well I would say ***** which was [OS 2] I can't remember where he was

*(He was at *****)*

these were the 2 that I was most aware of in the North.

How did you become involved in the process?

I was invited to become involved because of my dance expertise and because I was at that time the dance lecturer within the Performing Arts courses at Wakefield College.

How was the development team brought together?

I think it was brought together through BTEC and interested practitioners. I cannot remember if there was a more formal process than that I think it was a case of people knowing that in certain colleges there was good practice going on and good ideas and so the groups were gathered together. It was initially quite a large group, the initial working party.

Did you have any previous experience in teaching or managing TEC, BEC or BTEC programmes?

No nothing at all.

What consultation was there before putting the qualification out to pilot?

I think there was a lot of consultation. There was a lot of consultation with colleges who were going to be involved, consultation with the industry certainly.

(By what means was the industry consulted?)

I think personal contact, speaking to principals contacting admissions officers at higher education and presumably outlining the scope of the course. I don't know whether they were sent written documentation but I do remember being at meetings where letters would be read out where they were saying such and such a principal was saying we think this is a very good idea.

Why was the revised draft of the original guidelines never published?

I don't know.

Comment upon changes in the style of the unit specifications (if any) were included in subsequent associated courses such as The First Awards or the Popular Music Diploma.

I am not certain I did a little bit of work on the first award.

(Can you remember if it was different in any way?)

I think the scope was less

(It would be being a lower level)

I can't really remember I guess there would be more emphasis on the practical than on the kind of theoretical.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How was the decision to combine this particular group of separate disciplines arrived at?

It was seen as a coherent package, for students and young people who were seriously engaged in wanting to go through to some kind of work in the Performing Arts there was an increasing demand on people having skills and abilities in just more than one area.

Was there any preference for separate diplomas for each discipline?

I actually don't know. I seem to remember there was further discussion between the music practitioners and others.

Were you personally satisfied with the eventual outcome or would you have preferred a different structure?

No, I was very satisfied.

Were there any alternative titles for the course

If there were I don't know and I can't remember

(So it was Performing Arts National Diploma)

The final form had a unit-based structure - had there been any consideration of a 'grouped' structure as in some Art & Design programmes?

I actually don't know.

How was the overall structure of Core Units plus 'options' to address each of the separate disciplines decided?

I think that was by discussion with the group so that it was seen that core units would be necessary for students for all the disciplines and they would follow on their preferred strands.

(So it was a compromise in many ways wasn't it?)

Yes and also there were students who enrolled on the courses who actually weren't sure what line they wanted to take. In fact some even changed their minds as a result of doing the core units.

How was the format of the units specifications arrived at?

I cannot remember

(Was it handed down?)

I know there was an annual hourly total and of course it was in the days when these courses were virtually full time and students would be in college for the biggest part of the week.

Comment upon the requirement for Common Skills

Yes I think it was very necessary in my opinion. I think it was sometimes difficult to check the effectiveness and I think for some course teams the common skills were probably an add-on rather than integral to the teaching of the course but that is just an opinion.

(So you are thinking that the application of the common skills was a bit patchy?)

Yes

Comment upon the requirement for Work Experience

I thought it was very necessary and in fact from my experience at Wakefield we were able to give some of the students a very good work experience. I think its limitations were that in many cases there simply wasn't enough opportunity for the students to undertake meaningful work placement and so they would be perhaps placed with a small theatre company or a small video production or whatever and these small groups of people were so occupied with doing what they had to do sometimes having a student around who perhaps didn't have much knowledge or confidence was a bit of a hindrance and I know some of the students came back and felt it had not been a particularly valuable experience.

(They had to make tea)

Yes

How were decisions made regarding unit value (some are 1.00 and some are 2.00 or even 3.00)

I actually cannot remember that. I cannot remember which were the richer ones if you like.

(3 was Performance Workshop)

Well if I think back Performance Workshop would need to be a 3 because if it was effective and properly delivered and the students got a good experience out of it then that was where all the disciplines were coming into one whole production. Therefore there was a lot of time and opportunity for students to specialise and be more instrumental and effective in what they were doing and I think the best results of the performance workshops were absolutely excellent.

(But in terms of how the decisions were made as to how they were valued you are suggesting they would discuss how much work there was before they did this?)

Yes

ASSESSMENT

How was the assessment regime decided?

As far as I can remember it was based on the existing BTEC model.

(Were you appraised of this model, did someone tell you what it was, show it to you?)

I think we would have been given guidance documents to look at.

(The published guidance documents?)

Yes that's right and assessment documents and we would have made sure that the diploma kind of fitted the requirements by writing the assessment criteria very closely.

Was there any steering of policy based upon the newly developing NVQs or from government policy directed from the newly established NCVQ?

I don't know I cannot remember

Was the team prepared to accept a standard BTEC assessment model or were modifications suggested?

(You have actually said they were)

Yes

Did you have any previous experience with the assessment processes of TEC and BEC?

No

If so did the experience influence you in this project?

Did the team envisage any assessment problems inherent in the Performing Arts?

I don't know whether the team envisaged it or whether people actually realised that there always actually are in the performing arts. There is always going to be the tension between the skilled performance or the skilled production and something else that makes it a bit special. That something else that makes it a bit special is often very difficult to actually to assess in a concrete kind of way.

If so how what advice was offered to resolve them?

I don't know whether advice was offered and I think probably people just hoped they knew what they were doing.

Did the guidance for assessment in the Guidance Booklet and in Circular 17 alter over time and if so how was information disseminated?

I cannot remember it, I cannot remember that happening.

PROGRESSION

Was the diploma primarily intended as a preparation for work or for further study?

I think probably in preparation for work.

(Do you think that was a realistic expectation?)

In some cases I think my view over it and one I have always had it's too easy for youngsters who have an interest in performing arts through what ever route they have come to think that if they, or to be lead to believe in some cases, that if they enrol in a diploma like this then they will be guaranteed work.

(Make me into a star)

And that just doesn't work. I think that inevitably something else has to happen before work can come along.

(So you are saying further study?)

Yes

Was there any clear idea of the likely nature of the potential students (eg matures)?

I don't think there was and certainly noticed over the years that I was involved with it that the students who enrolled at ***** if anything were getting younger and having mature students on the course was actually quite unusual.

(Was that at the beginning of the course?)

No there was more mature students at the beginning.

(That's what I was meaning)

Why was the Higher National Award left as a 'Centre Devised' qualification with no guidelines other than a 'letter of guidance'?

Yes I was involved with them I did some work some consultancy work at Newcastle.

Probably because only certain centres had any special expertise I think most centres were generally there were a few that had real expertise and found they could develop a meaning full Higher National

POLICIES

Was there any policy steer from authorities, external, or internal to BTEC?

I don't know

What was the nature of this?

Was there a conscious reason for leaving the original guidelines in draft form until 2000?

I have no idea and I didn't know that.

What professional organisations were consulted during the development process?

Were any of these organisations particularly helpful?

I cannot remember which ones but I know there were some that were very helpful.

Were any of these organisations particularly antagonistic?

I think some of them thought that the course might tread on their toes and also I know from some of the HE Institutions there was quite often a comment of well we would only take a student on this course if they had done A level theatre studies or A level music.

END NOTES

Please mention any issues or interesting facts relevant to the development process that I have omitted to raise.

Have I missed something important?

I can remember the original working party which was sometimes there were many many people at the meetings maybe getting on for 20. I know the group that actually got to grips of writing the units was less than that. That was also a very stable number and set of people.

'Front Line Troops' Interview Transcript Number 1**COURSE STRUCTURE**

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

Since 1990

(So we are talking of 11 years)

Yes

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

I think because originally it was a qualification to replace college certificates college diplomas the national recognition was the attractive thing and it was also the vocational base that pulled students away from A levels where they weren't necessarily appropriate qualifications

What were the problem areas?

I think initially putting the music, dance and drama all together and staff had difficulty getting round the idea that their discipline could be integrated. Just that philosophy initially.

(Where do you think that came from, the earlier things?)

Yes I think it's the historical thing and it was just a question of change and it took a couple of years to work through

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

It's not necessarily. Very largely it was but there was some sort of related thing eg working in schools with children and we tried to get at least two weeks placement per student per year

Was the activity real or simulated?

We started off doing real activities as I say with a fortnight placement but after about three years we reviewed that and we decided that the quality of the placement wasn't really what the student could expect or should expect so we then designed an in house simulation so for two week per year the students would actually organize, market and present an arts festival

How successful was the common skills programme?

Relatively successful. Again, in the early days it was something different to staff, new to students and it was a question of how best to explain it to students. Once we really understood that the common skills have to be integrated within the day-to-day of the programme then it became much more useful - much clearer for students and for staff

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

I think initially in the planning stage we would have said yes because we really didn't understand what the integrations of the disciplines would lead to but certainly once we were up and running with it then - no we wanted the performing arts as opposed to the distinct pathways

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

Once they understood what they were and how to identify them within an integrated programme then they were fine and if they didn't understand that and were confused then they tended to dismiss the common skills as being add on and irrelevant

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I think some of them did and a couple of them actually did and have progressed. I think that it is inevitable that people will have those expectations and I think part of the value of a programme like this is that it presents the reality of the industry quite early on and then can develop and build on the transferable skills which of course the students find useful when they come to progress

Could it be that many students enroll on the course to legitimize their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

Yes particularly musicians, of course. Certainly, at enrolment that is apparent but reality soon kicks in and once they realize that it involves a lot of hard work and they have to knuckle down and get on with the hard work and enjoy it. If they don't, you know they tend to fall by the wayside but that tends to be a very small minority.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

Majority I would say 'yes'. I don't think that is necessarily a good thing. Students who have been dragged kicking into the dance studio if they have been regarding themselves as a non dancer often admit later that they have really benefited from the experience when they didn't think they would

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

Familiar with it rather than having experience in it

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

(Do you know if your staff prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ)

I do know and the answer is National Diploma

Why?

They have a perception of the GNVQ as being overly bureaucratic, that it's inflexible that as a qualification it is not recognised and not valued by employers or higher education institutions

Does your college management have a preference?

Yes they prefer national diplomas within the arts subjects

What are their reasons?

They recognize that the nationals have a track record of acceptability and they have currency and they appeal to students

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

No

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

Single disciplines, no common skills and a much clearer assessment structure

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

I was attracted to it. I think with the flexibility of importing units from other disciplines if you look at the package as a whole you can identify lots of different pathways. So whilst yes they are single structure qualification titles I think that with imaginative curriculum planning you could present students with a whole range of opportunities without forcing them to do things that they are really not cut out to do

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

I am aware yes

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

I think if it is going to happen then I want to know that it is going to happen quickly I want that information so that I can plan accordingly. Most students I am sure full time students would go for the 18 unit route, a full national diploma. Now whilst I think that should be available to them it does run counter to curriculum 2000 philosophy and it would provide a less flexible programme than the makers think, particularly as to what we could offer students.

In most centres and that includes this one, students wanting 6 or 12 units would make for tremendous problems operationally trying to infill those into groups with students who are doing the full qualification would actually distort the experience for the students. For example, it would make integrated assignments across units absolutely impossible to achieve. One of the nice things about national diplomas is that you can shut down a time table for two weeks and do a project which takes the full two weeks and deliver a unit in that sort of flexible way. Clearly you have got people dipping in and out for odd bits of the programme you are not going to be able to do that .

(You said that it runs counter to the curriculum 2000 could you be more specific there)

Yes the curriculum 2000 whole idea is to offer students breadth so currently with the 16 unit national, students are able to do a full national diploma plus for example an A level or a part of a GNVQ programme and some key skills so they are picking across a much wider range. With an 18 unit they simply are not going to have time to do any more than the full national diploma and the key skills.

(Even though it is only 2 units more?)

Yes even though it is only 2 units more

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?
Though the help of what was then called a moderator, colleagues, occasional short courses and learning by experience.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Theatre

For how long?

Full time for 3 years

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Mainly theatre

For how long?

25 years

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

No I think this has long been debated about this and 10 years ago I would have said yes but now I would say no because provided we are clear about what we are looking for and how we are going to identify

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

Yes

How could they be improved?

It's too early to review them really. Certainly there is an apparent lack of consistency across the units. Now I am aware that these units were written by different people with different ideas, different expectations but I'm not satisfied that the moderation procedure for the qualification as a whole has been effective. I think some units are asking for too much, some units are asking for not enough and there is a whole range in between

Are they as useful as formative assessment?

Safely to say and good tracking procedures as well

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Yes

(They can be used at the finish?)

Yes

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

First of all I think that change is inevitable I personally welcome it I understand the reasoning for it I do like the idea of the points system I think that would help and it's a very clear system for the students to understand. The main thing of course is that people understand the A level grading and some people have never understood the concept of the national diploma grading

(But you see A level grading is norm referenced)

Yes

(Whereas criterion reference is what we have been discussing with the national diplomas GNVQ and the two things don't mix do they?)

They don't

(But they appear to be trying to make them do you think?)

They are trying to make them. All this points thing, it is going to fall short but I think what it is going to throw up sitting along side some of the standards moderation would be actually very good. It will improve the assessment system I believe.

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

No but I recognise why it is there

(Why is it there?)

Financial reasons and its also for standards moderation

(Why is there standards moderation)

Because of QCA and because of the desire to have a standard, a national standard

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

Very difficult I think the idea of an external assessor coming down to watch a live performance would not happen for all sorts of reasons. No means of recording performance can actually capture the event so I just think we are onto a hiding to nothing there.

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

It would distort the content it will inevitably throw the emphasis onto the theoretical the academic a lot of the students don't want that nor should they have it thrust upon them just as a money saving device

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

I would like to say from Edexcel but hand on heart I can't

(Why?)

Their service from the centre over the last two years has been little short of abysmal.

So I get it from external verifiers from colleagues who pick up bits and pieces

(Put it together yourself?)

Put it together myself and make something out of it

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

I have had very little staff development because there has been very little to be told in terms of fact.

As I say I have been trying to put some stuff together and I have been delivering development

(This is internal in fact?)

This is internal and networking across as well across colleagues in other colleges

(But you have not tapped into anything that Edexcel has been putting out)

Well by the time they have found out what they are on with finding something out then we have been up and running with it for a year anyway

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

Virtually impossible

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Well I tried all over the place for advice I try all sorts of sources. If I speak to people at Edexcel whom I assume are people who should know what is happening in many cases I know what's happening before them and they quite happily tell me that

Why do you select this source?

(Well my last question was why do you select this source but I suppose really it answers itself because really of course it should be the obvious place)

It should be but if they don't know then nobody does. The truth is that they don't know

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

I think the main comment I can understand the need for a change in the national diplomas I think in any case they had been around long enough and they wanted a damned good shake up and rewrite. I can understand why they need to be brought into line with the other available qualifications having done that though and gone through the 16 years and got that through QCA then to go through another period of complete change and uncertainty is very off putting for staff. It's going to transmit itself to students and parents, I am finding myself that parents evenings are now of applicants next year, saying sorry we just don't know what is happening and those students are not going to come to college and eventually that would mean that the college doesn't get the income nor would Edexcel. I understand that they are not the instigators of the change they have got to do what they are doing in order to survive but they ought to just keep us informed every inch as the information emerges.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

We have been involved for the last 10 years. We have just changed to the new qualifications September 2000 with the introduction of the new national diploma

(You still have the second years running the original?)

Yes our original started in 1990 so we said 10 years with the original the 1987 version

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

I think probably the flexibility that it gave us for what I would call real projects in terms of performances exercises we were able to do with the students and collaboration with other outside agencies, arts centres, theatre companies other performance groups. We were able to design our teaching plans able to design our assessment strategy to co-ordinate with those kind of things

What were the problem areas?

Yes I think obviously there were only ever draft guidelines

(Where was the problem in that?)

Just in so far as you felt that approaching certainly for the first time you wanted more guidance you wanted more content you wanted to have more of a feel for specifically what the students should learn at the end of the course programme and the nature of the guide lines because they were flexible which was obviously the advantage inevitably meant that there was a degree of vagueness or interpretation. I mean it was OK if you were prepared to run with it and do the work it was alright on that score but principal objectives principal aims the way they were written and meeting the rationale made a lot of flexibility there. At times you felt if only they could be a wee bit more specific in terms of what we are covering here it was more just a few pointers on indicative content in the unit

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes we did and again we felt that was an important part of the course and the students went out in the second year of the programme and went out actually for a considerable period of time. Initially they went out for a five week period and this coincided with the main arts festival period in ***** so they were attached to the ***** Festival they were working in all the theatres that had festival events on and working in arts centres and basically in that November period there was a lot of artistic activity and performance work so it meant that they got real hands on experience

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

Was the activity real or simulated?

It was real for the most part on the odd occasion maybe we had to simulate something maybe we had a student who you felt there was just no way this person was ready to go out into an organization whatever and maybe we had one or two sheltered placements where they worked maybe attached to the college technician or that kind of thing

(So what you are really telling me is that most of the work experience was within the performing arts?)

Oh absolutely Yes Occasionally there was the odd interesting placement I suppose but again it was related still in the arts world it might have been something to do with, I can think of a couple of students who went to work for example with a film production company, Northern Ireland film commission, radio station, in the media, in the arts some way, or even in the community I suppose but again it was connected to community artistic activity.

How successful was the common skills programme?

The students hated it. We felt it was important because we could say it doesn't matter what you BTEC qualification is everyone needs to address these skills. I think certainly the theory was signed in terms of those kind of strands the students should be able to be competent in right across but it was difficult for them because there was no credit in them as they could perceive it

(There was at the start there were 2 units worth)

Well when we did the qualification it was always zero rated but they said you had to complete the common skills profile to get the qualification. We started off with log books for the students like a log diary all that sort of stuff a reflective journal and then trying to extract the evidence, the information. It became quite unwieldy eventually we streamlined it down to identifying which common skills the evidence would necessarily occur within the assignment and then get the student to cross reference it either in terms of see my log book diary page such and such or video or listen to the tape whatever it happened to be and then in that way we were able to sign off their common skills

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

We grew out of a personal development through a drama programme which was a youth opportunities scheme and given our history we ran that programme for nine years given our history we were pleased to give in to the BTEC what we saw as main stream and I think the cross over in terms of the range and a bit of assignment work I mean we were happier with that to be honest I think because we enjoyed the mix and the opportunity to bring in a team of people to work on it

(How did the students feel about this?)

Yes the students seemed to get a lot out of this because they were working in a team and they could say look my main interest is maybe acting or mine technical and mine may be music or I might be more of a dance person and here we could collaborate together on this you know and its only when you bring in more students and more specialists that maybe you know well the dancers don't want to mix with this one or that one tensions arise you know

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

We did try and explain it to them so while they could see and understand the fact that these were transferable skills no matter what area of work they went into they would be of use and obviously the opportunity to improve those skills was important but they felt it was a drag felt it was an add-on even though we said look this is very much integrated. I know there were some centres and even some colleagues in other vocational areas where they extracted the common skills from the vocational programme and they actually had a common skills class on the timetable we just said there's no way that's not what we believe was the intention they were to be fully integrated and when we pushed on that front they responded accordingly

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

Well I think quite a lot do and I think in some ways we have got to say to them OK you are arriving and there is a degree of glamour attracted I suppose inevitably but I suppose it is one of the things in some cases where we have to counter and say this isn't fame forget fame forget stars in your eyes this is hard work and start to work on the projects they see the discipline that is required and the concentration and the levels of research and all the rest of it. They can see actually there is so much more in terms of the hard work aspect of it and I think those people who grasp that and start to put those kind of things into their routine we have been very successful in terms of employment students have gone onto business and have got Equity tickets and so on. So while certainly a lot of students expect to make it we have to say in the 10 years quite a number of ours have actually made it

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

Well certainly the students feel special they think they are a bit different superior I don't know if that is the added confidence that the area brings and you certainly know if a group of performing arts students if you go into the college canteen as opposed to any other area and other staff would say they are more lively more outgoing and so on but I don't know I think again there may be some feel yes performers' life style is cushy you tend to work in the evening and then go on party and socialize don't get out of your bed much before lunch time again those are the kind of things for some people we work to overcome when its nine o'clock on a cold rainy Monday morning and they are in on the rehearsal floor then that's what it's all about and having the self discipline to be there and be prepared

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

There would be some of each some would say yes I just want to do this area and not really interested in these other things but again you would have students who know they enjoy the opportunity particularly I think at this level at post 16 level where they don't want to specialize particularly they don't really know what I want to do yet I haven't got enough experience or I haven't tried enough things

(Do they regard it as a taster course?)

Yes I think it would probably be about 50 50 in terms of breakdown

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

Yes we have obviously when it came out we looked at it and we were more or less taken by the hand down the GNVQ route. We felt very strongly that the national diploma offered something for us in our centre in a way that we had become used to working at that kind of GNVQ didn't. Certainly in the early days of GNVQ there was a lot of difficulties and so on through a variety of re-writes and

generally the thing got up and running without all of the thought having being put into it that was necessary. So we were quite glad that we took the decision not to go down the GNVQ road

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

I think they do now and I think it is driven by economics. At the moment we are actually being pushed and just fought off this year anyway. We are being pushed to go down the AVCE route which is obviously the replacement of GNVQ

(Well it is the GNVQ advanced Yes)

I think it is purely a monetary thing the way the units are structured and so on and it would seem there is a steer on it from our department of education here. That's something we have been in touch with other centres mainland and so on and those that have been running the national like ourselves for quite a number of years want to retain it

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

(You have not been in a situation where you have been currently or in the past have changed from national diploma to GNVQ?)

No we haven't

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

We have looked at the AVCE and in many ways it now seems to have come into the format not unlike the new national qualification. The feeling is that so much work was done and we were instrumental in some of our staff working on the new specifications for the revised national, we feel that the work that was done there over a two or three year period and having just introduced this in September it would be rather foolish and a lot of time wasted to have to throw that out and then change prospectuses, literature and remarket the new AVCE. Again as I say we were under pressure to do it purely for economics but we staved it off on the basis that well look the national diploma has currency it's a qualification which is recognised by employers by universities but fair enough the AVCE now seems not that dissimilar to it but it is going to take two or three years at least until it becomes embedded in the psyche of employers' colleges and university and they start to see it in terms of currency of the qualification, whereas the national has that cachet and we are very keen to keep it

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

Much more focused than the original. We have the learning pathways as well and we have the more subject specific but it allows for mixing and matching as well so you might get a student that might come in and say I am taking a dance pathway but they might take other modules from the menu in other areas as well

(In a way then you are saying it's the same as the previous one but it has the benefit of giving a name to their specialism?)

Yes and also in terms of the content it is much more clearly defined from the point of view of devising the curriculum into schemes of work which you are actually going to be teaching the students the guidance is so much more specific and in terms of the evidence that the students have to produce

(So you would give the thumbs up to the new one?)

Yes and even with reading lists and other resources that are suggested it is so much more of an improvement in terms of what we have previously gone on

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

No this came as a bit of a shock

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

We would say is it do-able because all the problems is always the amount of contact time you have with the students and in our areas of work in performance clearly we would almost want to work one to one with the students and clearly you cannot do that so it's the organization of the course and how it was delivered in terms of contact hours colleges wanting to deliver in ever decreasing numbers of contact times

(Can you imagine in fact a student doing a six unit one? Which would have to be complete in itself)

It does seem very strange just being able to cover what we are doing. Staff already put in a lot of time over and above and it has been for many years a thorny issue with management again it comes down to not fully realizing the practicalities and difficulties of what it takes to put this on the floor and the rehearsal process

(So what you are really saying in fact is it's an institutional time tabling problem?)

I think so yes I would be worried they are trying to create some kind of qualification that meets that model. If someone said to me we don't want the tail to wag the dog.

(Baby and bathwater?)

Yes. We are conscious that we have to do things within a certain budget and so on. There comes a certain point and I suppose we feel we are close to it to say well just hang on we can't do what we are supposed to be doing with the time that is being given. We have to look for a mountain of solutions in terms of delivery we have looked for intensive blocks of time when students can work in an intensive way on a project we have looked at other things that are more skills based and know they need their weekly class to bring their skills levels up. We have also looked at providing more supervised student directed time and facilities as well as more resource-based learning things that they can access for themselves and so really what you are doing in your contact time is checking that they have gone and done in the last class having a quick look at what the results are and then setting them on for the next level.

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

I think we were very fortunate we had an excellent external moderator who kept us on the right track and if it hadn't been for him I think we would have been at sea.

(What was missing then if you hadn't had a moderator who was willing to help?)

I think it was in terms of guidance and more procedures the whole idea was when you went for your approval you drew these things up yourself so there were lots of different proposals coming in from I suppose centres all over the UK and basically they were all putting their own spin on it. There was some staff development BTEC development unit did have the general guide lines for assessment

(Did you have a copy of that?)

We got copies of those yes then actually we got some training we sort of kicked up and got something so some of the BTEC people came over and we got 1 day workshops. Again we found everything was more of a generic basis when we got down to the specifics of our discipline in our area. The people who were doing the input just weren't qualified enough to give us the kind of specific guidance we wanted.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Technical theatre

For how long?

30 years

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Drama and Technical theatre

For how long?

22 years teaching

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

Well yes I think in terms of technical theatre it's down to equipment and resources for example its very hard if you have a group of 20 and you are looking at something in stage management you want to give everyone the opportunity to stage manage a production I mean 20 performances, you cannot do that so there has to be a degree of kind of mock up if you like and taking people through the process and locating and shadowing of rolls. What we would do is try and get our stage craft students as they were in the old system then to become the stage crew for the various other performances so they would amass their experience through crewing and running shows that the other students would be doing.

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

To a certain extent. Clearly this is the kind of way we are in now with education we have got to see the end result to make sure the students who have come through the process have achieved. I think we have just got to be careful about what those outcomes are and again we have got to go back to "is it do-able?" within the time frame, within the resources that we are putting into the provision and within in terms of the experience level the students are arriving.

(This is as it feeds back to you in terms of structuring the courses isn't it?)

Yes

How could they be improved?

Are they as useful as formative assessment?

It seems a bit contradictory in terms of you talking about formative assessment with an outcome with something which is almost the result of a period of time

(Which you would imagine to be summative?)

It's how we assess the process if you like as we are going through the model so I think the outcomes have to be broken down. We have done with integrated assignments in the past would be to have a number of smaller tasks for example things that would come out after a certain period of time and if you like break it up into more manageable chunks for the student rather than say here is your assignment there are 8 or 9 tasks to be done on that and they have got to be in 8 weeks time.

