

**A Masters level teaching profession: a study of the rationale for the Masters level
Postgraduate Certificate in Education, a Masters level teaching profession and
the Masters in Teaching and Learning and the perceptions of key stakeholders in
the English West Midlands**

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Abstract

There has been a significant shift in initial teacher training (ITT) and teachers' professional development (PD) to include masters level (M level) study in recent years in England and this research investigates aspirations for the M level teaching profession, providing a rationale for the M level Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), a masters level profession and the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) and providing the perceptions of key stakeholders. Although these initiatives represented a major shift in the training and development of teachers, only limited consideration has been given to these areas, despite the plethora of research regarding ITT and teachers' PD.

Findings suggest that HEIs superimposed their own rationale for these initiatives, in addition to the imposed rationale. Findings also indicate that universities consider M level ITT and PD to have many benefits, but there was much scepticism regarding the MTL. Furthermore, although trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were positive about M level study in principle, especially when there was an element of choice, they were sceptical regarding its benefits to practice and considered M level to be more important later in their careers, due to their more immediate concerns to meet statutory professional requirements.

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List of Abbreviations

ACSTT	Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers
APCL	Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
ASCL	Association of School and College Lecturers
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BA.Ed	Bachelor of Arts in Education
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BPRS	Best Practice Research Scholarships
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CVs	Curriculum Vitae
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
EBITT	Employment-based initial teacher training
EBR	Employment-based route
EPD	Early Professional Development
ESCalate	Education Subject Centre advancing learning and teaching in education
FE	Further Education
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
GTCE	General Teaching Council for England
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
GTTR	Graduate Teacher Training Registry
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
H level	Honours level
HoDs	Heads of Department
INSET	In-service Education and Training
IPDA	International Professional Development Association
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LA	Local Authority
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
M.Ed	Master of Education
M level	Masters level
MTL	Masters in Teaching and Learning
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters and Union for Women Teachers
NCSL	National College for School Leaders
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NUT	National Union of Teachers

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PD	Professional Development
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education/ Professional Graduate Certificate in Education
PGCert	Postgraduate Certificate
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPD	Postgraduate Professional Development
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Q Standards	Standards for QTS (See QTS below)
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RQ	Research Question
RQT	Recently Qualified Teacher
SBC	School-based coach
SBM	School-based mentor
SCITT	School-centred initial teacher training
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SfCC	Schools facing Challenging Circumstances
SMT	Senior Management Team
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (analysis)
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TLA	Teacher Learning Academy
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UCET	University Council for the Education of Teachers
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focuses on masters level (M level) study in initial teacher training (ITT) and aspirations for a masters level teaching profession. It also focuses on the perceptions of key stakeholders in two higher education institutions (HEIs) and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in one secondary school in the English West Midlands.

This research is important in order to trace ITT over the last fifty years highlighting the journey from teaching becoming a graduate profession for the first time in England to the present – when teaching has partly become a truly postgraduate profession for many new entrants via the M level Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Also, it is important to reflect on one of the most major changes proposed by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) - ie that teaching would become a masters level profession (DCSF, 2007). This research is also important as it will enable higher education (HE) ITT providers and other ITT providers to reflect on current practices in ITT and M level study within ITT and enable prospective trainee teachers and trainee teachers to reflect on M level study in ITT for their own professional learning. It will also enable HEIs and other PD providers to reflect on M level study for teachers post-qualification and enable teachers to reflect on M level study for their own professional learning. This research may also enable policymakers to reflect on these issues and provide a new direction for raising standards in schools.

Postgraduate study has been increasing rapidly in the United Kingdom (UK) (Wakeling, 2005; Gilbert, 2008; Tobin, 2011) and

this trend has also taken place in ITT in particular and in teachers' professional development (PD), to some extent. This has arisen as a result of the widespread introduction of the M level PGCE in ITT from September 2007 and the former government's announcement for a masters level teaching profession (DCSF, 2007) via the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) - a new M level qualification (DCSF, 2008). These are both recent educational initiatives which constitute a shift towards an M level profession, although the two initiatives have different histories and backgrounds. However, the current government policy to shift ITT from HEIs into schools and the withdrawal of funding for the MTL is largely halting aspirations for a masters level teaching profession. Nevertheless, a comparatively small amount of funding - £2 million - has been allocated for teachers via the new National Professional Development Scholarships, which the government expects most teachers to use for M level study. Also, the current government has provided funding for the continuation of the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).

This chapter introduces the thesis and provides an overview of the research. Firstly, the background to the M level PGCE is discussed and research questions outlined, followed by the background to aspirations for a masters level profession for qualified teachers within the context of the MTL and research questions for this aspect outlined. Finally, an overview of the research is provided to outline the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background: the M level PGCE

The Bologna Declaration (1999) called for a system of easily readable and comparable qualifications. The Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (QAA) explains that the UK is a participating country in the ‘Bologna Process’, which aims to develop the European Higher Education Area to facilitate the mobility of staff and students between member states and to establish comparability and compatibility of HE systems across Europe (QAA, 2009). One of the stipulations of the Declaration was that awards bearing ‘postgraduate’ in their title should have a significant amount of work at M level. Consequently, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) was brought into effect in England, which meant that HEIs had to review their awards to ensure that they fitted into this new framework. The FHEQ (2001) defines masters level study as a critical awareness of current problems and/ or new insights, much of which is at or informed by the forefront of academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.

A range of routes and ITT programmes to qualified teacher status (QTS) are offered in England – the most popular of which is currently the PGCE. PGCEs are well-established ITT programmes and were mostly at honours level (H level), as it was understood that their role was to provide a professional qualification for those who already had an honours degree (Sewell, 2008). In this case, ‘postgraduate’ in the title of the PGCE related to chronology, rather than to the academic level. Therefore, most ITT providers had to review their H level Postgraduate Certificate in Education programmes to ensure that any award with ‘postgraduate’ in the title included M level work.

HEIs were obviously free to choose the level of their award and from September 2007, the former Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) stated that HEIs had to register with the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) whether their PGCE was at H and/ or M level/ level 6 and/ or level 7 (FHEQ). (The TDA was the government quango which replaced the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and is now the executive ‘Teaching Agency’). This prompted some HEIs to offer what became called an H level Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) only, some chose to offer the M level PGCE only and some chose to offer both awards. However, a minority of providers had already re-validated their PGCE programme to M level a few years earlier.

The following research questions have been formulated to address the aims of this part of the study:

1 (a) What was the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI?

(b) How were the M level PGCE programme and M level work within ITT perceived in the two case study HEIs by ...

... ITT tutors?

... trainee teachers?