(I understand what you are saying in fact it is very interesting. Are you meaning therefore that outcome related assessment and outcomes as they are identified in the unit specification that in fact you have to do something with them before they become effective as formative assessment?)

I think so yes I think it's much easier to apply summative assessment to the outcomes because you can say at the end of the period of time, OK we have got there and we can see that that outcome is comfortable especially when we are all in a process and skills element and acquisition I think that's particularly hard for outcome related through the process.

(So one of my questions is how can they be improved and you have more or less told me that in the way that you use them and a need to have a continuing flexibility in order to be able to do that)

And use of the observation schedule as well, get a diary for the process and so on those are important

(Well you are talking the language of GNVQ there you know)

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

I wasn't aware of that

(It's in the new GNVQ AVCE or what ever it is called)

We are still working on past

(Yes you will be)

It was always a difficulty, because you basically only had the three grades and you could be into high passes, low merits, high merits, low distinctions all this kind of business.

(So that would give you an opportunity to reflect that)

It would very much so. Even so the BTEC system you didn't give a score a numeric score but we would always weight our tasks. If this is a small introductory task this doesn't have the same weighting as let's say something which is going to take the student more time involve them in more research. So we would put percentage weightings on them.

(Well that was allowable on the original assessment and grading document)

Well we go along on that basis. The students I think they find it helpful in saying how their end grade was determined in that way. If we were into more grades or more points then I think that would be a better system.

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

Yes there would be no problem at all. I think again in the early days we would be surprised if we came into contact with some other centres or if we had a transfer student you would say my goodness how is the student there getting a pass or distinction or what every it happens to be for this work and I think the external testing just gives you that kind of reassurance that there is a national standard in place.

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

I think what you have to say is that the performance is the test, you have almost got to bring your external examiner in and let them see the performance. I think it is important looking at the next question as well that the practical has got to be treated in exactly the same way as the written.

(Do you think that is realistic though knowing the number of centres and the number of examiners that would be available?)

Well I think there has to be some mechanism for it we are not just about written work here. I think if we are about written work then it becomes for the purpose of the test then that becomes a skewing of the qualification and how it is delivered as well. I think that would seriously affect the curriculum and the skills and the learning experience the students get.

(It's going to be difficult isn't it?)

Difficult yes but if we do the test only covering the written work then we miss the point.
If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

We got it from BTEC initially and then we got it obviously from other people who were experts in the field who came and gave us various courses and programmes

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

Internally we actually have a member of staff in the Institute who is responsible for co-ordinating BTEC officer you may say. It's his job to co-ordinate and disseminate information and give advice etc. We would also have various staff development events across the department where we would look at delivery and assessment and we have just gone through a standardisation across the whole Institute so that all of our assignments etc. are now on the same formats and working to the same kind of criteria and agenda.

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

It largely depends on whom you speak to. Sometimes you can get quite a difficult run around and other times it can be a bit easier. There is now a local office BTEC Edexcel now have a local office in Northern Ireland and we have found they are quite good in terms of getting specifications and information and so on. It is variable and we have had some paper chases where we have been passed from pillar to post through Edexcel in the past.

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

Something we have noticed in terms of the National qualification the comments from Universities in terms of students who have gone there 1st year students.

(This is the old national?)

Yes when compared with students who have come through an A level route the feed back we have had from the colleges and universities that they have gone to is that they are much better prepared for their higher level of study as opposed to those who have taken the purely academic route. That has been encouraging.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

7 years

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

I think the flexibility lying within the individual units in terms of how they may be delivered and the types of assignments that can be written. Generally I think the objectives were reasonably clear on those programmes. Those were the two main areas.

What were the problem areas?

Lack of academic aspects.

(Did you feel that that was necessary?)

Yes, particularly in terms of parity with A level programmes and that sort of thing. In delivery of it, in the time I have been delivering it, I kind of almost forced academic elements into it, where the specifications don't ask for it, for example the language of theatre units suggests that it should be very practically based but I used to use that as a more class room based area.

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

I haven't done any of that. The reason behind that are organisational issues, particularly in recent years it's time out of your delivery time programmes which has over the years been reduced and reduced and reduced and the demands set on us to deliver in 12, 15 hours a week obviously you are taking a lot of time out of that. The other point is if you have got a large number of students, depending on in what area your college is geographically, it's not easy to find enough theatres or theatre companies in a local area to send the amount of students you have got.

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

Was the activity real or simulated?

The activities that I have run, the assignments that I have put together for the students have been based around a realistic working environment, this is how a professional theatre company would conduct themselves, this is how a professional theatre company would devise their own work. We have technical run-through, we have dress run-through, they have a call before performance, so all of their work, particularly their performance work, is in a professional simulated environment.

How successful was the common skills programme?

Not very. From my point of view, if I am to be honest, I don't think I ever took it seriously, it was an add on. I introduced it to the students at the beginning of the year and then you get running into your assignments and assessing the students and all the day to day running of the thing, and you lose track of the common skills programme. Being very honest.

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

Well within that old structure I think there was still an opportunity for students to follow a path way, but I think it is very important, particularly from the point of view of drama students that they do have movement and they do have an element of music but certainly singing. So I do believe in the cross discipline training but with a main route.

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

I felt again that the students didn't recognise it, or particularly be aware of its importance of existence and referring back to my comment before, that was probably very much down to I didn't keep battering them with it and reminding them of it. All these assignments that were set identified key skills that could be assessed but there was never any record of that assessment and it was a case of when you had finished an assignment or project Oh well yes they were OK on that they were OK on that, it was a bit of an add-on to be honest I felt.

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

At 16 a lot of them yes. Obviously beyond that we do get mature students who perhaps have got a more realistic, for want of a better word, outlook. But again I think that during their time on the course the students obviously mature in themselves and also in terms of how they view their future and their career and they do start to realise that there are opportunities to work professionally, which doesn't mean that you are a household name. When they come to us their experience of drama and music is basically from a box in the corner of the room, it's television, it's soap opera, it's number one in the

charts, and through the nature of what they do they begin to realise that there are theatre and education companies out there where somebody is working 5 days a week making a reasonable living but aren't necessarily heard of.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer's lifestyle? Yes I think so. But again I think perhaps in the early stages they have a rather romantic idea of what that is and again that is something that is a good thing. I always encourage them to hold onto that 'Yes I am going to make it' attitude because obviously that's a positive thing. Having said that many of ours as well do enrol and from the age of 16 they enrol on it and aren't quite clear that they want to use it as a stepping stone, higher education, drama school, so they are not completely 'head in the clouds' as it were they do see it as a route through to higher training.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

Yes and others no. I think what we do find that when they start the course and we say to them again if you take as example the drama students, we say you are going to be doing movement studies, you are going to be doing dance improvisation or contemporary dance and you are going to be doing singing for example they go, you can see their faces drop. But again that is generally, with all due respect to them, through ignorance they haven't any experience and they haven't experienced what contemporary dance is and they don't at that stage see the direct relation between the movement skills, as a dancer and the movement skills required of an actor. Once they have then got in and they start doing contemporary dance their whole attitude changes and they love it and want to do more.

(Is this the same for all the disciplines?)

I would say not. Going with the students that I am working with currently, if I think of those as an example, the dance students would not be as open to for example acting techniques and we don't have that built into their programme. The music students again would not be open to acting techniques they tend to want to focus very much on their own area. Having said that we do have some drama students, we have some dance students who want to go into musical theatre therefore recognise that cross discipline training as important.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

I have yes.

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

National Diploma

Why?

I felt the GNVQ, particularly when it was first introduced was rather restrictive, particularly at the intermediate level and again specifically at the intermediate level it insisted on far too much written records from a student point of view, not from a staff point of view, and I felt the students were getting bogged down with writing records of what they were doing, so I felt that it was a little too restrictive in that way.

(So you had an intermediate, so what did you replace?)

I am now delivering BTEC first.

(But you had a first then you went to intermediate?)

Yes

(And then you came back again?)

Does your college management have a preference?

Both colleges, the one where I am now and my previous college had a preference for GNVQ.

What are their reasons?

I think that is because GNVQs in other areas, in other subject areas and curriculum areas have been around longer and therefore are more established. Generally college management do prefer to have the same thing running across the board, and also I think there are particular issues with curriculum 2000 more recently.

(Do you think there are any other issues? When you say curriculum 2000 are you talking about finance?)

I am talking of the funding for a 12 unit value that sort of thing and the difficulty of the current, even the new National Diploma fitting into that. Having said that it has been a preference, my personal experience is that, I may be lucky here that senior management have listened to what I said in terms of why I feel that a National Diploma is more relevant and have said, "Fine go with that". I haven't been forced into GNVQ.

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

Haven't looked at them, the reason for that is that, maybe I should look at them, but I think I would say now I would want to stay with the National Diploma. The main reasoning for that is I am more familiar with the National Diploma set up, I think the National Diploma is more tutor friendly and perhaps more importantly I still feel that higher education, universities are more comfortable with the National Diploma within this curriculum area. They are more familiar with it, it has been around for a while they know what they can expect from a National Diploma student when they are going on up to university and they are a little less certain, I still feel they are a little less certain of what the skills the GNVQ students are going to come out with.

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

I think the first thing that springs to mind there is the new National Diploma is perhaps more structured more detailed and I feel that it does have that extra level of academic content which pushes the students more in that direction which I feel is an improvement.

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

Yes

(How do you feel about that having just started this new one?)

I am not fully aware of the extent of the rewrites.

(Apparently it is happening as we speak and they are looking to make it fit curriculum 2000, the national qualifications framework, 18, 12 and 6 units each of which must be complete in itself)

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

Which would suggest in itself on a day to day delivery basis it won't change very much, for example what's been very demanding on myself and my staff team this term this academic year is re writing new assignments across the board, dealing with new units, dealing with the new structure. If we have to go through that again then obviously that would be quite a headache, so if it is restructured, if we have got to start reading it in different ways, we have got to start writing yet another batch of assignments well you know

(Well consider a 6 unit one, which must be complete in itself what's your feeling about the effectiveness of combining students?)

Students rolling in and rolling out? *(Yes)* I think there is a problem with that again within this particular subject area because of the fact that the beginning of our academic year with new students, the first few weeks would be very much about developing the dynamic of the group and developing the individual skills to work within that group. If you have got people coming in and out all the time it makes it difficult to keep a consistency with that. But again having said that, in an entirely professional environment you go from working with one group of actors on something to working with another so personnel does change, so maybe it's not such a problem. It shouldn't be a problem in managing it in that certainly speaking from the point of view of the college I am at the moment, the 6, 12, 18 unit courses are being run and managed in other areas of the college and we would look at using a similar sort of model.

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

My training was FE training through which obviously a lot of my work was on assessing students. I got it through that, I got it through being in a college and doing it and looking at what the college I went to was already doing and amending or using that model and through communication with external verifiers.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Drama

For how long?

Since a young age, quite a few years, professionally 15 years.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Drama

For how long?

7 years

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

I think any artistic subject area can prove difficult to define clearly in assessment terms. How do you say that performance is a distinction performance and that performance is a merit. Now obviously there are, and this again is where I feel that perhaps the new national diploma is an improvement is a little bit clearer in that the skills being assessed on stage are broken down much more clearly than the old. I think there is always difficulty and it's always a difficulty for myself and the staff team when we are writing assessment criteria, to try and say how much better does that student need to be and how exactly do they demonstrate that additional level of skill. A lot of it is about synthesis of skills.

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

I use the assessment criteria rather than the outcomes.

(But they are assessment of the outcomes aren't they?)

Yes, I think it works but I when I am writing assignments and I encourage my staff team when they are writing assignments and when we introduce this to the students we focus on the outcomes, rather than the assessment criteria. I see the assessment criteria as a very generalised area but the skills that we are assessing are much more detailed in the outcomes. In a similar way that I have always assessed on the basis of principal objectives on the basis of aims.

How could they be improved?

Are they useful as formative assessment?

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Again because I use the assessment criteria I think it is useful. I think it is useful because the students know where they are going and you can give them on going feed back and assessment and then a kind of formal summative assessment.

(What I am looking for is to see how you feel the same system is applicable for the ongoing formative assessments and then the final summative assessment. Do you think in fact that the same system operates just as well in either case?)

In terms of a final grade for a unit do you mean?

(Yes or a final grade for anything compared to a grade that you are giving when it's for an ongoing learning experience or assignment?)

For example we might assess one outcome more than once

(So it's formative at that point?)

So we have a formal feed back at the end of a project and then apply that feed back to the next one. But that is not always the case, but again if you try and structure your course in such a way that the skills that they have learnt perhaps in that assignment for say acting techniques and they get that feed back, they can then apply what they have learnt from that feed back to a performance where you are assessing production process. So there is an opportunity for the students to improve on an on going basis. A lot of the time the outcomes, take acting techniques for example, when the outcomes are assessed more than once. Again with that a lot of the work that I do with the students is, before setting them a formal assignment that might assess outcome number one from a unit I would give the students opportunities to do dummy runs if you like which gets informal feed back.

(This informal feed back is in fact formative assessment?)

Yes, so they might have an assignment on using and developing stimulus to create drama I would give them four or five different stimuli in work-shop sessions, I would have a great deal of input in the beginning pass it over to them slowly they would come up with suggestions I would give them feed back on their suggestions that they have given we would do that over a four week period in week five I would set them an assignment which is on using and developing a stimulus. The informal, formative assessment as they have gone and now here is the formal assessment.

(Yes well I can accept everything that you have said there but the question I was giving you was is the same method of assessment applicable in all those cases?)

No it is done differently. In that the informal or formative assessment is not as clearly defined in terms of criteria it is more on the basis of tutor feed back, verbal feed back, students evaluating their own work, but there is no grade reported for it.

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?
I feel that some of these things that are going on, that it has been rather forced on something unnecessarily in order for it to fit in to a model. I feel part of the reason is it would be lovely if everything was the same. This idea that, if it is, there is more opportunity to have this sort of parity between all these different qualifications. But I don't feel there is a problem with that as we are from a point of view of higher education and points scoring and all that sort of thing I feel that universities are coping with what's happening at the moment and they are happy to say in their entry requirements you need X amount of points or a portfolio of merits and distinctions, and the universities are coping with that and have done for a number of years so is it necessary to force these changes.

(If it isn't broke don't fix it?)

Quite

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

Yes

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

The only way it could be done is through an externally moderated or assessed performance as in the traditional methods that have been used with HUA and with the new Edexcel AS Drama and Theatre studies where it is internally and externally moderated, by sending visiting moderators to sit and watch a performance. The problem with that is that they cannot then assess the process.

(Fair enough if you are looking at the outcomes on that particular time but you are right they wouldn't do the process. Do you think it is feasible with the number of colleges to have all of these moderators floating around sitting in the performances?)

It's not a problem for the colleges

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

It may, from a student point of view make them feel that that is a more important element of the qualification because they would know that that is being externally tested and we do have a number of students whose written work is perhaps not at a high standard but who however are very very strong practically. They may feel that I am being externally tested on this but why doesn't someone come and look at my performance work, that may happen, but again I am in favour of both happening. Can I just come back to that last question and the whole idea of external tests and perhaps moderation of performance and that sort of thing is that I have always felt and I still feel, and this is through what I know from other centres and people that work in other centres that and again I haven't got a solution to it that it is very very difficult to ensure that the standard of work that a student in one college is producing is getting a merit where the same standard of work is getting a distinction in another, and I think that that is an age old problem and as I say I am putting that forward as a problem without being able to offer necessarily offering any solution to it. Maybe the external testing and perhaps moderation of performances would go some way towards that .

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

Various 1 day half day courses, information would come through and I would think content of that looks useful

(So you had some staff development?)

Yes

(It was delivered by Edexcel?)

Edexcel & Network training

(You find that helpful?)

Some of them yes some of them absolutely no. I have been to some brilliant training days and I have been to some where I have walked out and I knew nothing more than when I went in and I could have had a much more constructive day.

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

I have perhaps been lucky in the fact that I have been able to have reasonably easy and open contact with my external verifiers.

(I was thinking if you had to ring up Stewart House?)

That's where I get the information most of the time, but again if I have to ring Edexcel I cannot say off the top of my head I have had major problems.

(Do you use mainly the regional office or London?)

Regional, well no London probably

(You are in London now but when you were up in the other college?)

I would go through the Edexcel link working for the college across the whole college perhaps initially.

(The are located in the regional offices?)

Yes, but then depending on the nature of the problem I would go through to the main department dealing with the Performing Arts in the London office.

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

(Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?)

The structure of the new National diploma some of the units are proving in delivery very very difficult.

That is down to the way the outcomes and assessment criteria are structured. An example would be performing arts in context where from a management point of view and managing and tracking assignments and ensuring you are covering all the outcomes necessary for the unit. It would be wonderful if each outcome could be assessed in an assignment. Yes if each outcome could be assessed in one assignment or for example all three outcomes in one assignment. Good example of this is production process outcome 1,2,3 have a natural progressions that can be seen with in them and one assignment could cover all those outcomes. Performing arts in context however if you look at one and two I think it is outcomes, it is very very difficult to write just one assignment without that assignment having five or six different parts to it that would cover all the assessment criteria for outcome 1. So therefore you start assessing two or three assessment criteria then you have to do the other two in a different assignment. It just makes it a little bit more difficult to structure and manage the delivery of assignments.

(Especially if you were going to have 6 and 12 unit people in there as well?)

Yes it would make it even more difficult.

To structure and manage to write the assignments and to track ensure that you are covering it all, there is a couple of issues there but nothing major generally I am happy with the new BTEC National that is running and I think it is a great improvement on the previous one I think it is always nice to have something new to work with and it does make you reassess what you are doing which is always a good thing.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

Started teaching that in 1989 when I was part time.

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

For me I think it was the fact that there was a lot of variety and we really did emphasise the practical element of things. I enjoyed the fact that we could do a lot more projects and have time to work on projects and the students especially liked the end of year things when they got a chance to kind of stand on their own two feet and we kind of took a step backwards.

What were the problem areas?

Nothing I can particularly think of, the only thing is the students' responses which I actually don't think have changed over the years which is, they want to do things, get their hands involved and do the practical stuff and anything that involves slightly more written stuff they kind of turn their nose up at. But I cannot think of there being a particular problem.

(Do you think that is because you are getting a different kind of student to those who were taking an academic route?)

Yes, definitely I think that was the thing that attracted them to the BTEC and I always thought that it was aimed at was vocational, that is what it was publicised as, it was something that people could do rather than just write about.

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes we did, we used to do work experience regularly and I was thinking, I think we did it for round about 5 years.

(Then it sort of petered out did it?)

Yes it just stopped, there was one year where we said we just can't do this anymore.

(What were the problems?)

Two different problems. One the college got much tighter on the amount of paper work we had to do for every student and because the numbers were growing it just became prohibitive, and also we were struggling to find places to send the students to.

(Is that because you were trying to send them purely to Performing Arts places?)

Yes it was partly that and I think it was round about the time when year 10 students had to start doing work experience, so you were competing with trying to find places that were of value really.

(So what did you do? Did you have simulated activities for them?)

No, I mean when we actually did work experience we did it properly if you like, we did actually send students out to theatre companies to work with dance amateurs, and I think that is why we stopped it because we were beginning to feel like we were going to have to simulate things and we said there was no point in that, it's not working.

(On the other hand when you set students assignments they would have been fairly realistic so they could have been regarded as simulated work experience couldn't they?)

Yes in some ways, especially when they did things like theatre companies because they were actually having to take responsibility themselves and do things as if they were a company. So yes in that respect it could be classed as simulated.

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

Was the activity real or simulated?

How successful was the common skills programme?

I think it was one of those things that was given lip service, I think it still is. I think it is always felt tagged on I think the students have often felt, why are we doing this, especially when it gets round to UCAS and the grades are not worth anything from what the students saw.

(Yes and yet they were when it was first published, originally it was 18 units not 16, 2 of them were common skills, some people still think that is the case. I never understood why that was changed.)

I think I never realised that because by the time I became a co-ordinator it was the case that they didn't have any unit value. I think if they had a unit value the students would value them more, in some respects they are not as tangible because it is to do with how they work with people and how they co-ordinate and organise their own time. They also say that that's not performing arts.

(And yet there is another way of looking at it, it's so like what goes on in Performing Arts.)

Exactly and we would always try and emphasise that with them and say look you may be the worlds greatest dancer or actor or whatever but if you don't get on with other people then forget it.

(That's what dancing and acting consists of)

Exactly

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

Main discipline is dancing but I do some of the acting side of things. No, well kind of a yes and a no, because I think it is good for the student to have all those different skills. My own background of having done a bit of all sorts and also when I was their age I did want to do a bit of all sorts I wasn't ready to specialise.

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

It goes back to me saying they didn't feel it was worth anything. They didn't give it an awful lot of weight. They were, I think they were kind of bemused as to how we came up with their grades even if we talked it through with them they were never quite sure because I think they thought a lot of it was subjective even though it could be a team of tutors all saying yes this person is only a pass in this area. It was a difficult one I think.

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I think a lot of them do and I find it difficult to deal with that myself, I think all staff do. It's like we want to encourage them because obviously you want them to do well, but at the same time it's wanting them to get them to think realistically about what they can do with their qualification at the end of it, and what standard they have to be to get where they want to get. Yes, some of them are quite naive about their ability.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

Yes I think some of them do like that thing about I want to be famous, I think they quite fancy being on telly.

(I wasn't thinking of them making it big or famous I was thinking of the way they live, to say I'm on a Performing Arts Course I'm different)

I see what you mean. I don't know I don't think so. I think quite a few of them quite fancy doing the performing arts because it's what they think they are good at. I don't get the idea that they are thinking, oh well if I say to people I'm on a performing arts course it will give them credibility, I don't get that impression, it gives them an excuse to be loud. Sometimes if they are doing an extra GCSE in English or something like that then you do find them saying, we are different we are Performing Arts students, they do have a little bit like that.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

That varies from year to year. I think a lot of them do prefer to stick to what they know, especially I find the actors are less willing to dance than the dancers are willing to act. Those who are good at dance still want to have a go at acting

(Where is music in this then?)

Our students don't do as much music. This year we have introduced singing as a separate unit for the first time and the students, most are responding really well to it and we put it in for that very reason.

(But you wouldn't be able to give an opinion as to what the feeling of music specialists was about acting and dancing?)

No because I don't teach those.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

None at all. We have never gone down the GNVQ route.

I briefly looked at bits and pieces through me doing the work for Edexcel and my only thought around it was that it looks a bit vague but that could be just that I don't know enough about it.

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

The main difference is the specialisation, the fact that students are encouraged down one particular route rather than tasting a little bit of everything. I know it allows a little bit of cross over with additional units.

(What about the core?)

The core is virtually the same I think from what I can think of. It's interesting since I am part time, its coincided with having written the new spec and then having gone part time I am not as involved in the core element.

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

A bit of both. My initial reaction was let's update what we have got because the students can then can do a bit of everything and you are allowing for those who are not sure what they want to do or are good in more than one area, specifically from a dancer's point of view. It is good to have a single discipline because it really does allow the student to develop the skills. Particularly in areas like technique, doing it on a more regular basis they have chance of greater improvement.

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

I wasn't.

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

I am not sure, it sounds interesting. I think my initial reaction was that it could work particularly for mature students that they can do a bit of the diploma and get something achievable and then if they wanted to continue and do something else that was available to them. I am not sure how it will work in terms of getting the depth, the depth of work.

(How do you feel about making the changes so quickly after the other changes?)

I am surprised very surprised, I think it will end up with more confusion, just bringing in the new diploma and just getting used to it, students are getting used to the fact that they have got to specialise and make a choice. I think if it is all going to be revised again I am not sure it is a good idea so soon.

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?
From what I remember I very much learnt it as I went along, I think we all learnt it from each other, and we had a lot of team meetings in those days and co-ordinated things, yes that's how I remember it being.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Done singing professionally, done some acting work and I have worked as a choreographer.

For how long?

Not long, acting and singing for a specific company over 4 months and then really over the last 12 years I have kind of dabbled and done occasional.

(Worked semi-professionally?)

Yes

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Dancing and Acting

For how long?

12 years

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

(Applied to dance)

OK Yes I do because, I am sure this will be applied to drama and acting as well, with it being an expressive and creative subject I think there is a certain level of subjectivity, all dancers teach slightly different dance styles, therefore the students will pick up slightly different styles. What I observe as a tutor and think 'oh that's an interesting piece of choreography' but somebody else might say they don't particularly like that style and I think it is hard to standardise it. I have always said how do I know that my distinction is the same as somebody else's distinction.

(Well you are not the first one to ask a question like that)

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

I am a bit unsure about them.

How could they be improved?

It's a little bit clearer for the students I think if they know what it is they have had to achieve. But again within Performing Arts it is not always as clear as being able to say can do can't do, have they done this or not. So I think it does get a little bit grey.

Are they useful as formative assessment?

When I read these two questions, I had kind of scribbled answers for the others but these two I have left blank because I am a bit unsure.

(You are a bit unsure of the nature of formative and summative assessment?)

No I know formative is on going and summative is like at the end but I am trying to think how it is related.

(Well if you remember that, if you put it in mind the two, it's not just on going and the end if you think that formative assessment is to form their abilities, in other words as they are going along they find out where their strengths and weaknesses are and summative assessment is to give a final summative grade of the whole thing)

In that case seeing it kind of that way I am not so sure that outcome related is the right avenue.

(What would you recommend? Do you know of any other assessment procedures that you think might work better?)

I don't and I think that that is one of the problems in Performing Arts because it is a subjective process and I think it is a very difficult thing to pin down to say this person can do this. They might be able to do it on one occasion but then can they do it the next time, the same standard the next time.

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

I actually think it may help because to me a pass, merit and distinction three grade bands, leads to a lot of confusion and in the past our college has gone down the route of it's a pass plus or a merit minus or it's a D minus, I think perhaps having more grades to go at would give a student as well a better understanding of where they fit. And university entrance to have something that brings all the qualifications under a similar grading system would make things clearer.

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

I am not sure I think it could be a good idea but I am a bit both ways on this one. On one hand having an external assessment, having taught A level dance, having an external somebody coming in and creating that situation of if it was a practical, I think this links into your next question as well about applying it to performance, because within performing arts a performer does have to get up and perform and prove their ability when you go to an audition or you are doing a performance that is so much a part of the process, you have to just go up and do it on that one occasion, somebody external comes in and looks and thinks, " Can this person achieve what they say they are going to achieve?" so in that respect I think it is good.

(But if they took the easy route and made it just written tests?)