In order to address the above research questions, twelve tutors were interviewed across two HEIs which are ITT providers and similar institutions – ie. post-1992 ‘teaching-led’ universities, which were formerly polytechnics – and which introduced the M

level PGCE from September 2007 with large cohorts of trainees. However, the HEIs introduced the M level PGCE in different formats - HEI 1 revalidated the PGCE at H level and M level, whereas HEI 2 only revalidated their programme at M level. ITT tutors from a range of secondary subject areas and members of the senior management team (SMT) were interviewed regarding the M level PGCE at the end of its first year in operation (see Appendix A). Tutors were interviewed to ascertain the rationale for introducing the M level PGCE in their HEI and to gain their perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT. In order to gain collective opinions, focus groups of secondary PGCE trainee teachers from a range of subject areas were undertaken from each PGCE programme. In HEI 1 (operating both awards), a focus group was established of trainees who had just completed the H level PGCE and another focus group of trainees who had just completed the M level PGCE and in HEI 2 (offering the M level PGCE only) one focus group of secondary trainees who had just completed the M level PGCE was established (see Appendix B). Questionnaires were also disseminated to all trainees undertaking the secondary PGCE in each HEI to gain their perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT (see Appendix C). In addition, research from a primary source was undertaken to gain a picture of how widespread the M level PGCE had become across providers (see Appendix D).

Despite the wide range of published literature regarding various aspects of ITT, this research is fully worthwhile to ITT providers, policymakers, prospective trainee teachers and trainee teachers as there is little published literature to-date regarding this major, recent initiative for the widespread re-validation of the PGCE to M level for the first time in the history of ITT in England. In particular, little research has been undertaken to specifically consider the M level PGCE in its context alongside

the H level equivalent. This research issue is placed within a period of major change in ITT and highly topical. It was also an emotive issue for many of those interviewed in HEI 1 especially. Therefore, it is important that the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in different HEIs is established and the perceptions of tutors and trainees gained to review the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT within its context alongside the H level PGCE. This research aims to fill gaps in these areas.

The next section of this chapter focuses on wider aspirations for a masters level profession for qualified teachers within the context of the MTL.

1.2 Background: Aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL

Under the former administration, ITT was considered to be ‘world-class’ in England (TDA, 2008a). However, NQT induction and early professional development (EPD) are considered to be highly variable (Jones and Stammers, 1997; Totterdell *et al*, 2002; TTA, 2005). Also, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted, 2003) and McNally (2002) reported the difficulties many NQTs face during induction. With the aim of improving induction and EPD, the former Labour government commissioned a review of good practice in the most highly-performing school systems in the world (McKinsey, 2007), which provided information that masters level study in Finland had been very successful in improving the quality of instruction in its schools. This influenced the former government’s announcement for a masters level teaching profession in the *Children’s Plan* (DCSF, 2007) – a ten-year strategy aiming to

make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. The principles of the new MTL were later set out in *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* (DCSF, 2008), from which the TDA and social partners – such as HEIs, local authorities (LAs), subject associations, the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), etc. - drew in order to establish the National Framework for the MTL, regarding issues such as the content and delivery of the programme.

The following research questions were formulated to address the aims of this part of the study:

2 (a) What was the rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL?

(b) How were aspirations for a masters level teaching profession perceived by ...

... HEIs?

...NQTs?

(c) How was the move towards the MTL perceived by ...

... HEIs?

...NQTs?

In order to address the above research questions, the Deans in the education departments from the same two HEIs were interviewed.

Both HEIs also worked together within the ‘Teach West Midlands’ consortium to deliver the MTL collaboratively across the region, after a successful bid to the TDA. The Deans were interviewed to gain their perceptions of aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL (see Appendix E). A focus group of NQTs in a secondary school in the region was also established to gain their perceptions of the same issues, as NQTs were prioritized as the target cohort and the first teachers entitled to undertake the MTL (see Appendix F).

There is also little literature regarding aspirations for the M level profession and the move to the MTL. Also, existing literature is lacking regarding the broader picture regarding how aspirations for the M level profession and the move to the MTL were perceived by HEIs and NQTs. This research issue is also highly topical and placed within a period of change in teacher education/professional development, since the withdrawal of funding from the MTL. Therefore, gaps are being filled by this research in the areas of PD and masters level study for teachers.

The final section of this chapter focuses on the overview of this research, including the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Overview of the research

Conducted within an interpretivist paradigm, this research provides a rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE and aspirations for a masters level teaching profession via the MTL and a multi-perspective account of key stakeholders for each

programme. The thesis is divided into six further chapters, which are outlined below.

The first literature review chapter is entitled ‘Postgraduate ITT in England’ and is the focus of Chapter 2. The second literature review is entitled ‘Professional development for teachers, aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the Masters in Teaching and Learning’ and is the focus of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 is the research design chapter. This gives an account of the methodological issues, including the theoretical and practical approaches adopted to address the aims of this research. Findings are presented in Chapter 5 to address each research question in turn. In Chapter 6, the findings from Chapter 5 are discussed for each research question and interpreted in relation to the literature explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the thesis. The main purposes of this chapter are to make recommendations for practice and further research to be undertaken and to frame the contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 Review of literature: Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training in England

In order to start to address research question 1, regarding the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE and how the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT were perceived by the HE-ITT tutors and trainee teachers, a literature review has been undertaken within the following contexts:

- introduction;
- background of ITT in England;
- postgraduate ITT programmes in England;
- M level study in ITT;
- the future of the PGCE;
- overall discussion of the literature.

2.1 Introduction

In the 1960s teaching unions led a campaign for teaching to become a graduate profession, but it was not until the early 1980s that it became necessary for new teachers to have a degree (McAteer *et al*, 2010), in order to teach in maintained schools in England. Also, it was only after the profession gained its own specialist degree – the Bachelor of Arts in Education (BA.Ed)/ Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) – that teaching was recognised as a graduate profession (Maddern, 2009a).

Undergraduate degrees later gave rise to a postgraduate teaching qualification and currently a wide and fairly complex range of routes and ITT programmes leading to QTS exists in England. Although entry to teaching is still possible via undergraduate programmes, most trainees now undertake postgraduate

programmes. The prevalence of one-year postgraduate ITT programmes demonstrates their popularity with trainees. Also, these programmes are clearly cost-effective, as the government can then respond quickly to curriculum changes and teacher shortages in different phases/ subjects by the allocation of the number of places to providers.

Until September 2007, the term ‘postgraduate’ within ITT largely related to chronology (in most providers) – rather than the academic level – as the ‘original’ Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) was at level 6 (the same academic level as the latter stage of an H level undergraduate degree). This issue was a matter of concern for many providers, which genuinely believed that their trainees were operating at a higher academic level. In addition, the Bologna Declaration (1999) called for a system of easily readable and comparable qualifications across Europe. Therefore, the FHEQ was established in England and it became necessary for HEIs to ensure that awards with ‘postgraduate’ in the title included a substantial amount of work at M level.

The next section of this chapter considers the background of ITT in England, which is important to this literature review to examine the changing role of providers and government interventions moving to a largely school-based model of ITT, leading up to the introduction of the M level PGCE. It also examines ITT in England over the last fifty years, in order to explore the arrival at the current situation later in this chapter.