That wouldn't work for Performing Arts, that would be a major problem, because especially for the National like we said at the beginning a vocational course is very much about the students doing it and that is what they like to do. Somebody who is an excellent dancer is not necessarily going to be the best at writing essays and doing written questions. So I think that could be a problem.

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

Don't get huge amount I don't think, I was trying to think, "Have I been sent anything specifically from Edexcel or BTEC as it was?"- saying this is what we want you to do, this is how you do it. My main contact has been through the moderation process. I have been to some external agency things, this links in with the next bit, through staff development, I have been to a couple of things and the most valuable part of that was talking to other colleagues people who are delivering it and sharing ideas. So support and advice it has been the moderation process that has really gone through that.

(How easy or how difficult is it to get information say if you pick up the telephone and ring Edexcel?)

I have never had to do that. I have done it for the A level but for BTEC I have never contacted Edexcel directly.

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?
Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

The main thing that I wrote down for myself that has been my biggest bug bear, it is not an Edexcel thing it's the course hours. From teaching it when I started we ran the course on 28 hours and then we ended up delivering what is supposed to be exactly the same course in 16 hours and then sometimes 2 units are delivered within one class. I think it is watering down and it is not giving full weight.

(Where do you think this impetus has come from then?)

As far as I know it's the government and other colleges saving money and all the in co-operation stuff that went on.

(It was 7 years ago since we incorporated and it is still going on now isn't it, it's getting less and less?)

Yes it is

(What you are really saying is that I mean Edexcel tells you what it requires and it hasn't changed?)

Yes

(So it must be the colleges themselves?)

They don't turn round and say you must deliver this course in this number of hours, I have heard that there are some colleges that deliver it in 12 and 14 hours.

(Yes I can tell you all kinds of horror stories. The thing is that each college makes its own rules on this and what do you think influences the colleges when they make these rules?)

Money, that's how it always seems to be, each student has got a price on his head.

(So you want a lot of students in but you don't want to spend a lot of time with them?)

No and we are getting bigger groups of students much bigger than we have previously which is fabulous in some respects but like you say we haven't got the time to work with them.

'Front Line Troops' Interview Transcript Number 5

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987)BTEC National or First Diploma?

9 or 10 years

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

For us it was an alternative to the A level, and because it is vocational and because it's more practical based and of course because the assessment doesn't need to be written and there is no final examination.

(They were attractive?)

Yes all those things were.

What were the problem areas?

Initially do you mean, no not really, obviously getting it off the ground is difficult that's all and how to assess it, and just selling it to students which has always been a bit of a problem. The problem area being it hasn't been that attractive to a lot of students because it takes up a lot of hours, it's equivalent to the 2 A levels, so you really have to give up a lot of time to it and I guess also the standard of students it attracts they are not necessarily that academic and that in itself can be a problem, so you have to find ways of teaching that sort of student.

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Somebody was supposed to arrange work experience but that never really happened.

Students did work experience but they organised it themselves and latterly we have sent them all to a week's work experience teaching drama in a junior high school and we call that work experience. It never really got off the ground, some students could organise it some didn't do anything.

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

Was the activity real or simulated?

How successful was the common skills programme?

Well it's something that is forced upon you rather than successful. (I mean did it happen?) Oh yes it had to because moderators looked for it. So yes it did happen but like number 20 on the Common Skills nobody knows what it means let alone anything else, we tended to use working relating to each other a lot and some were not used at all. It was an add on that wasn't really that important.

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

No I think the broad range is better and I think that is a good feature of it, I think they should then be able to specialise but the early years they should do Stage Craft, a bit of Movement - a bit of everything.

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

It was something that was done to them and they have never seen the point of it and not enjoyed the paper work that is involved with it. (The paper work being what?) Well because they have to collate their own common skills. (And they leave it too late do they?) No they do it as they go along, but it is a cumbersome system, that we teach them, we teach them how to do it we have our own system, I don't know how other places do but it means that they have to collate them as they go along so they find that boring to be quite honest, but really they have never complained and it has always been told to them if you don't do this then you have to do a written exam, so they have settled for the collating (Lesser of the two evils?)

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I think some of them think that, if they are a little bit star struck, yes, but some of them are the hard workers and are prepared to put in the hard work. You get two sorts, you get the raving extrovert who wants to be noticed, and would do anything to be noticed, and then you get the studious quite conscientious kids who are interested in Performing Arts and want to do lots of things in it and not necessarily want to be the star of it. So you get quite a mixture really.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer,s lifestyle?

I would have thought so, but if so they have usually got that out of their system by the end of the two years because the course more than anything else teaches them that it is hard work and I think it is a very good introduction to that and I don't think it is, the way we teach it anyway.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

No never. But we always do it so that in the second year they specialise they are not made to do any courses as long as they have got their 16 units they can drop things in the second year and they accept that and see the value of that.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

No. I have been on courses and I decided not to offer it.

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

Yes because it would fit better into the system because they could do half of the course in one year. It just fits better into their system.

(Because they are adapting to the curriculum 2000 model?)

Yes and that's why I went on the course and looked at it but decided not to do it.

(When you investigated GNVQ was it the 1995 original GNVQ?)

I think my head of department put down to be one of the original pilot for that but we never ...

(Never got off the ground with it?)

Yes

(You are aware there is a new GNVQ?)

I went to the inset for it, well just to find out about it. I much preferred it. I thought if we are going to stay with that sort of modular exam I would rather stay with the present one.

(But the present one as we know has now finished and there is a new one taking its place)

Yes

(A kind of National Diploma mark 2)

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

The objectives are more clearly set out it is much more prescriptive, well it's not much more prescriptive, it is in terms of the objectives *(It is clearer?)* Yes I would say so, the breakdown is clearer. *(So do you think that is an improvement?)* Well yes and no, I think it has a good combination of things together, obviously it depends on the courses, because we have been doing it for years we have developed the BTEC as we want it to be and we are now trying to fit it as we want it to be into the present structure, there are not too many changes we are having to make.

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

I wasn't either attracted or not attracted, I don't think it made a lot of difference to us at all.

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

I wasn't no

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

It's come too late because we, our school, will probably be saying this year that there is not enough students and it depends on how many opt and really if they were going to change it they should have changed it last year with the new ASs when the new A level structure came on course because it has come too late really.

(You would have got it fitted in then? But the thing is that is why they are doing it to fit in with that you see)

Yes I know but they should have done it to have changed at the same time as far as we are concerned anyway.

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

Went on a weekend course, I think it was probably run by the LEA on teaching it. (It was specifically on the National Diploma?) Yes the whole team that were going to deliver it went on it 4 or 5 of us from our school went on a weekend course.

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

None

For how long?

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Drama

For how long?

20 years

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

No I don't think so. I read my dissertation on examining drama and because I have been doing it all along I don't really find it any problems with it whatsoever. I suppose because most exam boards would set clearer criteria than BTEC do, BTEC allow you to very much to decide your own criteria and maybe that is a problem. (Is that not altered by the new specifications though?) Not really because it is still fairly, performance wise, I mean if you were teaching in an exam board for instance they would always make the difference between a process and performance and I think when you get to BTEC you do that yourself. If you had never yourself actually examined under another board you would find it extremely difficult but we obviously use all that experience examining for all those years with different boards and apply it, I don't think BTEC themselves give you clear guidelines.

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

I think you just adapt it for your use. As I say we have got a course that we like and we adapt it to get the outcomes that we want if you see what I mean.

How could they be improved?

We do because we are happy with the course we had so we are bound to modify it.

Are they as useful as formative assessment?

I don't really understand what you mean by formative and summative. (Formative assessment is when you are teaching students something and you assess what they are doing in order that they can improve themselves and summative assessment is done in order to give them a grade at the end of a course) I think it is summative really because of the module you can divide it down, you could make it as you go along.

(You must be assessing students without the term assessment even when you are teaching them because they have got to know how am I doing)

Yes you do that as you go along, but everything you do in BTEC counts towards the end.

(Well you can weight it in such a way that)

You can weight it, but we don't tend to do that, but what I will do for instance I will give somebody a pass/merit with obviously an indication of their strengths and weaknesses and I would expect them to work on their weaknesses towards the end of the term.

(Well that's formative)

Instead of waiting to the end of the term, but we do expect obviously with the feed back that they get to improve, that is built into the teaching I'd say rather than the way the course is written.

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

I don't know I would have to see how it worked. I would have to see how they would seek to assess it. You see again giving clearer guide lines for assessment and if they did that then maybe it would work very well.

(You don't think they do that?)

No I think it is fairly vague and waffley but if we hadn't been assessing drama for a long time the board would not have helped us in any way to assess it. We make up our own levels for distinction but what the board doesn't do is then divide that into process, product and evaluation, we do that. They are very much depending on our

(Yes but that is coming from the A level world isn't it? A level assessment is norm referenced rather than criterion referenced?)

What is that?

(Well it is the essential difference between criterion referenced testing where you assess towards and outcome, can they do it can they not do it, where as norm referenced you are judging one student against another, who's better than who)

I think you are doing both aren't you, you have got to be doing both, I think that is part of the assessment programme, you are assessing their strengths and weaknesses but there has got to be a scale which everybody is on if you see what I mean.

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

Again I can't say until I have seen one. It could be good it could be bad. If we are teaching knowledge that we don't feel is necessary just for the tests then I don't agree with it, if I feel it is testing something that makes sense then I will agree with it. Again the problem with BTEC it tends to attract students who are not academic and are they going to be judged on their ability to communicate through writing.

(Yes but you are expecting that they are only written tests that you are going to get)

Well yes I am, to be quite honest if they weren't only written tests I would welcome it, I think maybe the assessment of it should be more vigorous, it leaves it very much in the laps of the teachers and I think they would, and the moderation processes is, maybe, not quite as exact as it should be. I don't mean from you coming in as a moderator I mean all the rest of the things which A levels and GCSEs having places for the moderation process. How do I know that my distinction is the same as another schools distinction there is no setting of a particular level.

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

Only from the external verifier.

(I wasn't thinking of that actually I am meaning when you pick up the telephone and ring up the head office)

I don't think they even know what they are doing. I don't feel that there is a... I don't think I have ever spoken to the same person twice. I don't feel there is an office full of people who know what they are delivering but I don't even think the people who deliver it probably knows the subject specialism very well, that's the impression I get. In fact what I do is if I have a question I get in touch with my external verifier and not them, so I go to the person who I think knows.

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

Since 1994 that was when I first began 7 Years ago.

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

That it integrated the serious and the practical work it was a great idea to get the students involved to learn the theory and then to actually put it into practice

What were the problem areas?

None to be perfectly honest. The pieces integrated really well there were a couple of units which were more theory based than practice and that would have been looking more so at arts administration and arts in society but overall I found the balance really good.

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes work experience was set for the students each year

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

During the spring time the second year students would be aided in organizing and setting up work experience and they would go to theatre companies, to the administration area of theatres and to anything associated with the arts as we also had students working with dance companies

(So you really did manage to get the students operating in performing arts)

Absolutely that was the 'given'. We had stated that at the beginning that 2 weeks in a video store was not an option and they were to look in area that they felt especially interested in

Was the activity real or simulated?

We have 3 real activities a year we perform 3 shows and our main theatre space is opened and used as a theatre open to the general public and we do pantomime at Christmas time. Now we tour with the first year show and we tour through schools and colleges and final year show in June so we do have three full scale performances

(These activities are treated as on-the-job experiences?)

Absolutely the students have gone through theoretically what they should be doing and what they will be covering they then they go peer learning where they are allocated a production role and that is taken as their professional role and they see that through to the conclusion of the performances

How successful was the common skills programme?

It worked well once the students actually realised that it applied to them and they find the process of evaluation quite difficult to get used to the fact that they were analyzing what they were doing and applying the skills to themselves. Once they caught onto that it has worked well.

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

I like the broad range. I think that is one of the strengths of the course that we currently work with in that the students even if they never go back to doing lighting or sound work they understand the environment around them and we find that helps build student confidence and again they are able to see how a team works when we put together productions

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

They were just initially nervous because I think they find the challenge of writing about themselves sometimes quite challenging but they really did find that once they had actually started to do this and got into a pattern with this that the whole process of analysis was much easier than they had initially thought

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I have seen a change in student expectations over the years that I have worked on the BTEC course.

Initially there were some I think you had felt perhaps they were doing a course that they would have registered as being perhaps a little less challenging than other courses but what we have managed to do now is to weed those out to make the students realise right from the very beginning interview that this a course that we are very serious about what we do professionally and we also look for students to have the same attitude.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

I think again some of them have had that feeling at the beginning where they have realized only after they have been on the course a couple of months that they like the idea but the reality of the work was quite different but we again, I hope, are now winnowing out those students and making them aware

from the very beginning that the work is difficult, it is challenging its also very productive but we do expect them to put in a considerable amount of work.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

We are now starting to get feed back which I think is linking very well into the new BTEC where students are saying yes they would like to concentrate more seriously on their own subject discipline and I think it is something to look at for the future that we may go down a route where we offer drama national diploma and a technical national diploma.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

We began teaching GNVQ intermediate in September 2000

(So you have just got some experience of it)

Yes just

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ?

I know I will grow into the GNVQ at the moment I am still nervous about it our students are enjoying it the staff are enjoying it, I have more experience of the national diploma and truly like that I would like to just get more experience with GNVQ

(You are using the new GNVQ not the previous one?)

That's right the new GNVQ

(Have you any knowledge of the previous one?)

No I have not

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

(Let's look at the National Diplomas you are delivering the 1987 variety aren't you?)

Yes that is correct

(Which of the new nationals have you taken on this year?)

We have taken the new one that started in September 2000 and that is in drama

(Popular music will be on as well is that right and music technology?)

That's right

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

I find it's more specific in a lot of areas which is very very good and the overall content general guidance, which is very good, very productive and there seems to be a lot of energy within the units
(Are you happy with the fact that every one of the units is the same length they are all one unit versions?)

Yes because it now gives more choice

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

I like the single subject idea because it means we can mix and match and it is also something to think about for the future if we do decide to go into disciplinary and that we can offer a single subject

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

No I was not aware of that

(You have got that from the next question I imagine)

Absolutely

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

I think that is very good because it makes it very malleable and again that's a good relationship within the educational structure and the students

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

From BTEC documents and staff

(Which documents do you mean?)

From the BTEC manual

(Was that the one called Assessment and Grading?)

That's correct

(Which is recommended in the guidelines?)

Yes

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

I have worked in the area of drama

For how long?

Since 1983

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Also in the area of drama

For how long?

Since 1986

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

My particular performing arts specialism is very well catered for because I can not only talk the students through some of theory, encourage them to research the theory but also then work that towards the practical conclusion which can be videoed and can be assessed, so it provides no problems whatsoever.

(So you don't see any problems inherent in assessing on going performance?)

No I don't

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

They are, they are challenging for the students and they provide good guide lines and again we are able to follow things through with the students it's a learning curve learning process for them and it is very helpful

How could they be improved?

I am happy with them as they are

Are they useful as formative assessment?

Yes I do.

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Yes they help to establish a very strong picture of student development very helpful

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

I think it will take a while to get used to but again this is something that students seem to be fairly well used to, coming from their previous educational establishments and I think in the long term it will work and work well

(Even though that in itself is a little bit outside of the outcome related assessment procedure?)

Yes it's going to take a while to get used to but I do see the reasons behind it

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

Yes I do very much so

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

Well I find that in the quality of performance that we aspire to, there's a danger of that we become completely insulated and to apply external tests to it by external assessment is a very valuable indicator of quality

(Do you think that will be easy to do though?)

I think that it would I think that can be structured within the course yes

(How could an external person do the marking or observe the test?)

To be scheduled with a time that has been pre-organised and to follow up, having looked at paper work and preparations and earlier video footage of rehearsal and preparation

(So you are quite happy to use video footage?)

Again it's a great way of building confidence within the students work and it's a good way of charting their development. Students use video already themselves within rehearsal and preparation time

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

Profound effect I think it would diminish the practical experience and it would severely limit the development of the course as a whole

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

Get that on a regular basis from our moderator who visits us several times a year and also from staff training through a senior lecturer

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

(So you have staff development and the senior lecturer delivers this?)

That's correct

(So you have got an on-going internal programme?)

Yes that's correct

(Do you have any external staff development?)

We have been attending when it was decided that we were going to be offering GNVQ we have gone out for external training on GNVQ

(Where did you get this?)

We were attending a course at one of the institutes of Further and Higher Education just prior to the summer

(Where was that?)

I think it was

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

The channels are open we are aware who we can contact either our moderator or senior lecturer or head of department to ask questions

(I am thinking in terms of the organization itself the awarding body)

Yes we would have confidence in trying any of those channels

(Have you tried it?)

So far we haven't needed to but we would have no compunction whatsoever about calling and asking

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Our chain of command as I have previously said again the senior lecturer the head and the moderator

(So becomes somebody else's problem when it gets further up?)

No we would talk through with our members of staff and we have regular staff meetings which if there are any problems or the students have given any feed back that will be raised with the staff and if the matter needs to be carried further we have no problems with asking

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

I have found the questions very comprehensive and they have enabled me to assess and think about how I take part in this chain of events so I have found them really helpful and have nothing further to add.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

6 years

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

It was non-prescriptive. I think that was the most attractive feature of it. Compared to the new one it was less prescriptive, you had a set of objectives to follow but within that you did your own thing.

What were the problem areas?

Yes standardisation, because it was very broad, because you did your own thing, so every centre would do completely different things or whatever their own centre was good at. Difficulties in standardising the work nationally therefore difficulty in standardising it for the centre. There was nothing to monitor yourself against.

(So how did the BTEC get round this then?)

The only way I can see that you could standardise it would be the intermediary of the EV. By the EV saying yes you are on target, this matches what everybody else is doing.

(That presupposes that the EV gets about a bit?)

Yes that presupposes that the EV does and that's the only contact you have got with outside world. So you rely entirely on the reinforcement of the EV saying this is OK but in terms of having standardisation meetings as in GCSE and A level non-existent. There was great difficulty leading the programme in school.

(Can you suggest any ways round that or was it just something that you had to live with?)

The only way round it was to do very much like the GCSE or the A level would be to have standardisation meetings where samples of work are taken either watching students' performances live or through video or tape recordings and then the individuals marking those marking each of those just as an A level or GCSE standardisation and then the co-ordinator of that or the EV say this is the mark that in fact the Edexcel gave this particular group of kids and your out of sync Helen or Margaret you a little bit too high or whatever and that is the only way I could see it working.

(Do you think that is a realistic expectation?)

I think it's realistic I think it's necessary, I think it is necessary with the new one as well.

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes work experience within the industry and also in related industry for example journalism, television, radio marketing and some aspects of retailing.

(You managed this OK?)

Yes no problem, not at all.

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

Was the activity real or simulated?

Not with work experience.

(But what about the shows and things that you put on?)

Sorry I thought you meant work experience

(Yes I did but in a way the shows are simulated work experience aren't they?)

Yes but we saw it completely differently to that. The work experience was specifically industry linked so that was a very real experience the only simulation that we did related to work experience we did a three day conference which we do every year with the, called Understanding Industry, run by the IOD, Institute of Directors, and that is a three day conference where the students go off site, going to a conference centre for example the Royal Armouries in Leeds, or ASDA in their main head office kids are taken into an industry related conference centre, we have business people from around the region to come and talk about various issues of simulated paths.

How successful was the common skills programme?

Not very successful they were a hard sell to the students. Because they weren't a unit and kids like to see a unit with a unit growing and a mark attached to it the common skills were a hard sell. It was something that well you know you just achieved you just got it, it was very difficult to say to a kid you need to be more pro active here in this particular aspect of a common skills because it didn't have a unit value to it. Kids like to see unit value attached to something.

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

We actually taught it on a single discipline basis we didn't teach it integrated.

(But you had to integrate the core didn't you?)

No we taught the core separately as well. Each of our units are all taught separately.

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

Casually, and again going back to what I said earlier because they didn't have a unit value attached to it they were really inconsequential it was just something that they got through.

(You think that the lack of having a unit value was a weakness?)

It was a weakness and it was a hard sell for the kids. It was just something that they did, they were far more concerned to get the unit value and the grade on the unit as opposed to the common skills.

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

No because we have a very keen interview procedure so they may think that when they make their first application through the application form but they don't think that by the time they have an audition and an interview and they have gone through our induction programme before being put onto the course.

So their expectations we hope we will maintain but realistically.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimise their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

Yes possibly but I think they also really want, they hanker after clear guidance and training in order to get them to the next stage, that is not necessarily to legitimise it. Many of them come from a GCSE, well they all come from GCSE background where they may not have been able to take GCSE in dance, drama, music and they have done amateur work outside of the school. So it is a case of giving their prior learning legitimacy I suppose, at post 16 but also to use it as a spring board onto the higher education.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

(You have already answered this question really and said yes so do you get any students who want a bit broader approach?)

Yes I think they do want to work on their own discipline and what we did was ensure that because of the numbers of students that we have we are able to offer two courses so we could pull out some of the more dance based options for one group of kids and more drama based options for another group (So you could build in a kind of broadness yourselves?) They still had a broad range.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

I have no experience of it.

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ?

I have no experience of the original GNVQ

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

Not at all

(I think you probably realise you are lucky there because there are a lot of managements that do go for that in a big way)

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

Yes I would, I like them. I think they are very prescriptive the only thing I would question is do they have as much 'clout' as the ND at the moment.

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

More prescriptive, honed for testing purposes which is obviously a move towards trying to standardise the level.

(Yes and you like that?)

I like that

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

Well we were attracted by the new single structure well both were taught as far as we could

(So it only in fact reinforces what you are already doing?)

Yes it only reinforces what we are doing but what the new one does it is more prescriptive.

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

Yes

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

If it goes to the 18 unit that would mean we couldn't offer an A level with it because we haven't enough time in a timetabled week.

(The 18 unit is equivalent to 3 A levels)

That's right yes at the moment but we offer the national diploma with an A level. We believe that that extra A level gives credibility to the brighter kids and also aids their application for universities.

(Well the only way you would be able to use an A level then would be to offer the 12 unit version?)

That's right and I don't know then if the 12 unit will be a certificate rather than a diploma.

(Yes we don't know that yet unfortunately)

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

Entirely through discussion with EVs.

(What about the guidelines did you read them?)

Yes and through the guidelines

(Did you have the booklet, the assessment and grading booklet?)

Yes I had that from Edexcel and also from discussion

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Dance

For how long?

10 years

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Dance. I don't know if you are looking at Arts Administration

(Anything like that theoretical components as well)

For how long?

For about 20 years

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

I think you are more critical, you challenge the student more but you are also more sympathetic at the difficulties that they might experience.

(I think what I am wanting to investigate really is if your discipline of the Performing Arts is difficult to assess compared with Business Studies or something like that)

No it easier to assess if it is your own specialism. If it's your own specialism it's easier because you know what you are looking for, if it's not your own specialism and it's something you have learned since.

(Is it easy to express to non specialists?)

I don't know what you mean Jim.

(OK just leave it)

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

More or less they don't necessarily follow in an order that you would want to teach over a long period.

How could they be improved?

Are they as useful as formative assessment?

Are they useful as summative assessment?

As far as summative assessment yes but not necessarily formative.

You would have to invent your own stages in the process?)

Yes

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

Yes that's good. I think that is a good move.

(You like the idea?)

It's parity, it's easy for employers to understand, standardises it across the country in terms of admission procedures, most of our kids not only go to university but also stage schools. I think to be able to give it parity with the A levels gives it status and makes it more understandable.

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

Yes but concerned as to what they are going to test.

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

I think that you can apply the same as you do to A level testing

(Which is what you were saying before about standardisation, is that right?)

External verifier watches a live performance

(Yes do you think that is realistic knowing how few external verifiers they have got and how many centres there are?)

Well I think that is a problem for Edexcel that they have got to address because if that is the only way to do it then that is where the investment has got to be.

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

Poor, our students are practitioners and that is the beauty of the diploma and I think that written testing would be a retrograde step, I think it only reinforces the weakness of written work at GCSE and this diploma being of a practical hands-on nature is far more vocational, far more related to the entertainment industry and to test the written work would be a retrograde step.

(To test only written work, do you think they can get away with not testing any?)

Yes if it is a practical diploma then I think they should be testing practical application but they may want to test the written work that goes hand in hand with that.

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

EV

(Apart from the EV do you have any forms of staff development and where do you go for this?)

No we don't other than courses that are run independently

(Have you been on Edexcel courses?)

Yes

(Have you find them helpful?)

Yes very useful

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

It is difficult to get information, the information tends to be directed to GNVQ, you tend to have to pick up that and read between the lines and see how that could be related to the diploma. It isn't very forth-coming the information on BTEC there are no modules to follow there are not guidelines other than the original specification. Also centres, particularly neighbouring centres, particularly in your catchment area, tend to be a little bit closed shop about sharing any of their information.

(What about ringing Stewart House and Edexcel themselves?)

Yes I ring them with regularity but it tends to be on administration not on assessment.

(Do you get reasonable support there? I am not talking about assessment I am talking about anything)

Yes excellent support in terms of administration for example if a student registered can I take that student off and what have you.

(But if you want information about the new programmes and what shall you do about such and such?)

No non at all

(You haven't done it?)

Only rung the EV

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

Most of our kids go on to university that is where we encourage our kids to go, which is hand in hand with the question that you had earlier, do students come onto the course to legalise their desire to perform, and our view is that they need to reach a high level of academia in Performing Arts to open as many doors and windows as they can. What I wanted to say is that the universities enjoy the versatility of the Performing Arts student not necessarily looking for the academic, the literate academic, the versatility of the Art student. The universities are happy to put aside written work in the application procedure and by doing that they actually audition and interview the students they don't have to see portfolios generally, practical audition, practical interview.

(Test them out themselves?)

Basically they want to see if these kids can perform that's what they are really interested in because that is where the bulk of the assessment is going to be, that's peculiar only to Performing Arts degrees

because there is no other degree where students are auditioned, It used to be that you were interviewed but not auditioned therefore if the desire of Edexcel is that students are going to be tested in future on written work that will no doubt bring the grade down the overall grade at the end of the diploma *(And they may miss an interview of something? They may not be called for interview?)*

Yes they may not be called for interview simply because their grade that attracts the admission tutor in the first instance is not going to be as attractive, because it is their written work that has been assessed. So in fact the very talented student may yet again slip through the net simply because of written work testing which is exactly what happened at GCSE because it was only written work that was tested so these kids come to the diploma with maybe Ds missing the C criteria. Come with Ds simply because they are creating talented practical kids and not necessarily scientists, mathematicians and technologists and they slip through the net. They hope that when they come into a 6th form course with a practical diploma that that is their salvation now they can prove themselves. To test the written part I think is going to be a retrograde step and it will only reinforce inadequacies that they had in written work at GCSE. The other thing that I was going to say was the practical diploma a) its confidence and life skills. The skills needed to get on in industry, now written work isn't necessary to get on in industry, kids need to know how to write a letter, address an envelope do a CV put a report together those can be taught and those are taught within the course so really the only things you need to teach are the things that are required for many employment situations.