2.2 Background of ITT in England

During the 1960s, initial teacher education (ITE) was undertaken mainly in HEIs, with less emphasis on school-based placements, since it was considered that “personal education should take

priority over practical training” (Furlong *et al* 2000, p. 19). However, the mid-1970s were “a period when both teachers and students were questioning what they saw as the lack of ‘fit’ between ‘theory and practice’” (Furlong *et al* 2000, p. 11). Consequently, by the end of the 1970s student teachers were spending more time in schools. Although ITE was undertaken in HEIs, Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 21) recognise that “there was a slow trend towards a curriculum in which the disciplines of education became less prominent, where the status of professionally oriented courses rose and students spent more time in school”. However, Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 21) also maintain that “despite the slow trend towards professional relevance, courses remained distant from schools”. By the end of the 1980s, the government had started to recognise the capacity of schools to contribute to ITT. The amount of time spent in schools was now clearly defined and there began an enhanced role for schools and a reduced role for HEIs in ITT. The 1990s also saw further major changes, with School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) consortia being established – allowing schools to design and manage ITT programmes themselves or with the support of an HEI. Also, secondary trainees now had to spend 66% of their time in schools and primary trainees to spend 50% of time in schools. In 2012, it was also announced that primary trainees would spend 66% of their time in schools from 2012 – 13 onwards. Furthermore, meeting Professional Standards for QTS became the core requirement of any ITT course in the 1990s, rather than the academic qualification of the PGCE. Consequently, “many trainee teachers are concerned only with working through their training and gaining QTS” (Graham-Matheson 2010, p. 7). This is also reinforced by Ofsted (2009), which only inspects how well the provider prepares its trainees to meet the Standards for QTS. Further changes have also taken place in ITT since 2000. For example, the TTA remit increased as it became the TDA, by expanding its role to the wider school workforce. Training

Schools were also established in 2000, working under the TTA/TDA to develop ITT and the training of the school workforce. In addition, Teach First was founded in 2002 in an attempt to recruit to schools in challenging circumstances. At the start of the century Hopper (2001, p. 211) had recognised the reduced role for HEIs in ITT, highlighting that “with schools assuming ever greater responsibilities for trainees the role of the HEI tutor in school is diminishing and may even become extinct”. Less than a decade later, Hopper’s (2001) views started to become reality, as under a new Conservative-Liberal government, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for the new Department for Education (DfE), announced that ITT should be moved out of HEIs and into schools (DfE, 2010). Furthermore, in 2011 the new government introduced Teaching Schools – replacing Training Schools – working under the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (usually referred to as the National College), with a remit for ITT, continuing professional development (CPD) and leadership.

Furlong *et al* (2000) concluded that the increased amount of school-based training represented a significant change in the balance of ITT responsibilities between schools and HE. Although there was a shift in responsibilities, both sectors play very different but important roles in ITT, however. Maynard (2001, p. 39) also recognised the reduced role for HEIs in ITT, stating that

government reforms over the last two decades have ensured that not only has the amount of time student teachers spend in school been increased but also that the responsibility for ‘training’ intending teachers has gradually been transferred from higher education institutions to schools.

At this time, terminology changed accordingly. For example, ITE shifted to ITT to reflect the greater school-based element.

Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 86) also acknowledge the changes in

terminology, commenting that “Much of this move is captured in the change of title for teachers from ‘supervisors’ to ‘mentors’ that happened at this time ... As supervisors, teachers had been traditionally responsible merely for overseeing students. As mentors, most courses expected them to take on a much more active role”. Therefore, school-based training is now “seen as being at the heart of ... professional training” (Maynard 2001, p.39). As a result of the increased school-based training, trainees’ relationships with their mentors and ITT tutors seemed to change. Hobson (2002, p. 8) concludes that “mentors were regarded by trainees as ... more effective than other ITT course personnel, in assisting them to develop”. However, this may be a natural reaction for trainees as they recognise that it is their school-based mentors (SBMs) who have the contextual understanding, which is very important to trainees in challenging aspects in particular, such as behaviour management, particularly at the notoriously difficult time in making the move from ITT to actual professional practice (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002), although it is ITT tutors who support trainees in reflecting on and improving their practice through research.

Therefore, since the 1960s, there have been major changes in the way teachers are educated/ trained. Furlong *et al* (2000, pp. 1 – 2) conclude that, during the start of the 1980s, ITT “had become a key issue in government educational policy. Central control had increased dramatically and, once established, the speed of change imposed on the system became progressively more intense”. Also, following general cuts to HE (Curtis, 2009; Vaughan, 2010), the publication of the Browne report (2010), cuts to HE ITT providers and the ‘bonfire of the quangos’ (Sherman *et al*, 2009), competition between HE ITT providers and other ITT providers is likely to increase further, which could seriously damage partnerships, as general competition and competitiveness between

HEIs are already widely-acknowledged and documented (De Fraja and Iossa, 2002; Marginson, 2006).

However, ITT was generally considered by the former administration to be ‘world-class’ in England (McKinsey, 2007; TDA, 2008a). Paton (2005, p. 43) reported on the following claims made by Ralph Tabberer, former TTA Chief Executive, that “Teacher training has been turned round in terms of quality and performance over the past five years and we do not intend to let go of those achievements.” The move to greater school-based training was not welcomed by some academics, but school-based training has been very positive for trainees in many aspects. For Dr. Hagger – former Director of Graduate Studies (Professional Courses) at the Department of Education at Oxford University in the UK - the greater emphasis on school-based training is the main reason for ITT being ‘world-class’ (TDA, 2008b).

The following section examines the different voices of influence from key stakeholders regarding changes in ITT.

2.2.1 Voices of influence regarding changes in ITT

Furlong *et al* (2000) consider that the New Right, the teaching profession and administrators were major voices of influence regarding recent changes in ITT.

The New Right

The New Right includes neo-liberals, neo-conservatives and the former Labour government. Under the mantra of ‘education, education, education’, a whirlwind of interventions, strategies, ideological shifts and policies were launched when ‘New Labour’ came to power in 1997, in which “New Labour set out to

transform the public sector in general, and education in particular” (Chapman and Gunter 2009, p. 1).

Within the neo-liberal perspective, there is no need for ITT. Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 10) highlight the:

recurrent assertion amongst neo-liberals that initial training is unnecessary, even harmful...Often the implication is that teacher training courses actually diminish the effectiveness of teachers. ... if the quality of training itself is to be improved, the government needs to insist that it is opened up as much as possible to the ‘market’ of schools so that practical work takes precedence over higher education-based training.