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987) BTEC National or First Diploma?

7 ½ Years Teaching just the National

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

I think it was its flexibility and the variety it offered to the students

What were the problem areas?

No I have not found any particularly

(In fact you like what you are doing)

Yes I do very much

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

No we don't need to do that we found it we have tried to do it but it has just proved very very difficult

(How was it difficult)

It's just difficult to find a range of jobs that all students could do. The better ones it's quite easy to find something for them but the ones that aren't so good and therefore we found that we can provide equal opportunities in other performing venues etc. we found that easier than the work experience

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

(So in fact you are thinking of working experience entirely in the terms of Performing Arts)

That's right yes

Was the activity real or simulated?

(Therefore the activities that they do take part in are simulated is that correct?)

Yes and no because we really do try and make sure that they at least once or twice a year each group we have goes out and actually perform live

How successful was the common skills programme?

It's been fine because we tend to be very proactive on that and encourage them to see how important it is to multi skill and so that particular part of the programme has enabled us to do that quite well

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

No I think that at the time I actually came to the qualification I had a crossroads in my life where I felt it was better to teach that broad range anyway. No I have enjoyed that

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

They have always accepted it as part of the course but we have always integrated it into the assignment brief

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I would say that the top 5% do because they have got the capacity to do that the others don't so we have to spend a lot of coaching and building the self esteem up to help them

(Are we not in a situation where any of them have unrealistic expectations?)

Some do you will find somebody comes along with quite a big ego and not very much about them but it's our job to address that balance really

Could it be that many students enroll on the course to legitimize their desire for a performer's lifestyle?

I certainly think that some of the drama students do that. I can't say I have come across any music students that have that attitude

(You think it's a quality of the drama students)

Yes I think it is really

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

I don't think so. But I think sometimes they would prefer that and will get them with a very limited concept of things but again we are very proactive in trying to get them to understand that they need to multi skill and be very good across a broad range of things and it doesn't take us long to convince them of that. We just feel it's really important that they accept that.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

No I have not actually taught it No

(So in fact the next two questions I will leave)

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

Why?

Does your college management have a preference?

I don't think so I honestly don't know

(You are not aware of that)

I am not aware of that. I have certainly been involved in senior management discussions and I have been involved with people who run the GNVQ and I have certainly not picked that up. But with all these changes curriculum 2000 there may well be pressure put on us as far as funding etc.

(That's an interesting thing for you to say for it to come out of the blue. What makes you say that?)

Well I know getting involved I was in a curriculum 2000 committee for example last year and we were told very categorically that NDs would eventually go by the board and me and other people that were involved in the NDs were very very concerned about that.

And so they were saying eventually they were going to pull the NDs down to the same hours as all the others and that's a big concern because we have got some staff who can remember the NDs being 30 hours long you know guided learning over the week now they are down to 13.5. Certainly in the vocational areas we are getting very concerned about that

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

Generally speaking the general consensus from the staff is that they have got a lot more clarity the actual documents clearer and it provides more of the support for tutors

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

I think we all seemed to like the single subject structure

(How do you think that compares with the statement you made earlier when you said you liked the broad structure of the original?)

I suppose I don't understand the question

(Well I mean do you think there is some broadness built in to the new single subject structure)

You mean in terms of they can only do one unit for one year

(No I wasn't meaning that I was meaning that you can get a National Diploma in music where as before it had to be in performing arts)

I don't know but looking at it now I see what you mean I suppose the document we were using was one very much in music anyway and the earlier question I thought you were talking more in terms of looking at it against an A level

(No I wasn't thinking of it. I was thinking of the fact that they have to get some experience in all of the performed arts)

Right yes I suppose we shall still continue to develop that encourage that anyway and I think it will be a challenge to sort of make the document live in that way. I know we are talking about NDs so I won't go onto that

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

Yes I do know that

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

There is a general concern that it again will reduce student guided learning hours I know it's a general concern among all our staff.

(What would you think are the benefits of that though)

I think the benefit is that it's possibly the only way we are going to keep the National Diplomas I can see if they don't agree to go down that route then government pressure could be put on to stop running them

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?

Basically from our external verifier and from other practitioners in the college

(You didn't have any other inputs at all)

Not initially no if you are talking initially then that is how I learnt about it

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Music

For how long?

25 years

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

Music and I teach over music technology and theatre but usually subjects that are closely related to me
(*That's music*)

Yes

For how long?

About 25 years again

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

No I don't think so really

(*You think that in fact it is an easy thing to assess*)

For somebody that understands the art then yes I think that it is the same for anything if someone asked me to go in and assess a mathematician I wouldn't know where to start but I think you can clarify things enough. We do try to ensure we get a broad range of tutors assessing so that any things that we might not pick up other tutors would

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

Yes they are

How could they be improved?

Anything can be improved I think I prefer them to the previous objectives that we had I think the document makes it much clearer as to what they have got to achieve

Are they useful as formative assessment?

Are they useful as summative assessment?

I have seen both your questions here and I think they useful for both I know you in the past have gone over the sort of assignment briefs the variety of assignment brief we should address and we try to do that

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

I didn't know about that

(*You didn't well that's coming so you can't comment on that*)

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

I don't basically because I think it is going to be very very difficult to organize and extremely costly

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

Again I think it is going to be very difficult from a personal point of view. For example I was asked this last term to go in and assess a music and theatre assessment that I actually had no input in and therefore me and a colleague find ourselves having to make judgements on an end product without seeing any of the process and understanding any of the process

And consequently I refused to give a mark I just said I will give comments on what I see because it was very much a performing arts like parade of songs and dances so some people were much more involved than others and in fact the tutor took no notice of what I did and he actually marked them and said this is [FLT 8] mark and then someone came and complained to me but I said "I didn't give any marks" for exactly the reason the young man came and said I am complaining because you didn't see all the work that I put into that although I only had a small part in that I had a huge part in the organization of it. I think that is the big problem if someone is coming in externally its not so bad for musicians you know they can do an individual assessment but even then it depends on the instrument they play. If somebody is a bass guitar player we are not going to find it as easy to find him some interesting pieces to play.

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

I think that would be very negative because I think tutors are going to have to focus more on that and less on the practice, practice, practice.

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

From the external verifier and visits to Edexcel and I find Leeds helpful as well

(*You find the regional office helpful?*)

Yes

(*You find there are satisfactory connections with the London office?*)

I think my biggest concern is the contradictory advice that we get and people so many times will say I don't know the answer to that I will have to get back to someone nobody seems to know the answer

(Do they get back to you?)

They do get back to me. Yes but even then it's a case of well I have not really found the answer to that, and a couple of issues and I have said, "Is that a definitive answer? Is this really the truth, can you e-mail me this" and they say "This is the truth" and then they back off and say, "Well we would rather not we don't know whether it is or not."

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

You have done the staff development for us and we have generally taken advantage of the visits to Edexcel. We are going tomorrow for example to an HND

(Where will that be?)

Tavistock Square in London

(Who is running that?)

It's Edexcel that are running it

(You don't know the name of the person?)

No I don't there is no specific person mentioned its just an introduction to the new HND specification

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

(I have asked you if it's easy or difficult to get information you have told me that)

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Usually you first. In this last instance the problems we have had we have contacted Wendy Suthurst or if I cannot contact you then I will ring Leeds I wouldn't bother you if I knew it was something that Leeds could answer

Why do you select this source?

OPEN ENDED

Are there any issues which you would like to bring to my attention which have not been covered?

(Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?)

No I think you have covered it well We are very happy with the look of the new NDs but not so happy with the new HND I think it is very limited. Have you seen it have you looked at it?

(Yes I have)

'Front Line Troops' Interview Transcript Number 9

COURSE STRUCTURE

How long have you been teaching the (original 1987)BTEC National or First Diploma?

12 Years

(12 years and you have taught on both programmes)

Yes both programmes the National and the First Diploma

What were the most attractive features of the (1987) programme?

I like the flexibility and the integration across units also the fact that I could take units from other approved programmes such as the Pop Music courses and use them as options for the Performing Arts where you could build a course that suited your needs. Also we could write centre-designed units so that if I wanted to specialize in Irish Folk music or what ever then I could develop a centre devised unit and get approval to run that

(so in fact that was a strong one for your Centre Devised Units)

Yes

What were the problem areas?

Well it just all became out of date the syllabus and it did need to be rewritten

(Yes you mean the original draft proposals)

Yes it never became anything else but a draft

(That is exactly right yes)

Do you (or did you) arrange work experience?

Yes in both years.

If so was this in the performing arts or not necessarily?

No we always tried to get it related to the Performing Arts

(What happened if you couldn't manage that?)

We would have looked at perhaps looked at where they were still dealing with meeting people.

Perhaps from the communication skills point of view try to give them experience in that. 90% of the time we did because we have a good area here with no other colleges that close doing Performing Arts so that was an advantage.

Was the activity real or simulated?

Nearly always real they were actually out recording in the studios or they were with presenting a show. Even putting up posters or dealing with people coming in for ticket sales. They were real.

How successful was the common skills programme?

They were relevant to each of the subject areas and they could be easily covered in Performing Arts I felt. Maybe some other areas I heard complaints that they were more difficult to cover. They weren't completed as a separate entity which was good. You covered them as you taught naturally your subject. The only problem with them maybe was that they were not really recognized by University. Whenever students would get back offers sometimes they would not acknowledge the common skills in any way.

(Yes but remember that the common skills originally were given 2 units value and then they took that away)

But even before that they would have said they must have so many merits and distinctions excluding common skills

Would you have preferred to teach single disciplines rather than a broad range?

I was happy enough. I think everybody wants to teach their own discipline within reason. I mean obviously I cannot be into music and dance but I would take performance workshop the drama and possibly the arts admin.

(Did you feel that was a valuable thing to do?)

Yes if the colleges would have allowed more staff development. I did try to get into for instance to get into the Riverside Theatre to build up my own experience but that was difficult they were not in favour really of allowing us doing that

STUDENTS

How did the students react to Common Skills?

They were fine with them when they could see they were benefiting them and they were relevant to the integrated assignment or the subject area that they were covering and that is how we always tried to deal with it. I think if you tried to cover them as a separate identity they wouldn't.

(Yes if it was a special subject)

Yes if they didn't see any value within their own area.

What do you think of student expectations - do they really expect to 'make it'?

I think it's a start when they come along for their audition/interview yes they do they think it's all going to be 'Fame'.

(They think you have the secret and you are going to make them into something special?)

Yes and parents sometimes have that but in the negative case and they think Oh my son/daughter are going to think they are coming here to make it and they won't. So very quickly during the audition/interview when the parents are with them we clearly explain what students have done in the past.

What really students have done, opportunities that are there with a course like this and that very few of them will go on to work full time in the Theatre as performers.

Could it be that many students enrol on the course to legitimize their desire for a performers' lifestyle?

I think by the time they enroll there are very few because we have changed their minds by audition/interview stage. You have to remember that careers teachers in schools also are trying to explain to them about other options. We are working quite closely with careers teachers in sending them information where past pupils become to us what they have been doing to try to educate careers teachers because they really have no idea what the course is about.

Would your students prefer the course to concentrate upon their own subject discipline rather than a broad range?

I think this is split here. I think the drama students enjoy the broader range develop into dance stagecraft and possibly music. But the musicians I don't know whether it's something because they are musicians or whatever they like to stick within their own subject and don't like to delve deeper. That's why I think the popular music course suited them because they could get really into it.

GNVQ

Have you had any experience of the GNVQ?

Just starting from September 2000

Do you prefer to teach the ND or the GNVQ ?

National Diploma

Why?

First of all as mentioned it is more flexible. There are more units and it is a much broader range of experiences for the students.

(When you say flexible how does this flexibility manifest itself?)

Well the flexibility of more selection of option units and working across as I said taking units from the Pop Music course and using them and the centre-devised units we have lost all of that. You are literally given these units and that is it. You have to teach them in certain times and it is all very prescriptive. I think the assessment in the National Diploma was better. In the GNVQ for instance the one I am teaching at the moment they are preparing for work. Students for their end of year have 12 hours to make a video of their audition pieces now there is no allowance in that for students who have absolutely excellent stage presence but very poor video presence where as with the old National Diploma we had someone who came along and watched them live. What happens to a student who gets the video right first time and maybe only uses an hour and another student comes along and spends 12 hours and OK eventually gets the same grade as them there is no allowance for that what-so-ever. One gets it spot-on straight away and is really sharp.

(So in fact you think the assessment is not right yet)

Not right yet. Also there are exams for those taking single awards.

(What do you think about that?)

I mean how can you possibly do an exam in performance?. Certainly yes in the Arts in Society that type of unit.

(You mean a written exam?)

Yes and there is a problem of time table. I still have no dates for exams in May 2001 and already the students that are doing it as a single award have got their A level exam timetables and I know there will be clashes with other subjects. The main CCEA timetable is sent out from the department. I have phoned BTEC on numerous occasions and Edexcel and they have said oh well we will get back to you so as such there is no difference

(Did they get back to you?)

No. GNVQ are also working with this mish mash of points and grades you don't just get a grade E you get a points system with it

(Like the A levels)

Well like it in one way but you just grade them A B C D E and then at the very end apparently which is my last bit of information then you suddenly add these points on. I have nothing against points but I feel then we should be using them from September right through and they should be aggregated or averaged whatever. We have no sample papers at all. Tutor support material the first thing I got was last week and I have been teaching the course since last September. There is something wrong with their support material.

Does your college management have a preference?

What are their reasons?

Have you changed from ND to GNVQ?

Why did you do this?

Why did we change to the GNVQ purely funding there is more money for the GNVQ double award and so the college senior management pushed by the department of education are insisting we have no choice

(So you were instructed to do this?)

Absolutely - instructed. It is simply a thing about funding and on top of that the students who are doing the GNVQ double award now they are making the students complete the City & Guilds Key Skills Level 2 and take a single award at the same time all because of funding nothing else no other reason

(So the funding is driving the curriculum)

The funding is driving the curriculum

(That's interesting that)

If you did not, would you re-consider this using the new GNVQ specifications?

I did not have any sight of the old specifications well only briefly and didn't look any further

REVISED NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

What do you think is the essential difference between the original ND and the new ND?

(You will have seen that the ND's have been revised but you are not teaching them)

No. Well the revised National Diplomas and again I haven't been teaching these I am just saying what I have looked

(What do you surmise?)

Much better structure I like the structure well the last I looked at they had the ND performing arts you could have your band or stream in music and then you had music at the end of the title. I presume it is still that structure or you could have the ND performing arts in dance

(That's correct it's still that structure that's on now)

I feel that those students could take that and still with the flexibility of the option units you could move it between different themes in the option units. I mean the flexibility was at a maximum and I feel that any college could have stepped in there and found a course and developed a course that would have suited their students

When the National Diploma was to be re-written would you have preferred to update the previous structure or were you attracted by the new single subject structure?

I liked the new single structure

Are you aware that the new version is even now being re-written?

No I didn't know that

This new version is being revised into 18 unit, 12 unit and 6 unit versions to fit the National Qualifications Framework- comment upon this?

I suppose that's to fit in with equating it with the A levels

(yes you can have a single subject , double subject or the three)

It's much easier again for careers teachers to equate and for universities which is much more important and parents as well they can see that this is a straight forward equivalent to the A levels

(How would you feel about what would go on within the course though because remember each of these single awards would have to be a thing in itself?)

Yes I think that would work fairly well develop those that are better capable would have the opportunity to do more

(It hasn't been finished yet)

Well it will be interesting

ASSESSMENT

How did you and/or your team learn the assessment procedures required for the (1987) qualification?
We did get guide lines although they were a bit vague in places but I felt that most of the advice came from the EV visits and any staff development that I managed to get on. You could talk to someone who was doing it and show them what you were doing and get it sorted out. So I found the staff development talking to other co-coordinators useful but mainly advice from the EVs which is missed badly in the GNVQ

(You said that the guide lines were a bit vague there were two publications mentioned in the guide lines did you in the early stages have sight of them and look at them)

Yes we did

(That was a circular, circular 17 and assessment)

Yes

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a performer?

Drama

For how long?

Well really part time all my life

(Intermittent)

Intermittent would be good and Summer full time then I did, and a number of theatres groups

Which of the Performing Arts disciplines have you worked in as a teacher?

The Drama

(Just the same)

For how long?

12 years

(So you started doing that with this qualification)

That's right although when I add on I suppose we are talking 13 – 14 years

(You did some before that)

Do you think your own particular Performing Arts specialism presents any specific difficulties for assessment?

That's the old aesthetic value here I think I had to come to terms very quickly with. You couldn't allow personal preferences to creep in you must always refer back to the assessment criteria. Just because you didn't like a certain piece from a book where you had heard it umpteen number of times you still had to assess it according to the criteria you couldn't let judgment by personal preference creep in

Are the 'outcome related' assessment procedures which are currently encouraged satisfactory?

Yes

(You like that?)

Yes I do

How could they be improved?

No I am quite happy with them

Are they as useful as formative assessment?

Yes

Are they useful as summative assessment?

Yes

(Looking at the difference between Norm referenced and Criterion referenced assessment, which characteristics of the National Diploma- the original system - aligns with each or would you not be sure what was meant?)

The criterion referenced for that would be that it could be matched from each unit to the outcome

(Do you see any evidence of norm referencing in the system)

Not really

Comment upon the new requirement for grading as A,B,C,D,E and allocating points as in A Levels?

(I think you have already done this haven't you)

Yes

Do you agree with the requirement for external testing within the new regulations?

In the admin areas yes but I think if they are going to have external testing as they are with the video performance and then a written exam as well that needs to be looked at. It needs to have someone coming in and assessing it as a live performance because when those kids go to do their audition

material its not to a video and not given six chances to get it right they must get it right the first time to the person that is sitting there.

How would you suggest the external tests could be applied to actual performance?

(That is what you have really just said to me someone turning up and watching it)

They should turn up to a 'live'. We talked about making it as a real, not a simulated exercise I feel it should be real.

If the tests cover only written work what effects will this have upon the qualification?

Just written work will have great damage to it because it's not the sort of subject where you can sit down and write and you are going to attract the A level academic students not the vocational ones.

(End of the official questions have you any suggestions as to what could be added or taken out)

No I think I would have liked to say more about the lack of support

(You think I should put an open ended bit on and say what support have you had and where has it come from?)

Things like staff development sessions that Edexcel organize are always on the mainland there are very few it's always private companies that organize it here. I don't remember ever in my 12 years going to something that was organized by Edexcel in Northern Ireland and yet we have an office in Belfast.

Also as I said the number of times I have phoned and no one has got back to me they are just not organized I feel that we shouldn't be running this new GNVQ because we are not organized and Edexcel are not organized to run it.

INFORMATION

How do you get necessary support and advice on delivery and assessment?

What staff development have you had and who has delivered it?

(Have you been to any staff development on the mainland and if so what did you think of it?)

Yes I have but it was staff development organized by myself going on a college visit that I had set up. It was very beneficial. But I haven't been able or allowed we couldn't go to all the staff development that was organized

(Too expensive got to get on a plane every time?)

Exactly

(You think I could build in a question of some kind about the support you have had and where it has come from)

Yes and that may tie in the with support from the department (Northern Ireland Education) where they are talking about pushing it because of funding I mean they are not interested in the fact that I believe student enrolments will fall as a result of the department insisting that we do GNVQ. I feel they should be looking at us as professionals in the subject area have no say what so ever we are just told I feel there should be some two way process discussion perhaps and talking about what the students get out of it before deciding these facts

Is it easy or difficult to get information?

If you encountered a problem where would you seek advice?

Why do you select this source?

'New Developer' Interview Transcript Number 1

(As an Art and Design person when you were given the remit to start developing things in Performing Arts did you find any particular things that were peculiar to the Performing Arts which were problematic?)

Well the main brief that I was given because, of course, times were different then, the expectation was that our Nationals would be subsumed by a newly developed GNVQ, that was the plan, that was always the plan. So in a way I never really analysed all that closely the National Diplomas which were going on, which of course is a great sin but that was the spirit of the times.

(Your job was to get going on the GNVQ?)

That's right

(Where did this push come from?)

That was all internal, it wasn't from the centres, the centres didn't want it as far as I could tell. There was a keen sort of rump of centres that was developing, not a rump a kind of new influx centre that wanted to exploit this new qualification which they felt they would be able to do if it were a GNVQ, and that as we all know now is a code word for lower expectations of lower standards of work. However we define that, would mean that schools could do it and 6th form colleges could do it who previously hadn't been resourced to do it. So there was great pressure from this new force and NCVQ were keen to curry favour with that new force.

(So this is the first mention you have given me of NCVQ so there was a policy steer coming from there?)

Very strong. NCVQ were very committed to the Performing Arts GNVQ

(Was that at a time when NCVQ was at war with the DES as it was then or DfEE, I cannot remember which it was at that particular time because it had come from the DTI?)

Yes I think this was all part of that, it was at the time when actually NCVQ were beginning to lose faith in their mission but definitely the push for Performing Arts came from that time when they thought they could develop. In actual fact that was one of the very interesting things about Performing Arts qualification because it took me a bit of time to understand what the issue was but we had developed in our Performing Arts NDs very much a kind of compromise between stardom and a wish for stardom which some young people have and skill and craft and trade, and actually teaching them something and giving them something which would be valuable and we exploited the former to really develop the latter. Quite a clever way of doing it and we developed something which centres liked because of that because it had all the motivational pull for the students it had. It did the things they wanted to do but it gave them a strong educational frame work which meant they could also develop that in the students and young people so everyone felt happy with that. GNVQ came from a different mind set. It was DTI inspired because Frances Morell was put in the chair of the Performing Arts Subject Advisory Committee (SAC) and her one mission was to provide performing arts young people with the business skills they needed to survive in the world after they had failed to become stars and this was the premise for all NCVQ's intervention in the development of the performing arts GNVQ. They basically wanted a quasi business qualification dressed up as a performing arts qualification and they called it vocationalising performing arts. Now there are two ways you can vocationalise a qualification you can either prepare like in art you can either prepare people to become painters or dancers or musicians or you can prepare them to run arts centres and become business people and I felt very strongly that we were being pushed down this latter route and that that was a mistake because we would lose the students. We would produce a simplistic business qualification which would have no appeal to young people or to centres. Now from a centre with limited resource base and possibly low expectations for performing arts skills, what the students were going to be given was all good news. They could develop, they could run with this, they had got the business study expertise they had got a school stage and that was about it and off they would go potentially with the new performing arts qualification. I think in the end what's happened with the centres they have found it even with the revised performing arts qualification there is such an expectation in centres in terms of HE expectations that the idea that you can do this without specific performing arts skills has really come a bit of a cropper.

(What did you mean there by 'the revised', you are meaning the new GNVQ the more recent one?)

Yes I think the new GNVQs address a lot of the quality problems that we have had in the past.

(Could I just direct you to the structures of the original? Does this link in with what you were about to say there?)

A bit hazy in fact very hazy. We are always trying to get the balance right and in the end we wanted a qualification which someone could take through one of those routes quite successfully and that was our aim and in a way that kind of mimicked what we did in the national.

(But it wasn't so explicit was it?)

No it wasn't because we had to kind of disguise it to get through QCA we had to put in a strong wedge (NCVQ) yes NCVQ yes sorry we had to put in a big wedge of business speak business expectations which of course the centres often could not understand. Here I am talking I think there is an important divide between college administration and heads of department who are perhaps non subject specialist and the staff who are actually having to deliver the qualification; deep down, two very different sets of people, I think. One wants the resources, another wants to do it properly and often you find these people have gravitated towards National Diplomas. The administrators tend to think that here's a gift in terms of motivational device which will keep them all happy dancing and putting on plays and there are two very different mind sets there.

(If you were to give us a general statement about the original structure which by your own admission wasn't popular how would you describe it? It was generic wasn't it?)

It was failing to build on the success of the National Diplomas but then you could say that about the whole GNVQ project. What we had in the national diplomas was a very popular qualification and what we needed to do was to transfer that to GNVQ. Possibly that could have been a way forward but to get it onto GNVQ we had to unitise it. We then had to allocate because of NCVQ pressure a lot of those units to the business mentality. We then had to apply a wholly invalid form of external testing from multi choice questions which, of course, is wholly invalid in a performing arts or indeed an art and design or media environment so the intention to move to GNVQ was floored and the model worked against the primary objective of all successful post-16 performing arts courses, so it was destined to failure.

(Can I just explore a little mismatch in my own mind here you might be able to help. A few of us put together the GNVQ the 1995 version of the GNVQ but wasn't that simultaneously with SAC was meeting as well ready for that next one, that's what was happening wasn't it? The first one had got off the ground without that interference just direction from above through yourself to the writers and such like which you pulled together and then they started up to rewrite and rethink presumably because it hadn't taken off)

I think they really didn't take off because of the GNVQ structure and the NCVQ blamed the fact that we weren't preparing people for the world of work as they saw it and then there was a great deal of interference and to get our units accredited for the second time around when I did the optionals and additionals they had to have there was a very clear business focus there.

(Well I actually remember there one or two people who left the subject advisory committee, one of them being the Director of a large music college who 'didn't want to know' even though it was supposed to be so he could deliver this course through his one discipline)

And the thing is, it was easy for us at that time too we were playing quite a difficult game here. I wanted the Nationals to survive and we could end up producing a Performing arts GNVQ which was not a National Diploma, didn't deal with dance music or drama in any way near the depth of a National Diploma and so you could almost see it as a generalist, quasi-business qualification and I do keep saying to this advisory committee, we either go for a full blown course which our centres can do, which maps onto the National Diploma and we have to live with the silly tests, short answer tests but that was no way acceptable to the SAC we had to have huge doses of business in there.

(I remember that yes. Do you think that when they got an NCVQ officer who was a performing arts specialist it made any difference?)

It's really funny actually because I didn't even realise that he was a Performing Arts specialist until much later.