The New Right perspective regarding ITT has been voiced over many years by Chris Woodhead (former Ofsted Chief Inspector), by his involvement in a “new back-to-basics teacher-training course” (Paton 2005, p. 3) at Buckingham University – one of only two independent universities in the UK. In line with New Right perspectives, Woodhead had outlined plans “for a new no-nonsense teacher-training course”, which “cuts out all “politically correct” educational theory” (Paton 2005, p. 3). Of the new ITT course, Paton (2005, p. 3) notes that students “focus on classroom practicalities” and do not study what Woodhead considers to be “non-essential” issues. Smithers (a colleague of Woodhead at Buckingham University) claimed that universities were “inefficient” and “a questionable environment” for ITT (Paton 2005, p. 3) – citing that about 30% of those completing courses do not teach for more than a year. Revell (2005, p. 153) agrees with the New Right perspective, suggesting that “Teachers should be trained in schools, with the schools directly funded for the purpose. University input at this stage should be limited to validating the training process.” This is the model already adopted by many SCITT consortia. Woodhead concludes that school-based ITT courses, such as the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), give trainees the chance “to stand back from contemporary fads” and “think dispassionately about the nature of

education” (Paton 2005, p. 3). However, it is suggested that trainees can best stand back and reflect on practice when they are in university and have the time and space for reflection. This issue emerged strongly again in 2010 – just seven weeks after the Conservative-Liberal government came into power Gove announced plans to shift ITT further into schools, in a move which “could kill off the PGCE and wipe out university education departments” (Maddern 2010a, p. 4). Consequently, Maddern (2010g, h) warned that some HEIs may be forced to close certain ITT programmes and this has become reality, due to TDA cuts to the number of places allocated.

Of the neo-conservative perspective, Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 11) highlight that the primary task for ITT is, therefore, “to develop professionals who are themselves experts in their own subject area. Such preparation should take precedence over training in pedagogy.” So, the neo-conservatives were keen “to sound the death knell for educational theory” (Revell 2005, p. 157).

Similarly, in Woodhead’s back-to-basics ITT course, trainees received “intensive coaching in the subjects they are to teach” (Paton 2005, p. 3). For neo-conservatives, subject knowledge is of prime importance for classroom effectiveness. However, Professor Dylan Wiliam, deputy director of the Institute of Education at the University of London in the UK, insists that “Subject knowledge does not make you a better teacher ... it’s pedagogical practice which matters”

(www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). However, the current Standards for QTS (or the Q standards) – produced under the former Labour administration - incorporate professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills, rather than subject-specific expertise (TDA, 2007). Also, most trainees preparing for the secondary phase already have degrees closely aligned to the subject they are teaching, so further subject support would seem unnecessary, although greater input regarding subject knowledge for trainees

preparing for the primary phase may be appropriate. However, it is suggested that both subject and pedagogical knowledge are important and that an understanding of pedagogy is essential for effective learning and teaching in all phases.

Furthermore, neo-conservatives do not consider teaching to be a complex activity, but rather “an essentially practical skill that could not be learned from theoretical study” and is “best learned by the emulation of experienced practitioners” (Furlong *et al* 2000, p. 11). In effect, neo-conservatives reduce teaching to an apprenticeship model, considering that effective teachers can be borne from merely observing experienced teachers and copying them. New Labour also failed to fully recognise the complexity of teaching and seemed to regard ITT as “an inconvenience, a mere stop-gap of a few weeks before students are rushed into jobs” (Maddern 2009a, p. 34), proposing a new six-month course leading to QTS in the latter months of its administration. However, it is suggested that teaching is an extremely complex activity. Hagger reinforces this, stating that “If teaching weren’t complex anyone could do it ... A good practitioner is extraordinary ... Teaching children and nurturing teachers is very complex” (TDA, 2008b). Complexity increases too as teachers take on responsibilities to manage aspects of the curriculum, then progressing to other complexities if working as part of a senior management team.

The next section of this chapter focuses on the teaching profession itself.

The teaching profession

In addition to the New Right, the teaching profession itself was also an important voice of influence in ITT. Furlong *et al* (2000,

p. 13) suggest that teachers considered that “no satisfactory initial teacher education course would be possible without much closer and more effective integration of school-based and university-based elements of the course.” Also, Professor Howson, managing director of Education Data Surveys (a sister company of the Times Educational Supplement (TES)), expounds that “schools hire teachers, so they should take much more responsibility for their training” (Maddern 2009a, p. 35), which is a sensible suggestion as schools are the employers. However, recent Ofsted reports point to a lack of communication between providers and schools and call for more schools to be involved in ITT (Maddern, 2009a). The relationship between providers and schools shows the difficulty of two-tier partnerships and shows that ITT may not be of prime concern to schools. Therefore, under Gove’s plans will schools want to assume greater responsibility for ITT? One head teacher involved in leading school-based ITT commented that “Of course I would welcome the expansion of high-quality provision such as ours, but I feel there is a place for a mixed economy in teacher training. We must work side by side with universities, different courses appeal to different entrants” (Maddern 2010a, p. 4). This head teacher clearly sees the benefits of his school-based ITT programme and would like this to increase, but also values the role of universities and the range of provision available to suit all entrants, such as career changers for example.

Furthermore, it is schools which “have access to the context-specific knowledge” (Furlong *et al* 2000, p. 146) in which the trainees are working, giving them the opportunity to directly put theory into practice and to improve their practice from effective mentoring. Also, Hagger (TDA, 2008b) stressed that it is teachers – not academics – who are the experts on teaching. However, it is also true that some experienced teachers are often unaware of their own skills and may have difficulty in articulating their

knowledge to others (Smith, 2004). Revell (2005, p. 114) points out the different roles of providers and schools within the two-tier partnership, asserting that “Busy teachers ... cannot compete with that depth of provision, and shouldn’t be expected to.” However, school-led ITT is what Gove now wants and schools will be expected to fully engage in ITT when funding is devolved to them.

The administrators

Administrators – such as TTA/ TDA representatives - focused their criticisms “on the development of students’ practical teaching competence” (Furlong *et al* 2000, p.14). Furlong *et al* (2000, p. 15) state that the focus of the administrators’ criticisms came largely from evaluations from NQTs, who “complained that in their courses too much emphasis had been placed on academic study in general and on education studies in particular and that there was too little emphasis on teaching method and teaching practice.” Rather than seeking to fully integrate the school-based and university-based elements – as suggested by the teaching profession - greater emphasis on school-based ITT and the quality of practical training were considered to be the way forward to redress the balance, however. Hobson (2003, p. 246) concludes that “In some respects, the shift to competence-based and school-based training means that student teachers are now getting what they (or their predecessors) always wanted, notably less time in HEIs and less ‘theory’”. Obviously, the school-based element is very popular with trainees, who are keen to start teaching and working with children. However, although there is less time spent on provider-based training and, therefore, less time for theory as a result theory and linking theory to practice are extremely important for trainees to develop their understanding and skills

and to know how to translate theory into effective practical application.

2.3 Postgraduate ITT programmes in England

This section outlines current and former chronologically postgraduate ITT programmes in England. This section also examines the PGCE in its original and current format.

The PGCE is the most common ITT route in England, with the remainder of entrants roughly split between those who undertake undergraduate and employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT) programmes (Smithers and Robinson, 2010). An ‘assessment-only’ route is also currently available.

Employment-based routes (EBRs) are not new initiatives. The ‘articled teacher’ and ‘licensed teacher’ routes were predecessors to the current GTP. These changes appear to have been linked to the need to respond to and control recruitment in shortage areas quickly and flexibly in England. Consequently, the only mandatory qualification now needed to become a teacher in England is QTS – ie. professional recognition, rather than an academic award.