(He didn't give that impression when he was there)

His job as he saw it and he still sees it is to broker the most effective deal and in a position where you have got *****who is in control of the subject advisory committee and extremely strong and bringing in her trusty new tenant whose name I cannot remember but there were two of them that operated as a team and their organisation being funded on the basis of providing more educational opportunities which were about employability then I think I wouldn't be at all surprised if they weren't receiving DTI funding for that. You could see that there was a mission there that the chair had about

employability performing arts qualifications and so we had to work a compromise and as I say at the end of the day it actually suited the plan for us because it meant that the nationals remained unmolested.

(Well that came from the change in government didn't it? Because in 1997 when the government changed there was an expectation that they would retain some of the more popular other qualifications that had been earmarked to go. Can we just go on for a moment or two there was a huge list of BTEC nationals where we had to go through the titles they were all hung up on titles where did that come from? Who directed that?)

That's the DfEE their initiative which still goes on today. They are confronted with 17,000 titles post 16

(At that point we now have QCA don't we? They had come together at that point so DfEE took them over?)

DfEE used QCA and have used the national qualifications framework which QCA controls to continue that mission to rationalise titles as they see it.

(And are there any interesting anomalies in this? Do they in fact look at something and say there are not many people in that line of business so why should we waste our time having a course for it?)

Well I mean it's strange because in a way it's an absurd policy decision but you can see the logic for it in terms of league tables and reports and that's what it all boils down to. But you could also characterise their attempt to rationalise the vocational qualifications which after all City & Guilds tried, TEC, BEC, and BTEC have tried it and now QCA has tried it. If you look at the efforts of QCA, what they have actually done is to add to the raft of qualifications they have added GNVQs they have added part 1 GNVQ they have added NVQs they have actually complicated and often duplicated the already complex set of qualifications and they are planning to do this again.

(Their argument would be that they are going to get rid of those other qualifications so there are no duplications)

Of course and they never can because they are bucking what is market demand. Now one should identify a need for a course and then put it on in response to student demand. This is the thing under this idea of rationalisation and more effective business. Everyone is missing the main argument which surely is about where demand is and the market demands this. There is a reason why you have got strange qualifications and often it's because the bigger political project that we have got to placate someone who is powerful on a board who wants a qualification in an obscure subject which will then allow us to run a bigger set of qualifications and this these arguments of course all get lost in the mists of time.

(There is a story going round about people studying the chocolate industry? Is that true in York where there is a job at the other end but were refused the qualifications I don't know how true that is)

Well I don't but I know we have very small qualifications say in performing arts we have got the circus skills qualification which meets a need. Students are there to do it, we have got the skill to write the stuff and the skill to moderate it. What the government should have concerned itself with far more, and in fact it should have concerned itself with it before the GNVQ project. This was sadly misguided and no one to my knowledge has ever really apologised about the tremendous waste of money.

(There has been so much investment)

Absolutely phenomenal waste of money. But rather look at how we moderate, how we verify, how we examine how we control these qualifications which only now too late in the day they are actually doing and that's the real problem we have got. We have got a whole industry now populated by non-assessment specialists who are telling the assessment specialists how to get it right and they haven't got the first clue themselves.

(This is an interesting one. It takes me to the big one which is the assessment process. The interesting thing about the nationals was that they had a guidance booklet in the early stages which predated the NCVQ and NVQ and such like and yet it asked for a kind of competence based assessment although the word competence didn't come out, and in that booklet they allowed centres to devise their own means of doing this as long as they came up with 3 grades pass merit distinction or fail or refer. Now the very fact that you have got three grades as far as I am concerned was against the competence model because that gets you in line with norm referenced testing so if you read Gilbert Jessop's original thing which motivated NCVQ this book on competence then that wouldn't fit. That compromise was even built into the GNVQ and then they come along with external tests which were obviously in response to political pressure, but I am supposed to be asking you so would you comment on what I have been saying there?)

There are elements that are good about it and elements that are bad but if you have a very clear competence that a student has to achieve then that is obviously very valuable. But some students unfortunately, or fortunately, are going to do better than others and the way that we assess that is at the point where we actually employ an expert who knows about the subject who will make a value judgement and as an awarding body that is what we are now in the business of. A lot of people within Edexcel don't understand this yet, a lot of people still don't actually understand what we are about.

(Is this what you have just experienced?)

Yes and we are going through the process in GNVQ and our National Diplomas now in our HNDs to some degree even in an unknown way in A level where we are writing criteria and then we go through a social process where we bring the examiners in or the moderators and we reach a decision around a table about what at what point a student has achieved. Now within this dynamic it's a changing process. In a dynamic social process like that there is room for experts to gather round and agree on grades. Qualitative decisions where someone has achieved exceptionally well medium well and very poorly, the words themselves have no meaning whatsoever, they are merely markers for a process which a community of assessors, moderators, the assessors in the colleges come to understand through in-service training and through looking at examples of work through moderation training meetings and this is a rich process that we are now entering into. We have moved away, I think, from this idea of outcomes yet I have just been to a meeting today where people are still sat there talking about writing clear outcomes. We can write clear outcomes until we are blue in the face still someone will misunderstand what they mean there are myriads of interpretations such is the way that human beings work. The only way we can get a purchase on that in a valid way is to have valid examples of the student activities in art and design if it's about art and design, performing arts, if it's about performance theatre or music or drama and we have our experts then regulating that through face to face contact and discussion and debate. Now the allure of the competence based model is quite obvious. It seems here we have got an objective system and I listened to someone last year in Scotland. SQA have gone down the same horrendous route paying the price where they suggested that non art specialists could teach art and design because the criteria were so clear. People think if we get objective criteria and clarity in the outcomes we have solved all our problems. In fact that is where the problems start. It's your first base and there should be consistency in the way we write outcome. There should be consistency in what we mean by merit or distinction and consistency by what we mean by A to E grades. We admit that but that is only the start for a rich process which is a human process of discussion and debate. It's also a more expensive process.

(especially in performance)

Yes especially in performance

(Because you have got to be there to see the performance)

Yes yes and to be honest if we don't accept the added cost of valid assessment of performing arts, art and design then we might as well give up because you cannot test art and design in a valid way, performing arts in a valid way, media in a valid way with a paper and pen test. You cannot do it. We have tried in the past and it has failed and it will fail again and so we have to have a purchase on our moderators we have to train them properly. We have never done that in the past we have to produce exemplar material left, right and centre never done that in the past. If we do it carefully it will allow us to demonstrate that we can have reliability in performing arts, arts and design and media. The problem is that the government doesn't believe that we can and that is the thing that we are up against at the moment and unfortunately the only reason we are allowed course work style assessment in performing arts and arts and design is because they don't really take the subjects very seriously.

(Yes well that's always the story isn't it, it always has been and no doubt it always will be. Any school teacher who specialises in one of these forms of creative arts will tell you that they don't want to know when it comes to time tabling but when it comes to speech day comes they want you to produce, you have got to put the show on)

Yes of course

(But they will not give you time on the time table to do it and that was one of the best things about the introduction of the BTEC National for the first time students were going to get academic credit for doing what the subject is actually about other than just writing about it)

Yes yes

(Such as the A levels.)

(What do you think are the implications are for the teacher of all of this the pedagogic implication?)

I think what's happening at the moment across the sector is that we have become obsessed with assessment and this is largely a spirit of mistrust. We mistrust professionals, we mistrust lawyers, we mistrust doctors. Harold Shipman was a gift from God for the Government

(Well everything is like this now isn't it? We live in a litigious society?)

Yes and so there is this great deal of mistrust. So we are all focused on assessment we are all focused on the assessment process and this means that all of our in service training is obsessed with one thing and one thing alone and of course it is leading to incredible impoverishment of the educational experience for us as an awarding body because all we can talk about with the teachers is assessment when in fact as anyone will tell you just stand there measuring outcomes you are paying no interest to the inputs then at the end of the day you haven't got purchase on the whole of the process. So we need to move back, I think it is very important to recognise within nationals we had a very weak model of standardisation and we didn't move fast enough to address that. We didn't have standardisation.

(But when we did move we moved towards the GNVQ)

Yes

(Which was throwing the baby out with the bathwater)

Absolutely. All we needed to do was to move to a course work style A level GCSE model which would have, but no one in our neck of the woods actually talked to A level and GCSE people. It was only when I moved over there I saw instantly they had cracked the problem, although interestingly we are miles ahead of them now in terms of our understanding of how we can make this work because they are continually buffeted and under pressure to introduce more formalised exams where as we are allowed a bit more freedom in GNVQs and Nationals to make course work assessment work.

(Is that from academics like Smithers and such like?)

There is that yes and there are people who are obsessed and think paper and pen tests unseen tests are the only way forward and I think well that is a nonsense in art and design I still think that it's a nonsense in other subjects as well.

(Last phrase the famous student comment to me as a verifier at one point but which is applicable everywhere they say "they are making this up as they go along" do you think that applies to where we are?)

I think we have lost sight of why we need qualifications. We have got a very interesting project at the moment; the London Institute which is huge has come to us and they have currently got about 6,000 students on their professional development qualifications and they want and they are worried because they want to keep getting funding for them and they want to get them onto national qualifications frame work. So here we have upwards of 100 to 150 units, very desperate. They managed to gather them around 9 titles, not very neat.

Level 3 and yet some of the students are doing degree level work it's a very messy kind of qualification. But yet the students want to do it. The average age of the student is 27/28 so its about widening participation of adult returners it's absolutely perfect in terms of the government agenda which I completely agree with. It's obviously a wonderful thing that the London Institute has put into place. The qualifications are very strange some of them very obscure but if a student doesn't do them they don't run them so they are meeting a market need. I think we go to a few meetings and what are we hearing already this doesn't really fit into the level 3 framework. The work is too high, how many units constitutes a qualification and as soon as that debate kicks off we have lost site of what we are actually about. These are qualifications that students actually want to do, they want to do for a variety of reasons they want to get on, they want to get on a course, they want to do them just because they want to do them and they are probably going back to industry and getting promotion because they have done them. These courses are as far as I can see become a touch down for me because if we can't get those onto a national qualification framework then we really are going to end up destroying more and more of what education should be all about meeting students needs. So when students say you are going round in circles they are absolutely right and that is why it is very important to recognise that the GNVQ experiment was an unmitigated disaster but more importantly to understand why. One of the largest factors was that it was a completely top down exercise, no consultation with the teachers until they had finally proved that it couldn't work and time and time again we are doing that. We are doing that again with nationals I sit listening to people today telling me how nationals should be organised. People I know haven't taught for years not been in a centre for years certainly not consulted with teachers or staff and it's because of the strong regulatory presence that we have over us and that strong regulator may have a lot of strength but it's not necessarily populated by the people who at the end of the day take responsibility for the qualifications because they don't. They just hold their hands up in horror and say oh well it didn't work BTEC got it wrong, after they have told us to make a mess of it.

'New Developers' Interview Transcript Number Two

I am actually interested in the policy structures which pertain in terms of colleges and schools doing GNVQs and the other qualifications which the previous government was going to do away with and I remember when I was at Newcastle College in England the expectation was that we would be doing GNVQs but they had originally started them in 1995 in 5 subject areas and then eventually about 2 years later they went into my area which is Performing Arts. Now, when it got into the Performing Arts this created a lot of problems and most of the colleges stayed with the National Diplomas and that is still the situation today. I find that that gets by OK in England because it is in the schedule 2A or I think that has changed its name now to Section 96.

I don't know but under the new Learning and Skills Council.

(In my travels in Northern Ireland I find that there is a different mood and I wondered if you would comment on that.)

Well first of all when GNVQ started in 1992 we were involved in the pilots and we were working hard to ensure that whatever qualification came out met the needs of the students and higher education and employers in Northern Ireland. Now you were involved in those days as well you know the difficulties that we had and the qualification wasn't right, but then it was introduced very quickly and with everything like that there are difficulties but the department believed and in those days it was the department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) from devolution as far as the colleges were concerned it is the Department of Higher and Further Education Training and Employment; as far as the schools concerned it is the Department of Education. But in those days it was the DENI the old D.E.N.I. all the colleges and schools were in the one department and DENI wanted the schools and colleges to play a big part in the developments of GNVQ and to adapt them or to be sure they were adapted along the right lines. In Northern Ireland, I think it is important that you understand where we are coming from. Now then in Northern Ireland we have a selective system so that age 11 a child takes a test, well 2 tests which determines whether they go to a Grammar School or whether they go to a Non Selective Secondary school. That causes a great amount of contention and so education is valued very, very highly. Education is valued incredibly highly more than any other part except perhaps Scotland but incredibly highly.

(Can I just jump in here. You know with you saying that it is contentious this issue of the 11 plus, is it contentious with the general public or is it politically motivated as it is in England?)

Well it is both.

(There are a few pockets in England where they still have it, in the county of Kent for example.)

You know, or you may not know that we are undertaking a major review of the post primary education including the transfer but to go down that road would take and awfully long time and I don't know that it would add to what you want. But just to set the back drop education is regarded very highly.

Secondly my view would be as well that because of the high unemployment that we have as well for so many years a lot of parents recognise that the only way out was through education. So in Northern Ireland you are not a success unless you get to higher education on a full time basis. If you take that only 30% of our youngsters go to a Grammar School the other 70% go to a non-selective school. Now the non-selective school wanted a 6th Form and up until the local management of schools some years ago a school could not develop a 6th Form unless they had the approval of the Department of Education the old DENI that there was a whole raft of hurdles that they had to jump one of which was they had to be able to offer I think it was the top 15 A level subjects which was quite a high hurdle to jump. So for a considerable period of time the 6th Form provision was contained. Local management of schools came in and the Department decided then that if schools were in charge of their own budget the two things didn't sit easily together that they had to have approval for a 6th Form so the approval was withdrawn so every school could offer a 6th Form. However at the same time GNVQ came on line and this gave the schools an opportunity that they had never had before. So we had a massive number of schools wanting to get involved in GNVQ and they have got involved in the typical ones, the Business, Health and Social Care and the Leisure and Tourism, the original five, but not the hard hitting ones, just Business, Health and Social Care and in those days Travel and Tourism.

(Pen and paper ones in fact.)

Ones that they didn't need a lot of equipment. The ones that we had a lot of difficulty with was the Health and Social care because they weren't employing specialists. They were employing ex Home Economics teachers. So colleges were competing now against another raft of players in schools. We wanted colleges in there with the GNVQ because for two reasons. Number one we wanted to make sure that the curriculum that was eventually developed in GNVQ was the correct curriculum and if you

are not in you do not have any influence and the second reason was going back to what I said earlier about education being highly valued and the will to get to higher education. While GNVQ, and indeed the National, had two aims One is to get up to higher education or to allow people to progress to higher education, the second and equally important is to allow them to progress into work and to go down a work based route. What we find in Northern Ireland is that a vast bulk of young people use vocational qualifications excluding NVQs to progress to higher education. So we felt within the department, and still believe the amount of work the government (and it was national government DfEE), QCA was putting in to get the GNVQ right and bringing in the Universities into this. That if colleges continued with the BTEC National route that our students the FE students would eventually be disadvantaged because the Universities would start demanding GNVQs as opposed to the BTEC Nationals. In addition to that and one of the big reasons for promoting the GNVQ was we are desperate to reduce the number of qualifications because of the plethora of qualifications.

(Well that was one of the original intentions of NCVQ when it was there.)

Absolutely and we are working to develop a national framework of qualifications. Now what I would want you to understand, Jim, is that we don't have a problem with BTEC National Diplomas where there is no GNVQ. Where we have a problem is where there is a GNVQ and the BTEC National because colleges were continuing with the BTEC National because, I taught it so I have an affinity with the National, because it is something they know they understand, they love and in the past there wasn't anything else and I think they served an excellent purpose, so I would want you to understand the National Diplomas in my view are valued in their own right. The difficulty is where you have two similar qualifications you have competition we have been continually told by higher education institutions that they want some sort of guarantee in terms of standards because I don't know what it is like in England but in Northern Ireland the University of Ulster, the University will tell you that they had a pecking order for colleges with a National Diploma so it may have been that they have taken students from this college with passes in National Diplomas but in another college they would have demanded distinctions, because they knew the differences. The other thing was that with GNVQ they liked the idea of the A level because it was the A level that gave them the grade. Now that GNVQs have similar grading they can see the articulation with the A level now that there is the externality with the GNVQ that also suits the Universities. So that is the history.

(I appreciate that, that more or less matches what my thinking was as to the thinking behind it and that was generated and this was discussed in Northern Ireland itself?)

Yes

(I do find it very interesting. Clearly I have an interest which is from the subject area and the Performed Arts came to National Diplomas very late and in fact they started at the same time as NVQs started. Consequently you would find, and I have found in the research so far that many of the lecturers in the further education college have just come to terms with the BTEC National qualifications and then they were pushed along into looking at the GNVQs)

And I have to say to you Jim in the early days there were problems with the GNVQs, particularly when they became so portfolio-based and that every element had to be covered.

(That's right you don't have to tell me I have seen it happen)

Absolutely I was in the inspectorate at the time and I was saying where is common sense in all of this? And the grading system with all of those four areas and themes and one third of the whole qualification for this.

I think we have come out of that I am not saying that we are right because I don't think that any qualification can sit in concrete it has to move but I think if we continue with qualifications which are similar to something like the AVCE then we cause all sorts of problems. We do not allow, schools are not allowed to run National Diplomas here in Northern Ireland unless they have been in National Diplomas before GNVQ, so there is no difficulty with schools there. We don't get the same criticism from the schools in terms of GNVQ they don't say this isn't what the students want this but this is what we continually hear, no we don't continually hear that's wrong we hear less of it, now that curriculum 2000 has come in and there will be, I believe, greater transparency and articulation and opportunities for young people, I think the way GNVQs are packaged alongside our A levels and indeed our NVQ gives so many opportunities I think we are just on the brink of really looking at a revolution in terms of curriculum.

(I would agree with you entirely. One thing that you said interests me because it does show a distinct difference between the arguments that have been pursued in England in the further education sector, where you were saying that you were urging the colleges to take on the GNVQs so that they could be doing as the schools are doing.)

No I wouldn't say that it was because I wanted them to do as the schools. What I wanted, if you step back and think that our Grammar Schools are very, very powerful organisations and so are some of our large Secondary schools they were the one that are going to be working with the Higher Education institutions. It was because I was frightened that colleges, not me the Department was frightened that the colleges were going to be disadvantaged and the students were going to be disadvantaged and I wanted them in as the 'powerful hitters'.

(This is interesting you see because it is the fact that you have got the Grammar Schools which made the argument form in that way Whereas in England they don't have the Grammar Schools and college starts in Further Education when evaluating what would happen in terms of their normal say City and Guilds and BTEVC Nationals and all the other groups of things that they did and GNVQ came in the feeling was that if everything was moved over and GNVQ was the only thing, there would be nothing distinctly Further Education with which to compete with the schools and the schools would win because mums and dads know where their youngsters are going and they would rather they stayed there.)

I haven't and there is an argument with that and I have listened to it from the FE sector and they do believe and I passionately believe that there is a market and there needs to be a market for National Certificates or a brand of National Certificates, Jim. What we were doing here in Northern Ireland was causing greater confusion because mums and dads were coming and saying we want our young people to progress to higher education. At least we want them to have the opportunity and whether they do, now we are hearing about GNVQ and we are hearing the University is involved with the GNVQ but we are not hearing about National Diplomas. I think the second thing that I have to say and this wasn't borne out from the Performing Arts it was borne out from the IT. The BTEC National Diploma in IT, one of the big pieces of work that the inspectorate did over the last number of years was to inspect a range of vocational areas at level 3. Now we didn't care whether it was GNVQ, National Diploma or National Certificate or indeed NVQ or indeed any certificate in City & Guilds that was regarded as a level 3 equivalent. What we found was, not me but my inspectors in Engineering and in IT, that the National Diploma options were out of date because obviously Edexcel had not invested in bringing those options up to date because of the huge expenditure on the GNVQs on IT and Engineering. So when we looked at what GNVQ promoted for us then we were in a much stronger position in talking to employers to say look here are units which articulate with industry so it is that history that is behind it as well.

My understanding, Jim, and I can't remember who told me this from Edexcel was that at some stage they were going to make a statement which I could live with but I thought I didn't see how it was going to work from Edexcel's perspective and as I say I don't remember who said it to me but they were continuing to develop the National Diplomas and the National Diplomas would be regarded for those people who didn't want to progress into higher education but wanted to progress into work.

(I can understand someone saying that. Yes, I have not heard them say it but they are very guarded in what they say and we are all a bit disenchanted with them)

The department wrote to Edexcel. It was BTEC then, a number of years back and said 'look we support National Diplomas but you are causing great problems. We are wanting a line'. Will BTEC continue to offer, for example, the GNVQ in Business and a BTEC National in Business and Finance. Will they continue to offer a BTEC National in Health and Social Care along side a GNVQ and we have a letter on file, Jim, which says no that where there is a GNVQ in that area there will not be a National Diploma, that was wonderful. We sent that out to our colleges but then we discovered that some external verifiers were going in and it was particularly in Art and Design and saying but all you have to do, you would really be better running with the National Diploma. All you have to do is write something which is a wee bit different and we will give you a National Diploma so you don't have to go down the GNVQ route. Now that caused confusion those were the messages, now yes OK I am elaborating what somebody else told me I didn't hear this, now obviously some teachers had in their minds that they wanted to stick with the National Diploma. What I don't understand is why we haven't expended the same energy, Edexcel hasn't expended the same energy in developing qualifications which are the old National Certificates because I think there is a massive.... particularly here in Northern Ireland, there is a massive potential for those. But here, obviously, the money comes from full time provision.

(What do you think of this thing that I have as the central point of the thesis that one size doesn't fit all and where as you might get a qualification that's perfect for Business Studies or Leisure and Tourism and such like but doesn't fit the Performed Arts at all. I mean how would you do postal sampling for

the Performed Arts the only thing that you could do would be something that is written and then you are not getting to the whole basis of what the thing is about.)

You are right I don't have a problem with that except you have got to remember that the qualification isn't just for that area of work it has to have an understanding by the parents, by the employer, by higher education. The one thing that, whether or not you like A level and whether or not you think it is the gold standard and I personally have my doubts in some cases - the one thing is and the same with GCSE because of this one qualification branded under A level or GCSE - it has credibility it has standing and that is what we need to have with vocational education.

(That is a strong point, the answer to that would be, therefore, if there is a mismatch between what further education colleges in the Performed Arts would prefer to do in this, then the obvious thing is to keep looking at the GNVQ until it comes right)

And that is what I have argued from 1992. This is going to be government policy. I was in the inspectorate. I wasn't in the position I am in now. So therefore I mean I wasn't directing policy but I kept arguing that if this is government policy then get in there and make the qualification right instead of fighting against the tide. I still believe that, I still believe that if there is something wrong with the qualification then its not 'ditch the qualification' but rather work with the QCA the subject advisory groups with the employers to make the qualification right as opposed to ditching the qualification. They will vote with their feet and will not take the qualification. I think that our colleges in Northern Ireland haven't come to terms with and it is one of the desires that I now have in this job is that we need to get across to the Grammar schools to the secondary schools that there is potential at age 14 and at age 16 for young people to be doing the bulk of their studying in school if that's what they so desire following the qualification that the schools offer. But they need to be given the opportunity to take units from Performing Arts to take units from Engineering, ICT and those units because of the equipment and because of the expertise and resources involved need to be done in an FE college. We haven't cracked this yet in Northern Ireland.

(What would you see are special problems of running programmes in the Performing Arts?)

Well one of the things that we are always saying every meeting we have for the National Diplomas, whether its generic or all the different subject areas, we find that we are all saying we are different, we are different. That happens with every exam really, one of the big things is the assessment because, of course the easiest and cheapest way to assess anything is through a written exam and of course with Performing Arts that's, I was going to say not possible it is possible but it isn't what we say fit for purpose. The way that most people have the big assessment in Performing Arts courses is through ,obviously, through performance and that is what colleges all over the country have been doing. They are usually geared towards one big production, one of many but the biggest one at the end of the course. So when we were looking in the latest model of the National Diploma for some means of assessment we wanted to keep as near to that as possible.

(Can you afford that though?)

So far everything seems to be going ahead. We have devised a system whereas part of the core units they have Performance Production, Performance Process and.....

(Are these going to be assessed?)

They are going to be assessed yes.

(Externally assessed?)

Yes

(So you bring in different people? We will come back to assessment afterwards because that is a thing in itself. Lets look first of all, you told me, I asked you what were the special problems for the Performing Arts and you have given me assessment but there is a whole range of other things like the delivery of it or the fact that you have a number of different disciplines, do you put them all together or do you have separate things?)

One of the other things that you always have to deal with and this applies to Dance and Music in particular is that let's say you practise it, say that you are learning an instrument a lot of that is practising that and acquiring a skill which is developing over a time, similarly dance, dance is a good example where, if you are studying dance ideally you would need to be dancing certainly every day but what do you do put those hours as part of the guided learning hours or what?

(You are thinking now of how you would structure this into a course?)

Yes how you would structure it into a course, yes. Then of course going right back to the beginning with Performing Arts and as we say that is Dance Drama and Music, do we treat them as separate disciplines? Do we expect students to do a bit of everything because you have to bear in mind as well that the students that come when they are sixteen will, most of them for example, will not have had any experience of dance at school so it is always a good idea to let them experience that and may be that's the direction they want to go in so to a certain degree the course certainly in the early stages of the students career is diagnostic.

(It's a taster course as well? Let's them try things out?)

Yes

(Of the three disciplines that you have mentioned do you have any idea or any thinking about which of these is the least likely to be taken kindly to?)

Well what happens, I would say that the majority of students come along to do drama and generally speaking you would get dance students that come from that body of people. Music students tend to start off as music students and stay as music students, but then on the other hand you may have another body of students who may not have had a happy experience with music at school but when they experience it delivered in a different way then they are happy to take that up.

(Let's just look at some of the things. They were just generalities, let's be specific now. When you came in here it was on the tail end of the new Nationals, now they were in fact different from the previous Nationals because they were subject specific and we had been told. We had been told that they were being allowed to go ahead only because they were fully subject focused)

That's right

(To make it different from the GNVQ. Now from the inside have you any observations?)

That may very well have been true but it seems there is a different emphasis now.

(How did that come about and from where?)

That emphasis would have come from QCA

(The subject specific?)

Yes

*(So ***** would be able to tell me about that?)*

Yes ***** would be able to tell you about that, although *****, it seems to me that we had a meeting with ***** at the start of all this a few months ago, shall I say I was surprised at how little anybody at QCA seemed to know about the Nationals. Well people we spoke to seemed to know about Nationals. *(They are obsessed with GNVQ aren't they? That is their thing?)*

It could well be the thing throughout QCA but I wouldn't have thought it was *****'s thing.

*(No I wouldn't have thought but your feeling is that this came from ***** as well isn't it? He didn't know much about the Nationals?)*

That's right yes. We were giving them a sort of general talk about them seemed to be clear that really we were telling them all they knew actually. Just going back to where Jo got the idea from and I am wondering now

(Well she had been told that obviously, I am going to ask her who told her)

It could have been that that came from not specifically from ***** I am just guessing here but it could have come from a general feeling in Edexcel and I wouldn't be at all surprised if that is what they were told at the time, you know acting in good faith and all that.

(Well of course in the last few months you have been busy rewriting that material and recasting it into a different shape, now who said to do that?)

Well that is quite a different thing, that is because it had to go in the National Qualification Framework it had to be 18, 12, 6 and big thing it had to have external assessment. So we took the opportunity as well, it had to be re-jigged to new templates and so on but we also took the opportunity to tidy up if you like what was already there. For example some of the units were quite clearly bigger than others some of them there was overlap with other units so we tried to iron that out, that kind of thing.

(It hadn't been tried at that point had it?)

Oh yes *(Were people using it?)* Yes yes

(So there is a second year coming into this now?)

Yes but of course the Section 96 which is the new name for schedule 2A they can now go on until Summer of 2002.

(So schedule 2A or Section 96, they have changed the name of that now, that's only a temporary arrangement, I have no knowledge at all of finances so I really am fishing for this information. Who draws the list up?)

That is the DfEE *(They draw it up, do they consult anyone when they draw up this list, do they consult QCA, do they consult the awarding bodies?)*

They don't consult me. I think we just get told because that was something you know obviously very important, well obviously important to colleges, but it is also very important to us to know how everything stands and it was a case of just waiting to find out what they said. There wasn't anyone here who seemed to have the answer they were just waiting for it to be published and then when it was published we would know.

(So somebody in DfEE made a decision about this, we do not know whether or not that person had taken advice from experts?)

I don't know

(Fair enough I can accept that in fact it has a ring of truth about it)

No I don't know about that but in a way to us it is a bit of a relief because the Performing Arts tutors have taken on having had the 1988 guide lines for donkeys years draft guidelines (87) I thought it said 88 on it, any way *(It was piloted in 87)* people having had them were happy, warts and all. Everybody had things they thought were wrong with them. Generally speaking, people were very happy they thought it was a good course, attracted lots of students. Then we introduce a new one, I do find Performing Arts lecturers are pretty laid back about things generally speaking, happy to take that on and then they get wind that it is changing again, less happy, but the fact that now it can go on, the second one can go on to the Summer of 2002 has reassured a few people.

(So the structures of the new one how, what suggestions, what policies were put forward for this, did you have to make suggestions you and your team have to make suggestions as to what how many core units there would be how many options?)

No Right we were told it was going to be 18, 12, and 6 the kind of discussion that we had and our input and the reason it was 18, 12, 6 was to fit in with the 6 units A level *(Who told you about this?)*

Well that was meetings within Edexcel but that, internal meetings, and as usual we were saying, oh and the number of core units.

(That was a given as well?)

That was given I think there were probably discussions about that but not at my level but the number suited us anyway. The discussion with us the input we had was 18, 12, 6 now one of the things that Steve both I felt very strongly was that if Performing Arts Students the ones that we know now doing National Diplomas all they want to do is Performing Arts full stop, that is what they want to do. You make them do anything else and they will vote with their feet, so we were very clear in our minds that 18 was the one for them. 12 would be less interesting we thought, although we don't know what will happen when it goes into colleges whether they will be just told they have got to do 12 A level key skills or whatever and we also thought that there was a good market for 6 unit because I think you get students, and particularly mature students, who are looking out for example for a bit of a drama course that they work or they are at home looking after children and they wanted a course which wouldn't take too many hours, which wasn't a full time course in which they could do their drama, dance. So what we have done with the 6 unit award for Music for example, we have got one in DJ Technology, one in Composing one in Performing one in Acoustics.

(Have you got a firm structure now? Then names and unit names and all the rest of it and has it been to QCA?)

Right it is at QCA now we have had some informal feed back and we will get the official feed back next week.

(How long are you here before you leave?)

End of March it has to be done by the time I go.

(The reason I was going to say, the reason I am asking that is to say that could I get a copy when it is agreed?)

I could send you a copy now but it is not a good time to send you it. The actual structure of it at the moment will probably change a little bit but not much.

(There is a number of things, obviously with something which is on-going the stories go floating by, now I want you to confirm or kill stories. I attended a meeting and [ND 6] told us all that it was to be called Performance, and there were two things. There were Performance and Music does that mean anything to you?)

No you would have to ask ***** about his titles because he went down one direction when we had the internal feed back from ***** is changing his mind, but certainly for music it is going to be Music and Music Technology *(And Popular Music is subsumed within Music?)* That's right yes. Although talking to ***** it may be that one of them is, some slight variation on that, it will definitely be Music and Music Technology but there might be some brackets through that some where and it might be actually, this is one thing he said, I had two lists one for Music one for Music Technology with slightly different core units the core units for music were Performance, Performance Process and Performance Project something like that and for Music Technology, Studio and that was where this project would take part which would be assessed and then there is a list of Music units and a list of Music Technology units now inevitably when you do the music units you start thinking oh yes but I bet some of them would like to do a bit of sequencing so you draw one maybe they would like to do a bit of that and then similarly music technology and then actually the two lists had quite a lot in common.

(And now another story that I heard was that the 18 unit would be called the Diploma and the 12 unit called the Certificate?)

And the 6 unit the award that's right.

(Right well that is interesting because the concept of the BTEC National Certificate is a totally different entity than just reducing, its not just to reduce number in the past it was for people who were in employment and it was equivalent to a diploma and the thing that made it equivalent was the fact that they were in work getting work experience which the others didn't have)

Well that has changed.

*(The next thing is let's turn our attention to GNVQ. The original GNVQ the 1995 model was found to be unsatisfactory so then it was re jugged, now bearing in mind what **** said when we were doing both GNVQ Mark 2 and the National Diploma Mark 2. The National Diploma had to be focused GNVQ didn't have to be focused and yet at a later stage I was involved in this and so were you. All of a sudden 14 units from the National had to be written in GNVQ speak, now how do we justify that one or can't we?)*

From my point of view I just hope nobody notices.

(Well I noticed you see and I thought)

Although if you look at it from a music point of view I couldn't honestly say to anybody if you want to do a music, if somebody said to me what should I do with the level 3 qualification in Music Technology I would say you have got A level, you have got the National Diploma but I wouldn't say

you have got the GNVQ. There is too much of it, there isn't enough Music Technology in the options and there is too much in the core, now it's a different story if you are going to talk about drama and dance because there is more of a bias towards that. The model that Steve had you will have to talk to him about this because he is going to change the model but it is more, you know you do dance or you do drama or whatever.

(We are getting back to mark 2 again aren't we?)

Yes

(Now here is a question for you, I am wanting to move into the area of assessment you and I both know how difficult it is making assessments nationally in performance in any of the performing arts but on the other hand it has got to be done some how. Now short of sending the same person to every college to see everything which is going on which is unrealistic or if you get a team of people who share the same objectives and are trained the same then that would be very expensive. Right which ever way you look at it it is already being done to a certain extent in A levels. I have no knowledge at all of A levels I have spent the last 15 years in this area of vocational education, you have been doing a lot with A levels recently is there anything that the A level can teach us in terms of assessment of performance?)

Yes, one of the things that is part of A level music I have introduced into the National which a listening test using a CD.

(That is not actually performance though its aural training?)

No it isn't

(I am just wondering if there was anything, I mean what is it in A level theatre studies they have a moderation meeting don't they?)

They have moderation meetings in fact you will have to talk to ***** about this but I do know that one of his arguments is 'if we can do this we do it for A level drama'.

(What will be happening?)

Can you just let me go and get my bit of paper as an aide-memoire.

(What is the latest on this new vocational GCSE?)

Well, there won't be anything on Performing Arts or Music, no mention of it at all.

(It's only manufacturing and things like that?)

It is all the ones that have got part 1, right here we go.

(We are considering assessment and I asked you if there was anything we could learn from the A level or GCSE assessment. You said that we can learn something from Theatre Studies?)

From the Drama point of view, I suppose one thing you could say we have learnt from music assessment and performance in external examiners is that it's too expensive. This is what we have planned, as a unit the music industry, where that is a written exam and I think that is fair enough, perhaps it doesn't go with the old philosophy but I would say one of the feelings I get about the new one is that there is more of a push towards the vocational aspects on these, in particular the music business, over and over again we are told that it should involve the music business so there is a unit which at the moment is called the Music Industry maybe the Music Business I can't decide and that has a written exam with a range of questions, multiple choice case studies that kind of thing.

(Now this is in what the new GCSE?)

No the new National both Music and Music Technology there has been a lot of stuff. You know people have written essays, articles about how these qualifications aren't vocational enough and of course there is massive music industry so the kind of stuff we ask them about is for example

(You ask whom?)

The students in this written paper making a business case for a product that kind of thing. There is also a listening paper which is very similar. Now it is on a CD and the type of questions we ask are actually similar to the music technology AS level so it is not traditional by any means it is not asking it's not dictation it is not asking people to write down melodies and chords down that kind of thing it is more likely to be what is the recording effect used here and a bit of formal analysis what instruments are used is this major or minor lines that is more traditional. They are all mixed in different types of music what kind of effects used here that type of thing and then the big one is the music performance process there are two units here in music sort of processing product really, in drama there are three but I think we might even make the two into one so it will be 120 hours

(A double unit so we are back to where we started?)

Yes Performance workshop

(A three?)

Wasn't that a slip up?

(Yes and it stayed there)

So what they will do in this student proposed assignment brief and they will have to hand in a proposal form and they will have to outline the roles that they are going to take in the music performance group send the proposal form to an external examiner who will approve it or otherwise. Students carry out the assignment and a vocationally relevant condition in the music performance group, then there is an authentication form which we use a lot now increasingly in Music Technology have to use it because it is so easy to down-load stuff from the internet.

(Let's take a broader view of all this, the final set of discussion that we have is about the assessment regime, the global assessment regime. You know of course that we have written this in terms of outcomes the achievement of outcomes according to certain pre-stated criteria now this of course is the outcome model, which is Gilbert Jessop's model of competence based, and yet the competence base model wouldn't have gradings in. So we really have a mixture don't we?)

This again is different from.

(How is it different from what we had before?)

Right what you do now, a student must produce evidence that they can perform as a soloist and a member of a group, let's start with that one. Then you get to the grading criteria which are E, C, A according to pass, merit, distinction.

(Have we got the points yet?)

We are fighting with the points.

(They have got them in the GNVQ the 9 points)

Yes what sort of points do you mean?

(A,B,C,D,E and we have that translates into points)

UCAS points do you mean? *(Yes)*

These will definitely translate into UCAS points yes. I thought you meant the more complicated thing of how you arrive at the overall grade, but that is not us and still being worked out.

(Alright so we have got A,B,C,D, and E. Tell me which other units are for external testing?)

The units, there is the Music Industry or Music Business, there are these two Performance Process and Performance whatever it is.

(That is the one where they will actually have to perform?)

Yes. But the Music Technology what we will be doing then they have to put forward a proposal and what we envisage is producing a CD or something equivalent

(Those doing traditional music will have to perform?) Yes (Now how will that be transported to the external examiner?)

Now I think that is still under discussion but, there will be sample visits but obviously there aren't enough people to do everything.

(You are doing sample visits in any case)

That's right yes

(So you will have to have a special sampling for that unit, is that what's going to happen?)

Yes but I don't think it is going to be absolutely everybody every time but all these things will be videoed which is straight forward now people do it as a matter of course.

(Except with things like dance they are not very happy about using video because you miss most of what is going on)

Yes, one of the things you say you have learnt about assessment what ***** often tells a story about the worst scenario is and A level Drama thing where the performance started and the examiner was horrified to see that every single person was dressed in black with the same outfit, so you have to ensure some means of letting the examiner know exactly what is going on.

Yes, well you see the verifier that I used to have, before he came he wanted a set of photographs so that is one way.

(are there other ways of doing that but that is as you say it isn't new it has been done, so really things are still ongoing aren't they?)

Yes

(Now what do you say about the student who said to me about a course once and which members of staff have said about the current state of play they are making this up as they go along?)

What do I say?

(Yes)

Well what do I say?

(There are two words you could start with either Yes or No)

It depends who they are for a start off, but I would say that when it comes down to the people the subject leaders who are actually writing they are doing it with the best of intentions

(Ah well you do because you have been told what to do, you have been given a policy steer)

No, now if we did what we had been told to do Performing Arts would now have multiple choice questions so you have to remember ***** and ***, both heads of department know exactly what people want, not everyone wants the same thing, but we know how it operates and try to get the best for everybody.

*(When you have been working on the new one how many people have formed a team for discussions or has it been done largely by yourself and *****?)*

No, I would say, you know we had a meeting in Leeds and there was one in Bristol that probably covered *(That was about it?)* Oh no there was common consultation all the time because also we have people going round giving inset and we get feed back from them and also not on this I don't think, but I do know and you know as well, that you get to write to every college that runs the course and ask their opinions. There has been a big survey just recently that I collated on the First, but I often get people saying why weren't we consulted, and the answer is normally that they were, but they either didn't get the letter or they didn't do anything about it.

(Usually it is on somebody's desk higher up)

That's right yes. And also, now the number of writers that we have got on we have a terrific number because of course in *****'s bit there is Circus skills and makeup so we have got all sorts of new writers. So it isn't just me and ***** writing it.

(No I didn't think you were I just looking at the lines of responsibility and such like)

ne thing that you do get is that you get people, there are so many things to take into consideration, you get people who want something changed simply because they do it like that without taking into account that they are the only college in the country that are doing it like that. Also there is the business of, and this is something that I am very conscious of, I will give you a good example, a lot of colleges now are doing DJ technology they get a lot of students in and they attract the funding.

Whether or not there is the rigour in those courses is another matter, so what I have done with the National and I am going to do it with the First, is that I have written units in that to make sure that there is the rigour and that it is the same everywhere and how I have done that is I have been round and got units from a handful of colleges. I have worked out myself what the basic outcomes are going to be, ***** from ***** wrote the evidence then I have sent it out again to any one who has rung me up and expressed an interest in it so they can have a look at it. I have done a lot of consultation for that, it is something that I feel strongly about, I think there is a need and there is an art to it and there is something to be learnt, I wouldn't want it to be just a cynical exercise that people draw in students and not teach them anything.

(Would you like, in your own words, to tell me what, quite apart from all the qualifications and things, what you as a person who understands performing arts, what you would imagine to be the problems you would encounter in setting up courses?)

I think firstly you would have to ask yourself what purpose the course had, what the purpose of the qualification was, which becoming clearer as you go through the accreditation process and you would also have to be clear whether you had sufficient, if it's a vocational qualification, whether you had sufficient experience or resources to run the range of options that so many qualifications do have. For example we have suggested re structuring the BTEC nationals to the awarding body in order to ensure that if you are doing a discipline specific path way it is very clear what it is that you expect people to have had to offer and what students would have to experience. I think one of the difficulties has been like in art and design most qualifications do art and design the vocational ones aren't particularly vocation and there is a lot of muddle and confusion as to what the purpose of the qualification is and I think there is an extremely potent model over time which was the atelier model this is our centre and we do it like this and that is fine as long as everyone who comes there is sufficiently clear that's what you do, that's very much the higher ed. model. That's like RADA does, RADA, Goldsmiths you know don't take portraits to Goldsmiths take a fish in a tank call it something like Damien Hirst. That's fine the problem with setting up courses in performing arts, I think, is that there is a tricky balance between are you training actors, singers or musical theatre or musicians are you giving them a general introduction in which acting is a major part or what. I think it's about what you think your cohort is prepared to do balanced against what sort of qualification if you are serious for example about taking them on, giving them work in the business the chances are they will be working in the entertainments industry they will not be working with Chekhov or Shakespeare and the key difficulty there is that you choose a qualification that actually then takes you into that vocational context. Most people work on cruise liners, very few people play the clarinet in a chamber orchestra.

(Let me ask you one or two specific things. This organisation here where we are QCA was the combined forces of NCVQ and SCAA, am I right? NCVQ started out life as part of the DTI didn't it?)
Yes it did.

(And it remained there until it became part of QCA. Is that right?)

No. When the Department for Education and Science became the Department for Education and Employment naturally NCVQ was scooped up along with that

(NVQs were the remit of NCVQ weren't they?)

That's right. The original remits for NCVQ. What happened with NVQs is relatively simple the original remit was to produce occupational standards using ideas from Gilbert Jessop. There is little point in having standards if you don't know if anybody has reached them, that was fairly logical, so you produce some style of vocational qualification and because of the period they wanted to produce a national bench mark and I think the DTI wanted them to produce something that they could do in the work place which wasn't a traditional qualification. Out of that comes GNVQ which is sector introductions but as that debate was going on the DTI pulled back the DfEE includes employment and therefore all qualifications are brought together that's the same logic brings both SCAA and NCVQ into QCA as a single body.

(Except that both organisations have had entirely different philosophies previous to this)

Yes

(Are there tensions in the mix?)

I think they reflect the tension that you would find in the outside world, I mean it's very clear that the vocational qualifications are less well regarded in many areas it's a class thing, in my opinion, than say academic qualifications. I am interested in a pilot for critical studies, critical thinking I should say which is an extinction of A levels getting rid of S level papers and doing these extensions to geography and science etc is fine and one of them will be critical thinking and it has the arts as one of its four focuses. Writing essays about logic and things of this sort isn't necessarily about critical thinking in the arts, there is musical critical thinking, there's artistic critical so I just think that gives you an example of how a particular focus for academe logical and analytical thinking is seen as being somehow intrinsically better than say the ability to compose. We all admire it but we know it is not intelligence, you and I might not agree with that but that is a common view and particularly if you move down as people would say into pop music, popular culture, so I think what the tensions you see here are at least following, you see a slow movement to a common purpose what a regulator are we OFQUAL? You have OFWAT, are we OFQUAL which is completely neutral we simply say is it

appropriate or isn't it? Do we have a more curriculum driver-mode and how do we balance that if we do so part of that is regulatory and part of it is working towards and thirdly what part do we play in raising the level of educational training, which is fairly patchy let's be honest, not particularly in the arts but in general. What role do we have in making sure that it happens, promoting government policy of access, employability all of those things. I think that broader agenda has removed some of the simple certainties that we had before when SCAA I think would have been seen as predominant to start with, I think it is a much better balance now.

(The balance is coming right now?)

Well just the sheer volume of qualifications, the sheer volume of the rest of it people go - "Oh my God. Gosh."

(One of the things I remember you wrestling with at one time you mentioned to me on a previous occasion, this was when you were in NCVQ, was the huge number of crazy qualifications say even in the performing arts that you were hired to look at and try to thin it down in some way, could you put a number to these?)

The sector advisory group, which covers media and communication, printing, performing and art and design etc.

(Creative arts thing?)

Yes creative industries sector they reckon that the Candice Miller research is probably accurate and it did bring a gasp of amazement when at the meeting, which I was present, they said between 14 and 14,500 qualifications.

(Who is Candice Miller and what is the research?)

They are a research organisation and consultancy

(Did they produce a report?)

Yes You could ring Candice and say this is what I am doing I have talked to ***** etc. She may say no I am sorry it's confidential but otherwise I am sure she can give you that. The point about it is that the complexity of the situation is very understandable because there are three questions that QCA is now starting to address. Is it a regulation system, the kite marks qualifications that takes no view as to whether they are or aren't overlapping or needed or whatever you just say yes they are kosher that's fine they come up to these criteria.

(Even though we have five which duplicate each other?)

You could say it and the government could say fine, government has not said that is fine, the government has said we have a rationalisation agenda which you need to be mindful of. So you also have to take into account then what constitutes a valid qualification for the framework, bearing in mind some things that people have forgotten and is probably one of the key changes I think in the next ten years, is letting the Skills Council unlike the FEFC, will be able to fund courses and programmes as well as qualifications. That is a really significant change, lots of what happens in the arts is not actually about qualifications it's about learning on the job it's about access it's about all sorts of things. And it is true that many actors do get trained at RADA it is also true that a huge number of performers don't get trained anywhere.

(Situating learning I think it's called)

Situating learning comes from, I did it at school, I had an interest in it at a Youth club, I did it through (?) I did some music with some mates in a brass band.

(The used to call it apprenticeship)

Well we did but we don't use that any more it's all gone down the drain. The point is though that you have got to ask yourself in performing arts what constitutes qualification and I think this is a key issue as to what you are writing about now because it's the first time that it's been written. It's pulled into very sharp focus and I think you would have to say if you're validating a national qualification with fit-for-purpose assessment available to all etc. funded by the government you are probably going towards value added qualifications.

(Is this because it's performed arts?)

No

(It would be just the same if it were Business studies?)

I would do exactly the same because what they would say is if it is vocational are they going to be employable at the end of it so there used to be a feeling that it was learning for its own sake just like the way in which research in universities has been shifted that has to be value added outcome so you tend to get into bed with industry if you are in chemistry now because they are dealing with it, in the same way with the performing arts you will have to say well we will teach you to act but you have also got to do some key skills, also got to do this that and the other you have got to look at the industry so

you are employable in the sector, rather than we are not going to fund you to be an actor unless you are particularly talented. I have some views about it personally but that is the way that it is moving so that there will be BTEC nationals become pathways specific national qualification that bench mark level 3 achievement.

(Can we be specific here it leads on from what you have just been saying. When I was on doing a lot of work for *** she had me on mark 2 of the nationals i.e. was the general editor after I had finished that contract, by the way when we all came together as a team she told us, obviously she had got the information from somewhere, that they were looking towards the continuation of the nationals obviously the change in government had facilitated this, but it had to be more vocationally focused and specific, hence the different names, compared to the GNVQ which would remain a broader qualification. Now that is what she said.

I had finished the job that I had which took many months and at the end of that time she said to me there are 14 of these units which we had just put together and I now want you to take them away and do a GNVQ version of each which that meant vocationally specific, I am going to ask her, I haven't interviewed her yet, how do you reconcile what you told us at the start.)

I think there are two things, I think there has been a recent Edexcel view that you could have a single qualification that covered GNVQ. I need to draw you a picture. What we did was to try and define places, This is I think critical. We tried to find what constitutes framework, therefore, Dearing says - somehow shoulder-to-shoulder, all facing in the same direction, one end starting at academic the other one going towards occupational. All these qualifications, in whatever line-up side-by-side with not much overlap. Well we know that in the general vocation bit in the middle, he had three strands, he had academic, occupational and this great big slough of stuff in the middle. You and I know that they overlap, that they mix and match, it's about the purpose that we do it for, not just the content, the use of the voice or use of breath in instruments, we say there is quite a different model.

[With a sketch(We?) the arts department here in QCA would say that most accreditation forms explain how academic to how occupational the purpose of the qualification is. They then say how general is the intention or how specific is the intention, dark room theory and practice, A level art and design (photography). General personal response dark room theory and practice specific, probably down here somewhere because its more close to occupational than it is to that. You draw another axis here and it's not specialist its simply specific qualification only says we cover this little bit where these are about the sector the GNVQ down this way and A level clearly is also in a sense very general but the A level is more up that one and the GNVQ is more towards the centre.]

(We are into vectors here aren't we?)

[The other one that you have is theory and practice. We don't care, we don't mind what the content is because that is a matter for the awarding body we adjudicate what they say but we would like to know. For example you say it's occupational NVQ, dead occupational it has to be work based practice it's not about theory unless there is a bit of it and we know that it is quite specific so it's down there. We also know for example the GNVQ is not occupational it's general it's sort of vocational and there is a mixture of theory and practice so it's somewhere round here. A-level, a mixture of theory and practice but a lot of theory in it it's quite general so that's up there and the point about it is, if you can see where you place a particular qualification within that sphere, you say to me I want to do a six unit award in acting skills, circus skills, it's quite specific, we know that it's not going to have a lot of theory because acrobatics is acrobatics you don't need a lot of theory, you know that you have to hold on, you know that you have got strong hands otherwise you only do it the once! So that is down there and we know that it is quite specific also know that it's occupational so that you can say, right that one goes there it's down to there and the specific bit brings it in but it is not as far down as an NVQ because it's not work based competence or you could say.]

(You are saying NVQs are about there?)

I think NVQs are about down there because they are absolutely practical, absolutely specific. So that's an NVQ in which case in performing arts you could say this is an acting skills unit there is a unit on voice there is a unit on movement there is a unit on characterisation and there is a unit on rehearsing and working with directors. Its 'practical' and I can put it right there then I can say to you in that case, the sort of assessment the sort of support, the sort of resources and the sort of deliverers I can tell you what that ought to be then check whether the qualification does it, I am perfectly happy for you to say, "Here is a BTEC national in performing arts (acting) because you chose to specialise but you looked at a whole range of multi-skilling and other disciplines and all the rest of it so I take it more towards the middle". It's more general, it's not so specific it's still down here but I am over in this vector *(So it's a GNVQ then?)*. GNVQ would be further along there and my point about this is, your original

question was how would they prepare, centres would prepare, in selecting the appropriate qualification for the needs of your candidates.

One last thing, the FEFC inspectorate pleased with this because they were saying you could look at schemes of work in an identical way and see if the schemes work were in the same vector that the qualification is meant to be in and actually if you look at GNVQs they are very often their schemes of work are up in the academic sphere far more than they should be, because it isn't academic.

(Can I just ask you one thing, I like this, my point I was going to ask you is, that which you have just drawn there represents the current state of A level, would I be right in saying if you back tracked this model 20 years that would have been along there?)

Absolutely and in fact you could slide these 20 years ago you would have slid most of that way you would have slid that downwards because huge amount of more academic qualifications and yes they were general and yes there were some specific but that's constant.

(The next question I wanted to discuss is assessment and you also mentioned Gilbert Jessop earlier on. Gilbert Jessop was the concept of competence based assessment. Competence based assessment is not what we got is it?)

Well you have in NVQs the only areas you haven't got is independent.