Many trainees appear to appreciate the range of ITT programmes and this was also endorsed by the teaching profession above. Furthermore, David Miliband, school standards minister from 2002 - 2004, stated that “There is real value in the variety of routes ... You can meet outstanding teachers who have come through BEd, through PGCE and through the GTP ... Different routes are suitable for different teachers” (Thornton 2003, p. 23). The different routes do seem to support recruitment. Miliband also commented that “The fact we have got different routes means

there will be different balances of theoretical and applied study ... We are not looking for, nor are we creating, robots. We are looking for challenging, dynamic people who can lead children's learning" (Thornton 2003, p. 23). Therefore, Miliband believed that there is a need for a range of ITT routes, combining the theoretical, the applied and the practical. Although the situation in England is complex with a variety of routes and different awards to enter the profession, it would appear that these are necessary to attract high quality entrants to some of the more challenging schools in areas of high deprivation, where there are more teacher shortages. Nevertheless, bursaries – introduced in 2000 to attract the best graduates into teaching – were cut from 2010 - 11 in many subject areas (Porter and Paton, 2011), which may start to deter the less affluent from applying to ITT. Certainly some HEIs are indicating less interest in ITT. However, teaching is considered to be a secure career during an economic downturn and likely to remain popular.

2.3.1 The 'original' Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Although ITT has become complex in England, the PGCE "was a well-established award which everyone understood to identify someone who had completed an undergraduate degree at honours level and then gone on to do a one year ... course to learn how to be a teacher" (Sewell 2008, p. xi). Despite becoming the prevalent form of ITT, the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) – which represents university education departments - received criticisms regarding "the level and nomenclature of the PGCE" (UCET 2003, p.3). Also, the QAA criticised the name of the PGCE "on the grounds that it was not truly postgraduate in level" and advised that the award should be called the *Professional Graduate Certificate in Education*,

suggesting “‘professional’ because it prepared people for entry to the profession, and ‘graduate’ because only those already holding degrees could take a PGCE” (UCET 2003, p. 4). Furthermore, Wakeling (2005, p. 510) stated that “Some qualifications designated ‘postgraduate’ are in fact only so in a chronological rather than in an intellectual sense.” The PGCE - in its ‘original’ form - was a prime example. Despite being ‘postgraduate’ chronologically, the PGCE remained at level 6. Lawes (2003) also noted concerns about the level of the original PGCE and trainees’ heavy workload. It is also acknowledged that there is a great amount of content in a PGCE programme (Revell, 2005). Consequently, the introduction of the FHEQ and Standards for QTS “meant that the PGCE is no longer quite so easily recognizable” (Sewell 2008, p. xi). To address these changes and concerns, some HEIs re-validated PGCE programmes at level 7 as early as 2004 (including awarding up to 120 level 7 credits), believing their trainees were in fact operating at this higher level. Outlined in the next section is a literature review of the two PGCE awards widely available from September 2007.

2.3.2 The H and M level PGCE

Rationale for the two awards

By the end of the twentieth century the H level PGCE was the most popular means of entering teaching in England. In comparison with other routes, this ‘original’ PGCE remained remarkably stable in its long history (McNamara, 2009). However, due to the Bologna Agreement (1999) and concerns raised regarding the name and level of the PGCE, the QAA introduced the FHEQ from 2004, which meant that HEIs “had to look at their range of awards to ensure that they fitted into the framework” (Sewell 2008, p. 1). Consequently, some HEIs started

to develop and deliver the level 7 PGCE, ensuring this included work at M level (Sewell, 2008). However, it was not until September 2007 that the two awards of the H level PGCE and the M level PGCE became widespread, when the TDA called for all providers to declare the level(s) at which their PGCE was offered. Jackson (2008a, p. 3) – ITE leader at the University of Cumbria in the UK - remarks that:

The engagement with Master's-level provision in the PGCE seems almost to have been founded on a technicality, that of correcting a misnomer which had been used without question for years. It is essential that the fulfilment of that engagement owes little to technicalities and much to the excitement of a positive culture change in the teaching profession.

As Jackson (2008a) states, the M level PGCE was established as a result of correcting an unsuitable name for the original award, but this has turned out to be a serendipity which has led to a positive change in widespread M level study in ITT. However, many providers were said to be “anxious about losing the title of an award well-known among potential students” (UCET 2003 p. 4) and due to these concerns the acronym of PGCE remained. ITT providers “were free to choose their own route” (Sewell 2008, p. 1), leaving the debate between level 6 and level 7 validation for providers to resolve. Similarly, providers which chose to offer both awards often allowed trainees a choice of the level at which to study the PGCE, although there may be a bias within providers towards one level. Therefore, choice seems to be a key issue. Choice was found to be an important issue for students in research by Browne-Ferrigno (2003), who concluded that students who embark on study with clearly-defined personal reasons and are presented with choice have a more meaningful engagement on the programme. Although Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) research was based on transition to leadership, it is suggested that the same principles apply.

The tables below show the original and current model of PGCE programmes in operation. Table 2.1 demonstrates the PGCE models in the years up until September 2007.

Table 2.1: Models of PGCE programmes before September 2007

Model 1	The level 6 Postgraduate Certificate in Education – offered by most providers.
Model 2	The level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Education – offered by a small minority of providers.

However, this changed considerably from September 2007 – see Table 2.2 below. Table 2.2 highlights the PGCE models in operation to-date in 2012.

Table 2.2: Models of PGCE programmes from September 2007

Model 1	The level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Education.
Model 2	Both the level 6 Professional Graduate Certificate in Education and the level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Education.
Model 3	The level 6 Professional Graduate Certificate in Education.

These changes in the PGCE obviously necessitated changes in practice in ITT and are reviewed in the next section.

Changes in practice

UCET conducted a survey to assess the extent to which providers had re-validated to the M level PGCE (Appendix H) and found that “18 per cent ... were planning to offer PGCEs at masters level only and 77 per cent were planning to offer both levels. Five per cent planned to offer just the professional level” (Barker 2007, p. 20). Therefore, it would appear that a small minority of providers are now only operating at H level and that the M level PGCE has become firmly established, either alongside the H level PGCE or as the sole award.

UCET (2003, p. 4) had reported that some providers already believed that “at least some of the work involved in a PGCE was genuinely postgraduate in nature”. However, it is perhaps unclear which these aspects are. It would be an easy assumption to make that M level work relates to assignments. As Sewell (2008, p. xii) explains, “One of the common perceptions of students when they first start the PGCE M-level is that the M-levelness of the programme is confined to the assignments and the lectures and seminars which underpin these.” However, it is necessary for ‘M-levelness’ to permeate through all aspects of the programme, within the taught professional and subject sessions and the school-based work (Sewell, 2008).