(But we don't have it in the nationals because the nationals started before that came up in any case, although the very first guide lines for performing arts had an attempt as some sort of criterion reference testing rather than norm reference testing)

But at Excel they couldn't agree what to do

(Well this was earlier this was just as NCVQ got started and NVQs came on as well so they had inherited what had been running and it came from TEC & BEC. That having been said they also wanted gradings. Is it theoretically possible to have pass merit and distinction within a competence based system?)

No it's not

(Because pass merit and distinction means you are automatically comparing people with other people who have done rather better)

Well no I wouldn't put it like that. I would it say again it is to do with the strict evaluation of what the purpose of the particular qualification is. If you say it is simply about, the easiest explanation for this is there can be nothing more than pass or fail for example on flying an aircraft with passengers for aspects of health and safety you either have done it or you can't do it.

(But some people can do it better)

Hold on. If you then said there is a qualification which isn't about competence but it is also about aspects of employability it's about the job and the company then you have added an extra factor which allows you to talk about the quality of that. So, if I say to you there is a minimum threshold of competence to play the trombone for this job but we are in a big band and therefore there has got to be bags of teeth and smiles and all the rest of it the competence is the trombone technique the rest of it is about performing as a trombonist. Now performing as a trombonist is not a competence it's a qualitative judgement because it will change over time what people want in the 20's they'll want something different in the 50s to the 80s so I would say that most NVQs are not despite their claim to be actually competence based.

(Just theoretical concept it's a construct isn't it?)

You can have, I believe, competence based qualifications in something like welding but working as a welder has a degree of qualitative and peer agreement without that it's rather like saying what NVQs do you have in the arts at the moment you have things like working as a musician not a musician but working as a musician which includes elements like getting jobs getting an agent networking knowing what's going on keeping up to date with your practice and so on. So the theory, and it's interesting that the government is now looking for technical certificates and modern apprenticeships, to teach the underpinning knowledge and theory because a true NVQ assumes all that that wouldn't assess it. I think the key question, actually, is - the biggest change is the number of qualifications that now claim to be outcome-based rather than syllabus based and most submissions here tend to blur teaching delivery schemes-of-work syllabuses with the outcome, and if you are very purist, you simply say 'can-go - can't-go'. It's a simple 'can-go - can't go'..

(Let's get into the theoretical world then. You have given me a good rational explanation of the grading and how that, in fact, is judging something else which the basic competence doesn't do but we now look at the real world of what is currently going on in vocational qualifications. There is a dislike of the external tests among the front line troops. They worry that they will be faced with the written tests which miss the whole point of what the qualification is about. If we look at your diagram there)

This hasn't happened

(No it hasn't happened but as far as I understand, I told you I don't know anything about mark 3, clear agreement hasn't been reached yet?)

We have got a proposal on the table at present. What it says is, say in art and design there is a balance between knowing stuff about the industry and the sector and how you get work which is frankly knowledge and you would be given case study type questions, you wouldn't be given an essay but you would be asked how would you go about getting a job what would you do what does this mean balance of this talk about it, not least because it's a communications business so if you either write or talk about it it's not a problem. In art and design for example you bring together your art and design work. One of the elements of the 18 unit external assessment is some work given to you by a client which is after all what a graphic designer or a fashion designer guy does but you get given that and you have to do the work and present it and interestingly there is an increase for the waiting in terms of presenting because there is no right or wrong answer in all honesty can you convince your client that is what you really want to do. So that it isn't an absolute outcome here's my picture do you like it or not? Or is good or skilful because in part the level of skill is determined by the brief.

(Is it appropriate?)

Exactly. Therefore the portfolio and the work that you have done also needs to be brought into account, so there is always portfolio work, there is always an element of working to briefs the extra thing that we think is very important is the work that was done on the foundation diploma for art and design which was to include a statement of intent. If you are going these days, to actually work in the industry not just train for it but actually work in it, you know you have done it all you have got to go out and get your work you cannot just sit on your backside and wait for the phone to ring. Therefore the more you know about your strengths and weaknesses the more you are aware of what you do as a performer the more you can be your own agent. Therefore particularly in music technology, part of the assessment approach is to say we need a statement of who you are of what you do what you are intending to do that sent out beforehand the external examiner comes, listens to the concert, looks at the performance, goes to the exhibition whatever it happens to be and says, "well Jim Joseph says this is what I am going to show. This is my best work, this is who I am presenting myself as, a wonderful fellow". Even if it is fairly limited in range". It wouldn't necessarily matter because you could be exceptionally talented in one area and base your whole career on it, fine. However, for a lot of actors, there may be a range of things. You are a better generalist you are not wonderfully charismatic in a single area. So I think the statement of intention with a sort of diagnostic element to it is good. Tell me what you are going to do I will have a look at it and then we can evaluate how well it went.

(On the basis of what you have said)

On the basis of what they have said.

(So you are not looking for a national standard then are you?)

We are looking, I think we are because what we develop over time is a range of external verifiers who get together and say these are the sort of employability skills this is what we have talked to them about we have used, I have suggested that Excel take some casting directors and you ask them, "What do you look for? Would you take them?". They have done 18 units as an actor and what do you think and why have you made that decision as opposed to that one.

(Of course you are aware from the Edexcel viewpoint and the people that I have spoken to there quite clearly they are saving money and they won't therefore be able to do as you suggest)

No

(But that's their problem)

That's their problem. That is my point if we go back to the original one about what resources do I need what are the problems that I am going to get setting up the course that applies equally to an awarding body.

(That suggests to me also and the diagram that you have shown me is good in as much as it places things and it allows you to think of them in a certain way. The GNVQ therefore is not seen to be a direct rival imposed upon the national diploma as at one time it looked like the intention was, it's a different thing and since it's not that vocationally specific then it's more likely to be taken up in a big way in schools where they didn't have these resources.)

No not necessarily. You could argue that the structure of the BTEC nationals has been 18, 12, possibly 6 now subsets like nested Russian dolls, if that is the case we have considerable concerns about a 6 unit specific award that is actually general. You know because it doesn't seem big enough to practise it to get to a level of skill that is employable unless it is very, very specific.

(There is a number of highly specific 6 unit skills)

That would be one thing but the suggestion is that it is in fact just a stopping off point and you only do the core units or general units.

(I didn't know that, I wasn't aware of that)

Exactly, that was not the arts view but this is what has been suggested broadly, in order to aid retention to which my answer to that is, "rubbish if you want to be an actor you don't go off and if you do go off, well then you shouldn't be an actor, if you haven't got any stickability." I don't practise means it just won't work go away do something else, do something useful, don't come to me, I don't want to know. 'Oh I am afraid I haven't rehearsed I haven't learnt my lines'. You would only get a part once wouldn't you and then you would get the bullet. So the point is that irrespective of how the 6 unit qualification goes, you could see a model that said there are those that have a vocation they know they are going to be dancers. They knew they were going to be dancers, they have always known, it doesn't matter what Mum or Dad says, they are going to be dancers. They are going to play the trombone they are going to do whatever it is. The other cohort are people who want to be working as performers but they are not quite sure where their strengths and weaknesses lie, they are not quite sure whether they are capable of working in the industry they might want to be an actor to which my answer would be you do some A levels and some other stuff and an acting course as well that's fine but you know you can tell they don't have the stickability they don't have that X factor that says I am going to be an actor, I don't give a damn what you think, I can look like a brick, I can have a squeaky voice I don't care, I want to be an actor and that is what they will do. The point is that you could easily see a 6 unit GNVQ allowing them to look at the industry and take some serious questions about where they might or might not go because a BTEC national now is really quite focused if you want to do a music national in acting and musical theatre if you want to do it in music or music technology that's what you are going to do so if you drop off the twig you will not achieve because that is all you have been taught to do. So my point is I don't think that it is a competitor I think the GNVQ now allows people a broad access and entry point a diagnostic area and they could easily then follow on with a 12 unit national or shift it around, we have tried very hard in the arts to make sure that people can move between say a 6 unit GNVQ and a more specialist thing because you have got the talent. You and I know, "I want to be a star" dear boy you won't be, just trust me, it's profitless and if intention got you work well then we would be millionaires.

There is a final couple of critical factors. There is an expectation of progression that has to be explicit in how qualifications are drafted assessed and so on so. In the old days you could take three A levels you did them and then you went to university and you did something completely different. Vocational qualifications in the arts have to show how they can move you on to either further training or job or what ever. The second thing which is very interesting, the government has been putting huge sums of money for the first time in over 25 years, into a view that the arts offer large numbers of people a range of skills which make them in this day and age more flexible more creative and more likely to be employed. Those two things are very interesting, the GNVQ even the BTEC national will allow you having done acting to run a theatre company.

(You and I would know this but is this official, where would I be able to quote the officialdom of this? Document such and such)

Well it's not, it's given in guidance to us as our remit.

(It's given in guidance but your name isn't in this no name is involved so I could say that an official of QCA said)

Yes absolutely, the public understanding of the remit and through officers of the QCA, progression issues, employability issues, are to be addressed by vocational qualifications absolutely no question about that and DCMS (?) support it as well publicly. We have some very large projects called creativity in the arts and employability in the arts and it is to do with the change of ethos which says arts- based, IT-based. That sort of style of working is supported by a lot of involvement in the processes and procedures ways of working that the arts give you.

(The arts if you are to be successful in them and trained in them teach you to be a self learner and self motivator)

Exactly and that's what I was going on to say. We offer the key skills and I would say that one of the major changes you will see in all the vocational arts qualifications is that there is a sense of free lance. What would you need, you would need to be numerate enough, communicative enough, managing, proving your own performance, problem solving, group working, all those things are the basis for multi skilling, you could work in marketing, you could work in business you could do all sorts of

things. The old way is of a single skill. End stop - then you did another one. End stop, that's not how modern companies work and you don't even stay in the same sector for most of your life you are in three or four.

'New Developers' Interview Transcript Number 5

(You are an Art and Design person in yourself, but you did have some experience of the Performing Arts as a young girl, you played the fiddle and you danced?)

Yes, all that kind of stuff, yes.

(So that puts you in a good position. Would you like in your own words, to say what you saw as the needs, when you were put onto organising Performing Arts courses, it's a bit historical this.)

The first thing to say is before I was involved in doing the Performing Arts courses I had been working on the Art and Design, this may seem a digression but I think it is quite relevant and germane to the debate. So therefore I approach Performing Arts with a, with the perspective of being aware that there was a need to rationalise what was going on at level 3 qualifications with a view to getting courses through the new National Framework. At the time the criteria by which things were going to be selected were pretty damn vague.

(This was a GNVQ at first?)

No, I mean I am only going to talk about the National Diploma but you are right to say GNVQ is relevant because what had become clear to me from discussions with QCA and ***** was that it was unlikely that QCA would accept qualifications that were very much in the same area but structured differently. Now the problem for the National Diplomas in Performing Arts was that they were as constructed originally, very similar to what had been developed by what was then NCVQ in terms of the Performing Arts GNVQ, and so when I came on the scene and been charged by Edexcel to look at how to revise the National Diplomas in Performing Arts it seemed to me that the only way to deal with it was to somehow better differentiate from the GNVQ, so that it was possible to offer, have available within the suite of qualifications that Edexcel produced, qualifications that were suitable for different types of market, if you like, so qualification that were, so what I did was to kind of approach the task by thinking if the GNVQ is something which is predominantly generalist, then the way to go with the National Diplomas was to make them more specialist.

(Did QCA have any view point on this?)

Well obviously because of my long association with Paddy I made sure that he knew what I was thinking about.

(So you wouldn't be wasting your time?)

So there was no time wasting going on, certainly ***** seemed at that time and I think continues to be, sympathetic and aware that there are students who need different things. There is the student who doesn't know what they want to do particularly in detail, but knows they want to do something in Performing Arts, and there is the student who goes there to dance or whatever, so it seemed then that if it was possible to, I mean if it wasn't possible when we were first working on it to have that in one qualification then it seemed sensible to better differentiate and so work with the National Diploma on the assumption of taking it down a specialist route would be a way of preserving it as well.

(There is an interesting point here, in as much as you said that Edexcel asked you to do this. Now the perception in most colleges and in Edexcel before this was that it was the intention to drop Nationals and have GNVQ as a take over. How did we get to this stage?)

How did we get to that stage, well you are absolutely right that when the GNVQ was first developed right back in 92 / 93 and I was involved with the Art and Design GNVQ working for NCVQ in 93 that's when I started.

(That's when they started as well for NVQ)

Yes, so at that point, of course there wasn't a Performing Arts one because it wasn't one of the original five subject areas, and certainly the understanding at NCVQ at that time was, because of the range of courses that existed in the vocational area, for example City & Guilds, 365, 278's, you know and then the many BTEC qualifications rather than, how can I describe this. That was really a long time ago. There was the perception at BTEC that they were the natural home for all general vocational qualifications because that is what they did, they should have been given the power to produce something national, but of course they weren't, NCVQ were put in and developed GNVQs modelled on NVQs so they had performance criteria.

(Yes, I am aware of that, they were in fact DTI at that time)

They were funded though the Department for Employment yes. So because of the NCVQ coming in over the top there was the worry that at both BTEC and City & Guilds that this would take over. You know that the GNVQ would be it, the gold standard the Government had developed it what was the point in having anything different. Now, for whatever political reasons, and I am not party to that, NCVQ or the government didn't decide at that time to scrap everything else because awarding body

still had the power to, although they were not required to put anything through the national framework so the kind of accreditation board now exists, it didn't then exist and all that was required was for qualifications to be funded through the FEFC and go on what was then called the schedule 2A list, so that finally did. I don't know quite where the worry came from except as a kind of political power thing.

(Well it was certainly made known to us, who were leading different sections within colleges, that this was going to happen and obviously it was told to us by the principals and the policy makers within the college and then it was rather joyously accepted when the government changed, that the new government had made it plain that they were going to allow a certain amount of the other qualifications to remain, and I must admit in my possibly in naivety I had thought that this was the generating factor in having a further go at the Nationals. We are not in a position to know this?)

No, but I think there always is a major rumour mill going on and it is the case that whenever there is a new regulation system applied, I think people do feel that it is going to take away power from a local level, certainly I stuck my foot in it 'big time' in relation to Higher Nationals when I was at Edexcel because I understood the policy that was likely to be applied in relation to higher nationals being one that would affect Higher National provision in Higher Education as well as Further Education and I stood up on my head at an organisation called CHEAD, I cannot remember what it stands for, Colleges in Higher Education in Art and Design kind of forum which has all the vice principals of all the colleges that offer art and design right through the country, 75 odd people there, 'muggins' here stands up and says that Higher National Diplomas are going to be only available through BTEC and it caused the most appalling row. I got my wrists slapped because it wasn't true, Edexcel don't have the power to prevent universities developing any old higher national diploma they like and accrediting it because they are validating bodies in their own right.

(And some have done this)

Oh absolutely, and will continue to do it until, if it happens, the level 4 framework requirements that QCA is operating actually bites the HE and I don't know whether that will happen, but anyway we are digressing slightly.

(No, no this is very valuable, it is pertinent to the kind of things that I have been looking at)

It is still the case Jim, and you will know if you have spoken, as far as I am aware the latest information that I have is that none of the National Diplomas that Edexcel have produced now recently have yet been accredited into the national framework.

(That's correct because they are changing them again)

Yes I know, but I am saying, the Art and Design ones are in. They have been submitted, I am not too sure whether the Performing Arts ones have

(The 18 12 and 6 unit ones have been because Paddy was talking to me about his enthusiasm for 6 unit ones)

But they haven't yet been accredited formally the letter has not yet been received by Edexcel saying that they are a goer.

(I understand that they have extended the life of these for a further 2 years)

The existing ones the ones that we worked on.

(The ones that we worked on yes)

Well I am not surprised because there needs to be a kind of transition I think.

(Out in the field you can imagine that the people who have to make this change are not very happy that it is going to change again)

No sure

(But on the other hand there is financial pressure, the only way they will get the money)

Yes but I mean to be fair to the people out in the field, I must say I haven't been around in this revision of the Performing Arts ones but I have for the Arts & Design ones, and certainly what we have done we haven't really changed the units much.

(One thing that happened which I was always interested to ask you and never got the opportunity. One of the last things that I did for you was that you asked me to convert some units into GNVQ speak and I wondered how that could be reconciled with the view point of a vocational focus for the national and a generality for the GNVQ because they were vocationally focused units)

I again don't know what the situation finally has been with the GNVQ as it exists for Edexcel but I can draw you a diagram. How do I explain this. Well it seems to me that within any of the kind of areas Media, Performing Arts it would be possible to say that if you like this is a kind of sketchy idea but that is the domain of the subject area. So if that's Performing arts there, then what the GNVQ as I kind of worked on it and certainly when we were working on, as I was working for ***** on the most

recent round of revising the core, was to say with the GNVQ if you like this is, the core has to be that which is kind of central to Performing Arts and if we imagine that it was possible to divide this up into bald disciplines so that this tranche is music, this tranche is drama and this is dance or whatever, however big you cut it up that model operates. So the GNVQ is based on the idea that you start with something which is common, where this overlaps, and it probably should be drawn like a Venn diagram, and the time I was working on the optional units for Edexcel, I was imagining that there would be as it were two types of optional units. There would be optional units and if you like this kind of dimension is specialism, so this is kind of generality and this is specialism over there. So that there would be optional units that were kind of broadly general so that it would be introducing you to for example the different disciplines of classical and jazz and then beyond that there would be a range of possible specialist units that were very specific so that they looked at Latin American or Modern Classical techniques.

(So there would be the possibility of a small segment at the end specialised?)

Yes. So that's the kind of model that I was working on.

(That was followed through wasn't it?)

Yes and when you said that you were converting nationals *(I was in that bit?)* You were in that bit and so in my head and I hoped that it was communicated at least in part to the people involved that the national is a different animal from this.

(The national is that?)

The national I see as being this so it is within, this is all within dance and that there is a bit of a core that is going to overlap with one for music and so on and so forth.

(I think that makes eminent sense. Just looking at the GNVQ, just so that I get my mind right on this, there was an original intention for GNVQ to start in 1995 with a certain number of subjects, what were they?)

The very original GNVQs, they started in 93 in a pilot form, and they were Business, Art & Design, Health & Social Care, Leisure & Tourism and Manufacturing.

(Then at a later stage we had the first go at GNVQ Performing Arts?)

That's right I think 96 or 97 yes 97 I think the documentation is the pink one.

(It didn't take off very well at all)

No, poor take up

(Then there was another version mark 2 version and that is the one we are talking about here)

Yes OK

(And there hasn't been anything since, that mark 2 version has been refined and it is now in use)

No, there should be a mark 3 version. *(When did that happen?)* That was being worked on, that was launched for 2000. Which is new model GNVQ, new model AVC

(Is that what you were working in there?)

That's what I am talking about here.

*(OK but there was a little bit of time when, before you took on this, when in fact **** was managing this, and I had done some bits for him because you were a bit unhappy about some of them and you talked me through it)*

Yes

(That's it, that constitutes a mark 2, but that never got out did it?)

Are you sure?

(I am certain of that, it never got out. People were working on the original the 1997 version they looked forward to something happening but it didn't because this was what was to happen, and that that's what is out now. There are in fact colleges completing the 97 model second years now and introducing this 2000 model)

Yes you are right. What happened was, when you were first called on to write things for **** it was before they had revised the model for GNVQ and so your problem was that you were brought in then they revised the model and then the whole thing had to be rewritten because nature of the way the units changed.

*(That's right but the other thing was that they had the Subject Advisory Committee with (FM) and I attended that with ****, I remember there was lots and lots of argument about the content and I remember (DH) walking out saying he wouldn't bother with this at all because although they were saying it could be delivered in any subject area he thought there was too much, and a lot of other people thought so, and I thought the same myself. Too much Business Studies in it and not enough actual performance.)*

Yes, yes. Absolutely, I must say that everybody whom I knew when I was first involved in the GNVQ Performing Arts felt that way and certainly I know from *****, speaking to ***** at that time, he and ***** were absolutely convinced that there needed to be a different type of GNVQ with more Business Studies, because, the vast majority of people working in the field of Performing arts do not work as front line performers therefore where was the skill that they were going to gather about how to be an administrator how to be whatever it happened to be if it wasn't made available. So you could argue that there is a major dilemma because on the whole young people are not attracted to doing that they are attracted to doing the performing (*That's how you get them on the course*) and they fall back on the admin when they discover that they haven't quite got up to the mark, they are not just getting those auditions. I mean it is terribly difficult and I think the problem with the GNVQ was that when it was first developed the 1997 model was that it was very tightly structured and there was a hell of a lot to get through and it made students kind of vote with their feet a bit.

(And of course this wasn't helped I imagine, and I am giving my own view point here, but it wasn't helped by the teachers and lecturers who had only maybe a few years previously come to terms with the new form of courses in the BTEC course and then they persuade the universities to take it seriously and then somebody comes along and says no you are not going to have that you are going to have something else. Let's move on. You have had experience of NCVQ and QCA?)

Yes, and SCAA

(So you saw them joined together?)

I was involved....

(So there were tensions there?)

Yes I know that, yes my relationship with people at SCAA was not in either the Art & Design or Performing Arts it was actually in relation to Design & Technology because one of my other hats has been to be a Design & Technology specialist. So the work that I had done in the past for SCAA was all on developing materials for 14 year olds as part of SATs, so I was involved in relevant tests, tasks and assignments and stuff like that and advising on the National Curriculum so it was kind of lower level stuff. I am not intimately aware of the personal tensions that existed when the organisation was merged but I can say that there was. The merger resulted in I think in a huge lack of clarity and a lot of uncertainty in the first kind of two or three years as to what the new merged organisation was there for in its entirety and I think the kind of, that is to say that the emergence of QCA as a regulatory body is something that I think is still going on.

(What would you say was the difference between NCVQ what it could do what it's remit was compared to QCA?)

Not SCAA

(No I wasn't thinking of SCAA)

Well I think it is important to think of them as three different things.

(All right include them)

Another diagram OK. If that was SCAA and this is NCVQ and this is QCA as it first emerged and this is QCA maybe as it will tend to become. So this is SCAA. SCAA's main function was to define in either in specific or in general terms curricular content, so if you think about A levels and GCSEs, SCAA was in the business of developing the criteria, and I am sure you know all about that, so if you think about that as the criteria and you think about this as the National Curriculum so you are talking programmes of study and assessment criteria, now that legacy brings, I think, a particular mind set around detail, well I say mind set or even an internal conflict, because the National Curriculum when it was first developed was hugely detailed and impossible, completely unwieldy, but nevertheless they were determined and have continued to be determined to produce something which is really quite tight, whereas this is incredibly loose. (*That is the A level and GCSE*) The criteria against which awarding bodies development are really very very loose. Now if you think of over here NCVQ on this side you have got your NVQ development and then you have got your GNVQ development and you have also got your key skills. Now, NVQs are developed on the whole in association, they are developed by lead bodies or now National Training Organisation. (*Taken the lead bodies over?*) Yes there is a new whole system is different but basically speaking, they are developed and they are accredited by NCVQ, so the NVQs are designed by an industry sector. So METIER are involved in producing NVQs that meet the needs of industry and so they are really heavily industrially sponsored and they have to be written to a particular structural framework that used to be very tight but as now become much more loose

(And that structural frame work was handed down from the NCVQ?)

Has been developed yes. So you have got a framework here which says you have got five levels and they are based on units with elements and it is still more or less the same, I can show you some NVQs that I have recently written if you like.

(No we will not get into that. How does it become different at the present time, is that in the manner of assessment?)

No, well we can talk about what happens there but if we talk about history at the moment so they are developed by industry sectors. So what NCVQ does and how it works that system is a little bit like the way that the A level criteria are written but you have the great and the good within any sector that there are steering groups and there is a subject officer and so on. The subject officer here, unlike the A level people, are not specialists they typically have responsibility for a range of sectors so one bloke may do, engineering, ship marine this and that, petroleum extraction, a load of different things. GNVQs are different and they are much more like National Curriculum. And Key skills are much more like National Curriculum in that they were commissioned, written and developed in-house by NCVQ, like national curriculum was developed in house by a committee of people by SCAA. So when things merged the main tension has been I think in between this and this the kind of culture of the A level approach and the GNVQ approach. And I think it is also worth mentioning at NCVQ there is a research arm and an evaluation arm that were kind of just the research had been there for a while the evaluation hadn't but that became much bigger and has become much bigger in the kind of current QCA as it is kind of emerging.

(Just one point here, I find it interesting what you have pointed out how these are in with tension because there I would originally have had the perception that that goes with that and it started out like that?)

It started out trying to provide
(A generalised version of that?)

Yes, it was meant to provide, GNVQs have always been designed for delivery in an educational context based around what happens at work *(GNVQs?)* yes GNVQs

(I am trying to reconcile the based around the work bit, but the school which would be delivering it.)

The idea of the Performing Arts GNVQ is to give people skills that are like those skills that are used by a professional practitioner

(It comes from the old TVEI this business doesn't it?)

Yes absolutely TVEI or

(Where would other qualifications such as the BTEC National come in that diagram?)

That is where you have to know look at what the regulator does. QCA is a regulator.

(They are a validator?)

These were, this organisation, SCAA always existed, was an accrediting body they used to accredit A level submissions from awarding bodies. So some board A level music has to be submitted to the committee at SCAA to be accredited, now that model is what QCA now does as a regulator.

(Now that means that an organisation such as NCFE in the north east in Newcastle who wish to become an awarding body would have to submit things to QCA) Absolutely Yes (and that has happened as far as I can see)

Yes the regulation applies to different things. It applies both to awarding bodies and also, not National Training Organisations, but it does apply to all awarding bodies so not only do awarding bodies have to be regulated but also all of the awards that they operate have to now be regulated and accredited under the national framework.

(Which is now called 96 or so mething isn't it?) I don't know. *(Section 96 instead of schedule 2A)*

Quite probably

(One of these sudden changes of name that confuses people)

Yes, so now you have got the national framework which is kind of up here *(NQF isn't it?)* Yes

(Now the National Training Bodies, am I right in assuming that they are going to take over the role of FEFC, what is it that is taking over from FEFC?)

A good question, I don't know.

(I thought it was that, I may be wrong you see having been six years retired now there are a number of things which are peculiar to the colleges which I am not up to the mark with. I will ask around on that)

The thing, other bodies that now exist that are worth knowing about are FEDA which has now changed its name to...

(Did it come from FEU?)

Recently. It is now called the Learning and Skills Development Agency because they happened to send me a very nice mouse mat!