In the first year of introducing the M level PGCE *en masse*, reviews were undertaken by the former Education Subject Centre advancing learning and teaching in education (ESCalate). ESCalate delivered seminars and published information to support providers in the delivery of M level PGCE programmes and evaluated the experience. (ESCalate was part of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and worked with staff in education departments to enhance student learning in education programmes throughout the UK.) These reviews reported that the M level

PGCE had been a success overall and that pass rates were good (ESCalate, 2008), despite the increased academic demand. Also, it was acknowledged that trainees received high quality support and that the initiative was well-organized and implemented well by providers (ESCalate, 2008). At the second ESCalate M level PGCE seminar (2008), delegates were asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their M level PGCE offer. Twenty-six HEIs are represented in the following summary of its findings:

- 75% of HEIs were going to continue to offer PGCEs at both levels;
- 25% would offer M level only;
- 85% would offer 60 credits at M level;
- 57% would recruit to a single course and 27% to one course with optional M level credits to those interested. No provider ran two distinct courses;
- 92% would award QTS if trainees did not reach M level (with some provisos);
- 61% had embedded plans to allow trainees who successfully completed M level credits to progress to either M level or CPD programmes;
- 39% were changing their admissions criteria to reflect the introduction of the M level PGCE;
- 45% had provided staff training in preparation for the M level PGCE;
- concerning providing additional support to trainees, 69% would provide study skills sessions during induction and personalised skills support, 77% would provide study guides and e-learning opportunities, 77% would give tutorial support on writing at M level and 61% would give research methodology sessions.

Therefore, the ESCalate findings regarding the level(s) at which providers are working are very similar to UCET data, although no providers declared that they would be offering the H level only programme – which is to be expected as only HE ITT providers were part of ESCalate.

Perceptions of the two PGCEs

Some providers had already introduced the M level PGCE before September 2007 – feeling they were already offering genuinely M level programmes, hence the relative speed with which truly ‘postgraduate’ courses became available. However, the fact that so many providers offer both PGCEs suggests that some providers may have also seen this as a means of differentiating provision – using the H level PGCE to support the progress of ‘weaker’ trainees and the M level PGCE to extend the progress of ‘stronger’ trainees – or that they were not confident that all trainees would be able to meet the M level demands. Providers perhaps also saw the M level PGCE as bringing a new intellectual challenge to tutors, since this has an impact on job satisfaction. Rhodes *et al* (2007) found intellectual challenge to be a significant facet impacting upon HE lecturers’ job satisfaction and was ranked as the third most significant facet (out of thirty-five facets) relating to job satisfaction.

Also, it must be acknowledged that any PGCE is a notoriously demanding programme for trainee teachers (Lawes, 2003), in which they experience a steep learning curve – but now many trainees also need to meet the demands of M level criteria. Consequently, trainees who undertake the H level PGCE are required to study education – ie. a different subject from their first degree, but at the same level - whereas those who undertake the M level PGCE study the new subject of education and at a

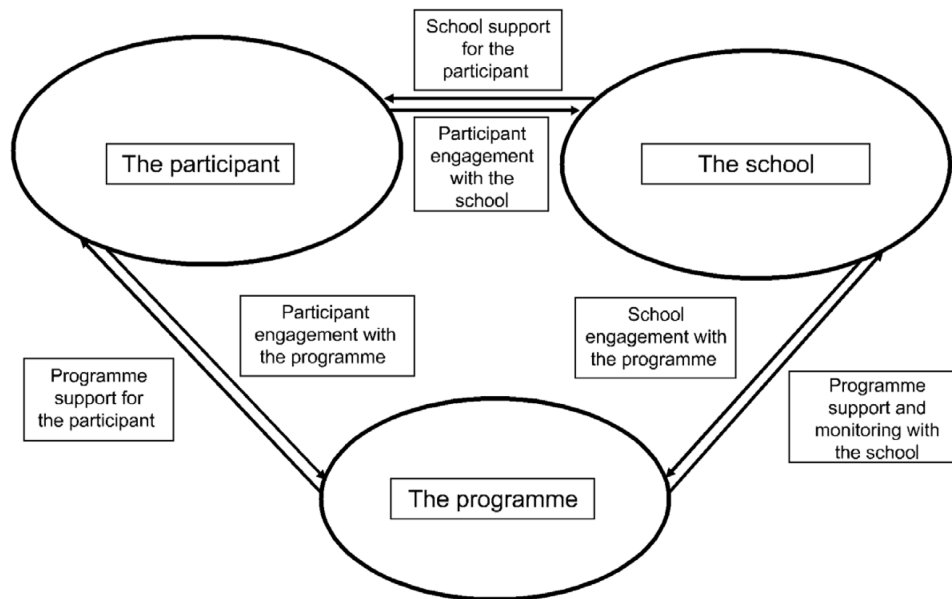
higher level too. In addition, as any PGCE is a demanding programme, integration is also an issue which needs to be considered further, since this has been linked to student drop-out (Bennett, 2003, in Rhodes and Nevill, 2004a) and retention in ITT is problematic for a variety of reasons (Whitehead and Postlethwaite, 2002). Tinto's model of student retention (1975) in HEIs recognises two spheres of integration: (i) social, and (ii) academic. Thomas (2002) supports this model but goes further, suggesting there are five spheres of integration: (i) social, (ii) academic, (iii) economic, (iv) support, and (v) democratic. Student retention is also an important concept, as there could potentially be problems regarding integration for trainees on different PGCE awards, so the situation needs to be managed carefully by the ITT provider.

For Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) the key differences between the two PGCE awards are: (i) the knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning, and (ii) the transferable skills which enable this to be put into practice. Consequently, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) consider that trainees undertaking the M level PGCE develop the knowledge and understanding of educational theory and the skills and attributes necessary to enable them to apply their thinking to professional practice. They also consider that this will prepare them to lead the practice of others in the future (Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008). However, Jackson (2008b) considers that there is a lack of shared language and understanding regarding what the outcomes of M level ITT should be and that it is unclear what the input and learning experiences are for M level ITT among providers. Also, there is much confusion amongst HEIs regarding the quantity of credits being offered within M level PGCE programmes and a lack of parity between institutions (Jackson, 2008b). To reinforce this, it must be acknowledged that there is a

wide range of credits being offered and that some HEIs offer up to 120 level 7 credits.

Also, many trainees do not recognize the benefits of theory (Grove-White, 2004), perhaps as the links between theory and practice are often difficult to make (Rivero García and Porlán Ariza, 2004). However, the theory/practice divide should be bridged, to meet the requirements of the M level PGCE (Woodgate-Jones, 2008, in Sewell, 2008). For Cain (2008, in Sewell, 2008), research is an integral part of the M level PGCE and enables trainees to explore complex issues, problems or strategies. However, it appears that some HEIs have not fully integrated research into the M level PGCE, although the effective synthesis of theory and practice is extremely powerful for improving learning and teaching. The effective synthesis of theory with practice is clearly an important concept in the M level PGCE. However, there is a paucity of research literature in this area. Nevertheless, Simkins (2009) has advocated that blended learning can effectively facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice, as theory and reflection via collaborative learning are being used to develop practice in the context. Simkins (2009) produced a model of factors in NCSL blended programmes, in which he fully integrated the role of the school in participants' learning, which could improve the linkage between theory and practice for trainees – see figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Factors in NCSL blended learning programmes (Simkins, 2009)



Although Simkins’ (2009) research is based on professional development within an educational leadership context, it is suggested that the same principles would apply in ITT to facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice, as structures are very similar.

Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008, p. 10) explore the link between M level study and effective practice, considering that, although the original H level PGCE was a success, the pace of change and increased professional requirements mean that “there is now a need to take teacher education to the next level”. Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008, p. 10) conclude that “the teacher who can respond to the multitude of changes which will occur throughout their career by drawing on the theory and research and by possessing the skills of critical evaluation and reflection will enable them to make changes in their practice.” However, this may be more about flexibility and adaptability, rather than M level work. Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) obviously consider M level work to be partly the key to the

challenges ahead in education and consider the links between theory, research and practice are crucial and the philosophy that the effective teacher requires an understanding of these appears to be at the heart of the M level PGCE. Woodgate-Jones (2008, in Sewell, 2008) also believes that trainees undertaking an M level PGCE should be reflecting on learning and teaching, consulting current theory and research, applying them as appropriate, reflecting on their effectiveness and also further developing innovations. Domaille (2008, in Sewell, 2008) considers that the M level PGCE should support both academic and professional development and that those who undertake the M level PGCE should be better prepared for the rapidly-changing nature of education and more easily able to use theory and research to support them to adapt and progress in their practice. However, there are many teachers who do not have masters degrees, but are excellent practitioners (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). Although research by Hoyle and Wallace (2005) is based on leadership, it is suggested that this same principle applies.

Although M level PGCE programmes are still fairly new to most providers, M level ITT has become a widespread entitlement for the first time in England. Barker (2007, p. 20) comments that there are now “two PGCEs: a masters level and a less academic version” and describes the new H level PGCE as “Honours degree level academic work with classroom practice” pointing out that “For students on less academic PGCE courses, the letter P will merely stand for Professional.” Therefore, Barker (2007) considers the H level PGCE to be a lesser qualification. However, these views of the H level PGCE are refuted by Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008, p. 2), who believe that:

It is important to recognize that the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education is equivalent to the award ... previously ... undertaken. It is important, therefore, that this award is not seen as a ‘deficit’ model, but rather that the Postgraduate Certificate in Education is seen as the ‘surplus’ model.

Therefore, there is a difference of perspective. Barker (2007) sees the H level PGCE as a ‘deficit’ model, whereas Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008) consider the M level PGCE as a ‘surplus’ model. Therefore, it would appear that Barker (2007) may now see the M level PGCE as the norm, whereas Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) appear to see the H level PGCE as the norm. However, data are not available to establish which award has become the most prevalent.

In contrast with the level 6 PGCE, Barker (2007, p. 20) explains that the level 7 PGCE means that “Graduates on these courses will need to do sophisticated, masters level academic work teamed with classroom practice.” As a result, Barker (2007, p. 20) believes that “The name change has sparked fears that the more practical courses have been demoted and could lead to a two-tier teaching profession.” At an ESCalate seminar (2008), delegates considered the impact of the M level PGCE on schools. Following this seminar Jackson (2008a, p. 2) asked:

Would this bring about a two-tier teaching profession? Would those who had ‘only’ got QTS be somehow less worthy in the eyes of headteachers when it came to employing NQTs? What about all those teachers already in the profession without any Master’s qualifications – would they feel undermined, resentful, negative? Have we not been preparing ‘good’ teachers with the ability to critically engage with their profession already? What real advantage would Master’s-level provision bring?

Jackson (2008a) concurs somewhat with Barker (2007) that the M level PGCE could bring about a two-tier profession and lead to divisions regarding recruitment and prospects for promotion. Also, Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 7) found there to be “a negative effect on students who only ... get a professional certificate” and also found that there were concerns for trainees who might struggle with M level work or feel they had ‘failed’ if they did not achieve M level credits. Figure 2.2 exemplifies these views, inviting speculation regarding the impact of the two PGCEs and

potential implications for the future regarding consequences for status and salary (Barker, 2007).

Figure 2.2: Spot the difference



The two PGCEs appeared to bring about some confusion for prospective trainees, who wondered whether they had to study at masters level “to stand a chance in the job market” (Barker 2007, p. 20). This links to Browne-Ferrigno’s (2003) research which indicates that people often feel some confusion when there is a duality of identity in their professional life, which may lead to them not assuming additional work/ study. Regarding employment prospects, Sewell (2008) somewhat reinforces this idea,

considering that those who undertake the M level PGCE are particularly well-placed at interviews to demonstrate their knowledge of the theory underpinning practice. In addition to causing confusion for prospective trainees and trainees, the changes also appear to have confused schools. As Sewell (2008, p. xiii) explains, “One of the challenges yet to be fully addressed with regard to the PGCE at M-level is getting employers to recognize it as different from the PGCE at H-level and to understand the benefits brought by students who have chosen this route.” However, the QAA led the change believing there had always been differences in the emphasis of courses and re-labelling the PGCE would reduce confusion. Nevertheless, despite concerns regarding a potential two-tier system the two awards could support the progress of some trainees more effectively and extend the progress of other trainees, giving them the opportunity to move on more quickly from the ‘plateau’ (Maynard, 2001) and may be more appropriate for trainees naturally operating at different levels.

Perceptions of the M level PGCE

Further to ESCalate findings (2008) above that the M level PGCE was considered to be a success, Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 8) also found that “There was a general feeling that this was a very positive change to the PGCE programme” within her institution. Furthermore, from 2007 - 2008 ESCalate ITE Subject Centre of the HEA and the University of Cumbria undertook a pilot investigation regarding perceptions of the M level PGCE, in collaboration with UCET and a range of HEIs offering the M level PGCE, with the final report written by Jackson (2009). The investigation gathered the perceptions of trainees, head teachers, SBMs and ITT tutors, whose findings are outlined below.

Jackson (2009) reported the following perceptions of trainees at the beginning of their M level PGCE: (i) M level is important in addition to QTS, (ii) M level will contribute to teaching, (iii) theory will contribute positively to practice, (iv) there is little real knowledge of what M level is, (v) M level credits will enhance employability. Therefore, trainees were positive about M level study and its benefits at the start of the programme, although there was evidently a limited understanding of the nature of M level study at this stage. However, their views changed somewhat during the programme. Jackson (2009) reported trainees' perceptions at the end of their M level PGCE as: (i) masters means such things as reading, conducting small-scale research, linking theory to practice and critical reflection, (ii) there is little clarity about what masters is, (iii) approximately 75% of respondents would consider pursuing masters study in the future, (iv) the pressures of the PGCE course are so great that it would be later in their career that they would return to masters study once established in the profession, (v) masters was valued a little more, (vi) there was no significant problem caused by different subject specialisms, (vii) linking theory and practice was beneficial, but the reality had not lived up to their expectations, (viii) only 30% of trainees thought that masters was beneficial for employability, and (ix) they had found aspects of the work enjoyable and valuable. Therefore, their perceptions show some understanding of M level, but trainees were still largely unclear regarding the nature of M level study. However, trainees valued M level work a little more at the end of the programme than they had at the start and most respondents were sufficiently positive about M level to consider studying at this level in the future, but when established later in their career. Subject specialisms were not considered to be a problem. Although trainees were aware of the benefits of linking theory with practice, it would appear that these links had not been exploited sufficiently for real benefits to be seen in practice.