(Don't worry about the 3 'Ws' just put the middle word down for me there, I will look it up on the web site)

So their job is to, they get money directly from government and their job is to provide training within the FE sector then there is over here a parallel organisation called Learning Through Work and their job with government funding is to provide training for people in the NVQ sector. So they are doing a lot of work for key skills within modern apprenticeships.

(That's what you are writing at the moment?)

Well, yes, no I am doing both, I have got two projects on at the moment so yes I am working for both these organisations.

(That is some terrific information there that is great. Can I get to something theoretical now Assessment. Now you know that that was started Gilbert Jessop's competence model and that of course is norm referenced. Where are we now? You see I figure myself that having looked at the documentation for BTEC courses published in 1993 before this was up and running, they are asking for a criterion referenced test and then to give pass, merit or distinction, well that's not a competence model because as soon as you get into the pass, merit or distinction you are comparing one student against another, so you are partly into the norm (And we are still there aren't we?)referenced)

You are yes.

(Do you agree with that?)

Yes absolutely.

Well now that is a very interesting question. I would say that the, NVQs absolutely continue to be competence based however, to get an NVQ accredited you have to include in it what is called independent assessment, now all that means, it's like watered down external assessment as now required in National Diplomas it is relevant up to a point because. Let me think about this and why is it relevant, OK. One of the problems with the competence model as applied in NVQs and arguably this is the problem with GNVQs as well why external assessment was introduced into GNVQs, is that there is a belief that there is a potentially cosy relationship between the student, candidate what ever you want to call them and the assessor.

(Especially when it brings the money in?)

Especially when it brings the money in and when you have got to keep them on the course.

(This is Alan Smithers' argument isn't it?)

Yes, and a number of other people's, the government has certainly believed it and the whole kind of don't trust teachers historical view so either independent assessment. Independent assessment as applied in NVQs means there has to be built into the NVQ a requirement to check assessment in some way that is independent from the candidate. So you could do that by having the assessors go to the centre down the road to assess the candidates so that you have training given by one person and assessment done by somebody else, or, you can do it by having external instruments like on-line assessment, like a test which is a set of questions that are developed by the awarding body and the assessor uses them to assess the candidates and records are kept of these the candidates responses. So their whole different ways of doing it, you can have assessment centres and what that means is you have an outside organisation who specialises in having a simulated work place and people go along there and people do their stuff and someone watches them. There is a whole lot of ways of doing it. So that same kind of pressure on the system was very much applied to GNVQ it was seen or believed that within the GNVQ, because there was a moderately absolute competence based model applied criteria based model applied that and that was dependent on the skill of the assessor, because if I say you meet these criteria but the guy down the road disagrees with you because they applied the criteria in a different way. *(there is no reliability there)* There is no reliability there and so the scrutiny that NCVQ was beginning to practise here in the evaluation bit when it was NCVQ, there are lots more of it now that it is QCA. It is out there to try and look at how awarding bodies do it. Sample more work in different centres and see whether the external verification or moderation whatever you want to call it systems that are applied by awarding bodies are actually doing the business. Now the move that took place during, in the GNVQ pilot in 97 that was organised jointly by QCA and the awarding bodies was an attempt to tackle that much more aggressively through both training assessors and developing what is now called standards moderation and also by using external instruments, external tests, whatever

you want to call them. To have a national system marked in a national way so that things are very much more like A level exams or GCSE exams so the kind of GNVQ has developed into something very much more like A level in that there is course work and there is a percentage of units, whatever it is 60/40, 60% course work 40% tests or whatever it is.

(This of course will eventually be applied to the National Diplomas?)

Yes I can't tell you what has been submitted for the Performing Arts National Diploma but as you may remember from our work on the National Diploma a while ago I couldn't believe that it was not sensible to think about external assessment in the National Diplomas and BTEC at that point in time were not having any of it because they were sticking their head in the sand and thinking that it would all go away.

(Well they have done this with common skills haven't they?)

Yes *(In out, in out, it's ridiculous)*

Yes, yes, but anyway the writing is on the wall and they have a problem with the National Diplomas because the National Diplomas are a cash card for Edexcel they subsidise everything else. Almost all A levels make a loss very few of them make a profit.

(I wasn't aware of that)

The ones that make a profit include Art & Design and it's serious money.

(Just return for a second to the thoughts, to standards sampling as it is called. Art & Design I would imagine would share the same problems or opportunities as they call them nowadays as in Performing Arts. It is entirely subjective you cannot measure it, I know the old thing that they used to teach us in courses is the old Lord Kelvin thing where he says if it exists and exists in some quantity and therefore it can be measured. Yes that is fine but that means that you have got to be able to stipulate what it is you are looking for even if the measurement is only binary, yes it is present, or no it is not present but making these decisions is incredibly difficult)

I can tell you at some length if you want me to about the mould that Edexcel is using for Art & Design National Diplomas *(No it wouldn't be relevant that)* OK (But I am going to go and hear the model that they are going to introduce for Performing Arts and knowing the people that are going to be introducing it I am not going to be very happy about it, I don't think they have enough knowledge of assessment processes.) No I have to say, I will tell you what I think would work, I think the model that they are working on for Art & Design is something that could work for Performing Arts in that it is similar to standards moderation as practiced as was developed through the GNVQ pilot and by that I mean that the system can only work if you train assessors to assess in similar ways.

(Assessment we have talked about that there and this of course is the quality control of assessment. What do you say to people when it comes to a Performing Arts qualification and they say is this a preparation for work, because it isn't)

No

(Because you are never ever thoroughly prepared you are always improving yourself)

Indeed yes *(you live in a kind of value added world)* Yes *(For some people value subtract of course as you go along)* Yes *(If there was such a thing, and then what would you say when people say that they don't take Performing Arts or Art & Design or anything like that seriously. Art & Design not so much as Performing Arts)* No *(Because I think there are more and more people taking it and I think they have to take it seriously because the money it brings)* Indeed yes *(But it is always left until last)*

Well what can I say about that

(Do you agree that they think like that or am I over reacting?)

I think it depends what else is available within the institution, so if you go to a specialist institution then

(Ah well it is bound to be high on the list then)

Yes it couldn't be anything else

(One thinks of the average school drama or music teacher who has to do everything in the lunch hours and on Thursday nights and they get no time on the timetable and then along comes Speech Day and they have got to deliver the goods)

Yes sure, yes I think that's probably right but I don't have all that vast amount of experience personally of being in institutions so I am only speaking as a person on the outside with interest, I mean one could see it as being a product of a variety of things, one of which is that it is hard to pin down and doesn't fit into nice neat 30 minute boxes or 1 day boxes it requires a lot of specialist resources, It requires a huge amount of time, the actual amount of hours that need to be put into performance or preparing for a performance are massive so it tends to eat up resources and because of that there is a tradition of

people doing it for kind of love and so the dedication is taken advantage of and not recognised and so I think therefore people feel aggrieved

(Even though they still carry on doing it)

Even though they carry on because it is their life, I think it is, I would guess over the next few years, now if you wanted me to do a bit of crystal ball gazing, that the kind of the impact of the things like the internet and interactive television on our area of specialism mean that there is a lot of opportunities for people in the kind of Art& Design, Media, Performing Arts area to get work. I think all of those television channels needing programmes to produce and provided there continues to be money in it, providing its all funded through the advertising market then maybe things will change.

(Well it is already one of the biggest businesses there is)

(What would you say were the special problems of the Performing Arts as a subject area from your own experience?)

Well I suppose the particular problems, I mean the obvious one is if you are trying to assess something it's totally ephemeral, it happens and it has gone in a moment. It is no longer there.

(You have come into assessment straight away, which I expected yes?)

That seems to me to be one of the issues, and that is a major issue unless you see something or even if you have seen it to then agree one thing or the other or not agree is very difficult because two people seeing the same thing and they have very different opinions. I guess also, to move away from assessment it's an art form and again beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Some people think something is wonderful and some people think something is less wonderful, so that in itself is a problem. I think the other issue, the other problem I mean something that's currently concerned with the new GNVQs is that for them to work vocationally means that you have to have a very flexible time table and the ability if you are going to work in a professional way to be able to rehearse straight out, non stop, for five days, or whatever it needs to put a show on, and increasingly that time table with curriculum 2000 is not available, and what they are doing in my view is school drama and not performing arts because they have got an hour slot there two hours there and an hour there, and that doesn't seem to me to be vocational Performing Arts. So they have to make it fit and as I say for me that then becomes school drama, because if you do that over six months that's not the way Performing Arts works and you either put them in a simulated situation for real, or real as we can make it, or we don't call it Performing Arts and we don't make it a vocational course.

(Let's look back at the previous scheme. What you described as the Mark 1 Performing Arts course which has gone on for a long time. The Common Skills units value was removed at one point, now even now there are people who aren't aware of this. I have had for approval things with 18 units, and I have had some of the front line people who have said that they think that that was a bad thing because it made the students feel that this was, their terminology, an add on. Would you comment on that?)

I think the unit value had gone just before I really got involved, I think it must have gone round about 1990, but I did have a centre where they felt the way to deliver Common Skills was to have a Common Skills session.

(I have seen these things yes)

I actually said well what are you actually doing because to me it should be embedded and I think for me if it has a unit value then that implies you have to deliver it as a unit but I don't believe that in the same way as I don't believe Key Skills stands separately. Common Skills only work if they are really embedded in the vocational qualifications and I think by removing that, as I say not that I ever knew what it was like before, by not saying here is a unit and it is called Common Skills A you are actually saying here are Common Skills and they must permeate the whole thing and that seems to me a much better way of doing it.

(And yet that is what they have said in the original guide lines)

It may well have done. It's an oddity because they get seven grades for it but it is not worth a unit. I don't know maybe we were ahead of our times.

(You say that in 1990 that happened and I think you are probably right, I have not looked it up, I will go to the library. The interesting thing there at that time the First award came on now you know that the structure of the First Award specification is different, can you comment on that?)

Well it has always seemed slightly odd, I mean I have just assumed it was fashion in the same way as we have to have learning outcomes now I assumed that when they wrote the First Diploma the fashion had sort of moved on to having C.O.s and P.C.s and things instead of P.O.s, but I am not I was never sure why quite that is was different I guess I just accepted it as being different and a bit of a pain because it was different and you had to remember the different terminology and did they have to take the C.O.s off was it just the P.C.s and I don't know I suppose.

(But they never followed through with that?)

No they didn't because I mean we have never really until this year moved off draft guide lines and people were always complaining to me, when are we going to get off draft guide lines, that's it that is all there are that is what you have to use and they have stood the test of time pretty well from those beginnings.

(The have stayed in draft form for 12 years)

Oh yes as with the First Diploma with things saying these units will come on stream in 91 or something, I can't remember if it was Performing Arts or Media but it was something.

(That might have been Media there was never any commitment. It's not generally known but the second year after it was piloted for the first year it was rewritten and they never ever published the rewrite. I would guarantee there is nobody in Stewart House could produce a copy of that)

I am sure there isn't. I also understand the fact that Performance Workshop as a triple unit was a typing error.

(That's right yes and then they copied that into the Media. It's strange that we should say this, the original starters, the guy that was the head of it all was [O.S.I.] and I interviewed him over the telephone and I asked him this and it's absolutely true. Here is something which you may be able to help with. You know that somebody did a retype of the National Diploma guide lines and it wasn't very good it was filled with type wasn't it?)

I think so yes

(I have never seen a copy of this somebody must have it somewhere, I would like to investigate it to see if there is any change in that from the original.)

I think you would need to get onto the centre that started in the last four or five years because certainly there is a word processed document, now whether that was done on conversion or somebody typed it in, but it is certainly laid out in modern type face and I assume the original was done on a P.C.W.

([OSI]'s P.C.W.)

But this was done in Times Roman or something but still said draft and it never changed but you might as I say get one out of a centre who.....

(I should be able to get one out of Stewart House)

Yes, yes you should but ***** has gone now.

(But Steve wouldn't necessarily be the one. The lady in the library should. She has been very good so far. It is difficult not to jump around here but I might as well I will get answers to all the questions.

Let's look now at the current things that are taking place which you have been involved with. There is a Mark 1 which we have just discussed, a Mark 2 which has just started but is about to stop has been lengthened to 2004, I was told that today)

I haven't heard that one.

(Well it just shows you how things move very quickly, Julia told me that today)

So when is the new one going to come in?

(Well we don't know, this is what I am going to question you about because quite a lot of people who are starting the Mark 2 version have had a shock when they are told there is a Mark 3 on its way. Now you have been involved with the Mark 3. Now I remember when we did a training day in Birmingham you were talking about some of the new titles that they have and one of them was Performance, is that still on the cards?)

Well my understanding is so yes, that is what has been submitted to QCA and I gather QCA are fairly happy with that, it couldn't be called Performing Arts

*(When you say you gather, sorry to probe like this) ***** (***** said?)* Yes he has all the discussions with ***** so yes we think that is going to be OK again it will help smaller centres who struggle a little bit with the concept of having to offer drama or dance or whatever where they have only got 15 students and they can't split them. That has been a real issue with the Mark 2. My understanding is that the Mark 3 is on its way through and could well be ready for September 2001 it could also not quite be ready for 2001 and may get left until 2002 but I think it will be well available before 2004.

(On the other hand the 2004 thing they are going to leave that still available for people who started that way)

In that sense that is quite good if it suits people but I do know that the DfEE changed all the listings for funding and this is what drives us as you know and they have created something called Section 96

(That's 2A isn't it?)

As was, and what they did apparently was build a snapshot on the day they decided to do this and said what is current and what is running and they moved them all onto Section 96 which included our National Diplomas which we thought were going to come off 2A like when we got something in the framework, so it is a bit messy, now we are going to have two very different models.

(Let's look at this for a moment and let's look at it from the policy view point. I mean we are working for an organisation which is an awarding body, it is taking its instructions from the DFE or by way of the QCA, the argument being and I use another acronym NQF so that is what they tell us, but it changes so rapidly you begin to wonder how these decisions are arrived at.)

Well I mean if it's nesting in section 96 for the next four years then it is there

(That is assuming that 96 will last for four years)

Well the messages are so mixed and so difficult, yes it was supposed to go into the NQF. Yes it had to have this and that, and meet the externality rules and all the rest of it, so the only advantage of keeping Mark 2 really is that it hasn't got the externality in it. Or Common Skills but then the next one won't have Common Skills either.

(But they are required in order to get the funding to do the Key Skills aren't they?)

No they are a separate funding.

(Yes but I mean if a college wants to get both lots of funding it will do the Key Skills)

Oh sure, yes it gets another 4½ units at the moment, but that is changing this year.

(Is it what is going to happen?)

Well because of these Learning Skills Councils they are bringing in different funding formulae which are supposed to be more student led rather than qualification led.

(What does that mean in real terms?)

Well we are not sure yet until we see the colour of their money no one is very certain just what the Learning Skills council is going to do. What I gather is that the college funding is going to change this year and school funding is going to change the following year and they will come if not together then they will be much closer together, because currently, of course, a school gets 3K for putting a bum on a seat.....

(The other thing of course which I am thinking of there is that you have been involved with this learning of skills council now)

Ah that is different

(Things are happening)

It's the Learning Skills Development Agency which is nothing to do with skills council, they have just changed their name to reflect partly the fact that there are going to be learning skills councils, and this is the buzz word, but I think equally the fact that increasingly FEDA was doing more and more work with schools. (But it is just FEDA really isn't it?) Yes it is, exactly the same thing and to call it Further Education Development Agency when you are working - *(You would cut the schools out then)* - is a bit silly.

(Bearing in mind, I think we both agree on this that the driving force behind all the developments is mainly funding then messing around with the funding all the time means you are going to be constantly messing around with the structure of the qualification?)

Yes well we were discussing today actually this particular issue came up. The fact that funding was driving the curriculum when it should be the other way round and it is not good at all and needs to be looked at. Certainly one of the curriculum issues that came up today apart from the fragmentation is this government wish for breadth against the fact that there are students around for whom breadth is not the answer, they know they want to do Performing Arts, they know they want to do Hospitality and Catering, they know they want to do a vocational course and that is what they want to do full time, and that obviously is the need for the National Diploma, particularly in the new 18 unit form.

(But they don't mention the National Diplomas)

In what?

(Most of the books I have read in the literature on vocational training and on assessment processes and things like that studiously avoid awkward subjects, they devise theoretical concepts of how you should do it and that is that. The very first thing you said to me when I said what are the problems with the Performing Arts, you hit it straight away, in other words you went straight for the jugular which was how on earth do you really assess this. We are talking about National Standards, it is a scary thing to mention in an area like this because how the heck do we know)

We don't

(You have got to go to the opera or you have got to go to the theatre then you have got to read next day in half a dozen newspapers)

It is what I said earlier, two people watch a performance, one person thinks it is brilliant and the other thinks it is crap, so yes it is very difficult to get round that. I guess what you have to do rather than just looking at performance artistically and say "Oh darling isn't that wonderful" is that you have to set some criteria *(Items to look at?)* Yes *(But even then it can be subjective?)* Yes *(Ultimately it has got to be)*

(Let's look at the assessment regimes that have been about. Now this will bring us onto GNVQ and I am not averse to that, that's useful. There has been Mark 1 and Mark 2 of the GNVQ) and Mark 3

currently in operation (*You mean they are doing it again? I am not aware of that*) Let me think, no probably for Performing Arts there hasn't been a revision, the Media we are on Mark 3.

(Well anyway lets just think it through, the original GNVQ was marketed, for Performing Arts came on in 1995 but prior to that just before 1990 when the Nationals were beginning to take hold we had the NVQ which was the darling of the Department of Trade and Industry and that's why they started the NCVQ, and that was founded on the concept of outcomes related competence testing as proposed by Gilbert Jessop in his book, well that is fine, but what I find rather interesting in this and I would like your comments, we are then exhorted to have to grade the students as pass, merit and distinction which is diametrically opposed to competence testing. Competence testing says, you can, you can't, that's it. Pass, merit and distinction has norm reference within it somewhere. Because, if one person passes another one is a merit and another one is a distinction you are judging the students then not against a criterion but against each other and we have had this interesting admixture all the way through)

I am not too sure I quite go with that statement.

(All right it is a basis for a good argument anyway)

OK Yes I will have to think back, as long ago as 1995, time flies, and I am trying to think when Performing Arts started actually having to tick PCs, range, we certainly were when we were starting and we rapidly moved on to element based assessment which was much better. You look at the evidence indicators and determined a match. There are still people about that I would have to argue with who still believe that they have to tick the PCs on Mark 1, but that is another issue. Yes you are right, I mean the original GNVQ was really based on a lot of the NVQ but it was supposed to be educational so it was broader-based but it was still, as you say, criterion referenced. Now I think there are some things which you could fairly easily describe as 'criterion reference' on a yes/no basis. I think there are some things in Performing Arts that you can, but certainly if you can drill a widget you can drill a widget. If you can write a memo then you can write a memo. There are grades at doing that and I think one of the biggest failings of the GNVQ in its Mark 1 form was that it failed to actually adequately say what a satisfactory performance was. Can-do can't- do, to get a pass but write a report, do a performance make a video it didn't say how good it had to be it just said do it and that's the problem with performance criteria and because that was the basic format to start with and they decided that they actually wanted levels of grading this is why we have this strange and weird grading criteria that nobody ever really understood. Well the planning, the information-seeking and all the rest of it and the eight boxes of criteria which we were supposed to use to judge. So really it was a bit of a pig's ear because it was one system with something else bolted on to make it educational it was only really when we moved..... (it was incredibly time consuming for people) ... and it was only when we moved on to base assessment that everybody was very happy with. Unfortunately Capey came along with his committee and did a bit of very bad research because what he did, they asked people what the problem was with the GNVQ and people said "Oh too much assessment". He did this in the summer and it was the summer where it was just about to change from PC. Too much assessment they said. The committee met again in September or October and this was fed back to them, too much assessment, "Oh my word, what are they doing now", said the committee well they are doing element based assessment now, "Oh there is too much assessment in that well we had better make it unit based then". On that flawed research and logic meant that the whole raft of GNVQs was piloted and remodelled to become the next Mark which is what we are currently starting, but the whole thing was a cock up. This is where it came from that research. The thing had moved on and they got the wrong answer. But somebody had done something about it there was too much fiddling with assessment but they had recognised it and they had moved on a phase and Capey moved it on another phase to unit based assessment and that in a way is causing, and will cause, problems.

(You don't think that the Mark 2 GNVQ will overtake the National Diploma unless there is an external entity like funding and such like that comes in?)

No I don't, I don't I have been predicting for a number of years and will continue to predict for the time being until I am proved wrong that, it is getting closer now because I have been saying it for a number ... in five years time, so I have got to be saying now in a couple of years, three years time I think colleges will deliver the National Diplomas and schools will deliver the GNVQs and I do firmly believe that the more I work with people and the more I meet people. There is another issue which is only just coming out into the open, people are only just starting to realise is that in 2002 the foundation and intermediate GNVQ will disappear to be replaced by Mr. Blunket's vocational GCSEs. Now the implication of that actually which people haven't picked up talking of courses for plumbers at 14 or something, but the implication of that actually is that this is a three unit qualification to be delivered at

Key Stage 4 the six unit will no longer exist, so there will be nothing for colleges to offer level two students.

(Except BTEC first?)

Except BTEC first which will lead naturally into a BTEC National.

(When I interviewed [ND3] she told me that there were no plans, I asked her about the GNVQ Blunkett,s new idea about this there is nothing in it at all for the Performed Arts is that right?)

It will go , Media will go

(Have they made that decision now, if so who says so?)

No

(Well then how can you make that statement)

Its not firmly made but we know where it is at at the moment and what is likely to happen it is still in consultation to some extent but we can't see Blunkett moving very much. The existing 7 part 1 subjects plus science people are saying they want to fight to get Performing Arts in Key Stage 4, I think it would be a disaster if they do it they might as well stick to GCSE Drama which is manageable in the kind of timetabling you have in Key Stage 4 where all you're offering is two option blocks and it just doesn't work vocationally.

(OK lets stay with assessment now and lets look at something else which has come into assessment fairly recently, that is the requirement to have external testing, now that came with GNVQ as a sop to Alan Smithers and people who were severe critics of GNVQ and belonged to the world of the A level and the academe. Now that has been imported into the new system of the Nationals would you like to comment on that?)

We could have done without it

(Nobody likes it and yet I have interviewed one school head who said he thinks it's a great idea because it means it will get standardisation from place to place which is something he worries about very much, but you know and I know that this thing that they will test in the main is going to be something that is written down, go on then tell me)

Unless it changes again.

(Where are we at?)

Well I think part of the problem is that Edexcel is frightened to stand up to QCA. I think if they stood up to QCA, we are actually we are not sure there is a requirement any more that has to be 25% of the qualification we think this is a myth that someone in QCA has propagated we think that 10% would do or 5% so long as there was some. But they are going along with this 25% because they want to get it through they don't want to rock the boat you know on stage they were terrified but there was only going to be one awarding body for the whole of England and Wales and it wouldn't be them necessarily and that is quite recent and I think the Scottish cock up last year actually saved us from that, very largely because no Government having seen what happened to the Scottish qualifications authority was going to risk the same thing happening in England.

(Can I just stop you there I know nothing about this Scottish qualifications authority and this cock up where can I find this out?)

Well it was in the papers last summer, this was, they lost papers they lost results it was a major scandal *(Oh yes I remember that)* the chief executive had to resign *(I though that was something with SQA.)*

That is SQA, SQA is the awarding authority really for

(Its not just vocational it's the A levels?)

Yes so they have only got one awarding body in Scotland and they screwed up so as a result I can't see any government in the short term saying hey this is a good idea lets have one awarding body in England and Wales. Externality is a problem it is a problem in Performing Arts but at present we think is going to go through the system that *****and I have come up with is that we have to do four units allegedly in the National Diploma that is the 18 unit the new 18 unit National Diploma, one of them will have to be some sort of case study based on the Performing Arts business, and what we have done with the other three units that we have to external test is we have taken three units which are called Production Planning something like that, Production Process and Production Project and what we are going to test is the outcome of those three units and we are going to do that by having somebody watch the Performance and grade probably 10 students and compare that with the internal markers grades based on that will be the grades for the whole cohort will be adjusted so three quarters of the external assessment is not on written work at all it is on live performance and that is the best fiddle we could come up with.

(But it would still be very expensive wouldn't it?)

Not if it's the same person who is the EV and they go on the next day to do the EV. But it is cheaper than tests

(Oh I would agree with you there but on the other hand all the schools will want to do it at the same time and all the colleges will want to do it at the same time.)

That could be a problem we haven't come, we haven't thought that one through yet but this is yes it is all going to be second year end loaded yes it is going to be a nightmare to actually do practically but it is the best way to test the qualifications.

(Where are we with Mark 2 in terms of externality?) There isn't any *(There was originally intended to be)* There isn't any and I don't think there will be.

(That brings me to the end of the kind of questions that I wanted to ask but is there anything else that you would like to add personally that I haven't covered that you think might be useful in a study of this nature?)

I think we have had debates in the past as EVs and things and there probably isn't a right answer as to how to do this videos aren't really satisfactory

(And yet I have seen people get, today [ND3] thought videos were good) Well only for music *(But the thing keeps still, well video for dance is just a non starter)* I find dance easier sometimes than theatre that is often because they are doing it in a properly lit room and you don't get a white blob in the far distance somebody who is videoing it knows about what they are doing so the actual recording one of my current nightmares, one of my current things and its not ND it's GNVQ again is that as moderator, Chief Moderator we have three units three core units which all the evidence is secondary so all I am being offered because these are the requirements are a working note book 3 teachers observations and an evaluation how do I moderate that, you can't, without seeing the performance or having some evidence of performance.

(So how) They could say Oh Julie was really great how do I know how do I moderate, well I am supposed to be checking and it is virtually impossible.

(So what happens about that then?)

I think we just have to smile sweetly and live with it this year it is too late to do anything about it. We need to factor in maybe next year something either that they have to provide a video and yes I know its not very good but or we have to say when they register their students they give us the date of all their performances and we reserve the right to send someone to all of them, we are back into expense again and extra cost, and already they are losing money hand over fist particularly with student numbers. I have a set of papers floating by I went to Stewart house to drop off the Intermediate disc I have the Foundation to finish there were 75 students doing Foundation Performing Arts registered this year and 2 of the units are option units and a lot of Foundation students take 2 years so some of these papers could only have I don't know 10 – 15. It is not cost effective. The Advanced GNVQ there is about 400 this year.