Also, only 30% considered the M level PGCE to be beneficial for employment, whereas they had considered this to be more important at the start of the programme. Nevertheless, at the end of the programme many respondents commented that they had found M level work to be both enjoyable and valuable.

The investigation also explored head teachers' perceptions in Summer 2008. Jackson (2009) reported the following findings: (i) there is a limited idea of what masters is, (ii) opinions were split as to whether masters would be beneficial to the profession and 'time would tell', although there was a negative response regarding the value, (iii) M level credits would not affect choice of candidates for jobs, but there was a hint that this may change in the future, (iv) there was a mixed response regarding what trainees who had studied at M level would bring to the classroom, although there was evidence to suggest that greater ability to reflect on practice was perceived as an advantage, and (v) it is not necessary for all teachers to have a masters. Obviously, head teachers had a limited understanding of M level study, were divided regarding its benefits and did not see the value of the M level PGCE. They maintained that it would not affect their decisions regarding appointments, although there was a feeling that this may change. Head teachers were divided regarding the benefits of M level study to practice, although they acknowledged the advantages of teachers who were more reflective. Finally, they did not consider it necessary for all teachers to have a masters qualification, showing a one-size-fits-all-model to be inappropriate from their perspective.

In addition, the perceptions of SBMs were also gained in Summer 2008. Jackson (2009) reported the findings as: (i) opinions were divided regarding whether the HEI had supported them with preparations for M level trainees, but there was very little evidence of support, (ii) with one exception no participants

thought their role had changed since the introduction of the M level PGCE, (iii) trainees had not changed significantly – it very much, as it always had, depended on the trainee, (iv) the effect of masters on trainees’ engagement with children’s learning, reflection, the application of theory, etc. tended toward negative perceptions; there had been little positive effect, (v) it is not necessary for all teachers to have a masters, and (vi) the push towards an all masters profession may cause demoralisation. In contrast with Sewell’s (2008) views above that it is necessary for M level study to permeate through all aspects of the programme, the first three points above suggest that, in practice, the M level PGCE has not permeated fully into school-based work. In fact, mentors considered there had been little change since the introduction of the M level PGCE and that any effect tended towards the negative. However, Jackson (2008a, p. 3) comments that the M level PGCE “is not an initiative for HEIs with no connection with the ‘real’ world. The partnership between schools and HEIs is crucial: we train teachers together. There is no place for HEIs blindly following the Master’s route because it seems to be expected – this is a matter for the whole profession.” Therefore, for the M level PGCE to permeate throughout the programme and have a positive, widespread impact more work needs to be done with schools to ensure M level is fully integrated across the course. In line with head teachers, mentors also did not consider it necessary for all teachers to have a masters qualification. Finally, they considered that an all-masters profession may cause teachers to become demoralised, presumably due to the potential to create a two-tier profession as discussed above (Barker, 2007; Jackson, 2008a).

Finally, the perceptions of ITT tutors are given. Jackson (2009) reported the following tutors’ perceptions at the beginning of the programme: (i) it is important that teacher-educators have a masters in order to teach trainees at M level, (ii) there had not

been adequate preparation before masters was introduced, but over time this was improving, (iii) there tended to be a focus on assessment rather than teaching of masters, (iv) ‘Time will tell’ regarding the value of masters for the profession, (v) there have always been trainees more able to connect with masters work, and (vi) it is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the effect of masters in the classroom or in the profession. Despite the views of tutors that it is important for them to have a masters degree to teach the M level PGCE, it is certainly the case that some ITT tutors do not have masters degrees themselves. Also, it would appear that the introduction of the M level PGCE may have been rushed in some providers, but is now being embedded. It would also appear that providers had concentrated on assessment at M level, rather than teaching at M level. It would appear that tutors were not convinced at this stage of the value of M level study for the teaching profession and acknowledged the difficulty, if not impossibility, of measuring the impact of M level work in the classroom or to the profession. Finally, tutors acknowledged that there have always been trainees who are more able to succeed at M level. Jackson (2009) reported the following perceptions of ITT tutors at the end of the programme: (i) for trainees, learning the trade is more important than masters study, (ii) masters is not necessarily for all, and (iii) ‘Time will tell’; a seed had been sown which might bear fruit. So, at the end of the programme tutors considered that succeeding in their professional practice was more important to trainees than academic study at M level. However, it is suggested that M level study should benefit trainees’ learning, if links between theory and practice are made more explicit. Also, they considered that the M level PGCE was not suitable for everyone, which reinforces the decision taken by many providers to offer both awards. Finally, they were not convinced that the M level PGCE would have a real impact and considered this would only be known over time. In addition, Graham-Matheson (2010) researched the perceptions and

experiences of ITT tutors regarding the M level PGCE at a university in the south-east of England. Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 1) found the benefits to be: (i) that it moves trainees “towards critically evaluating and reflecting on theory and practice”, and (ii) that it had encouraged tutors to be “more rigorous and evidence-based in their own teaching.” In contrast with Jackson’s research (2009), Graham-Matheson’s research (2010) highlights these tutors’ perceptions of how the M level PGCE has moved trainees forward, whereas Jackson’s research (2009) found that tutors were not able to judge this yet. Also, Graham-Matheson’s findings (2010) demonstrate tutors’ perceptions of how the M level PGCE had improved their own teaching. Graham-Matheson (2010) also expressed several concerns relating to: (i) teaching at M level for tutors without M level qualifications themselves, (ii) assessing at M level, (iii) the particular difficulty for maths and science graduates, as they may not have experience of the kind of writing required, (iv) time, and (v) workload. The first two concerns relate to teaching and assessment at M level, as tutors feel that they lack the necessary skills or confidence to support trainees appropriately, particularly when they do not have M level qualifications themselves, which was also raised by Jackson (2009) above. Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 5) reported that the M level PGCE “led to concerns from tutors, many of whom had recently come from schools and did not have a Masters degree themselves.” Therefore, it was not only prospective trainees and trainee teachers who were concerned about the move to the M level PGCE, but it would appear that some tutors without M level qualifications were also feeling vulnerable by the shift to M level ITT, since this would mean that their trainees would be working at a higher level than their tutors had experienced and gaining higher qualifications than their tutors. The third concern regarding the particular difficulty for maths and science graduates in writing at M level is in contrast with Jackson’s findings (2009) that subject specialisms caused no difficulties.

However, certain bachelor's degree subjects obviously do not include the type of essay-writing which is required for ITT programmes, which are programmes in education – ie. an arts-based discipline. Therefore, after consideration of both Jackson's research (2009) and Graham-Matheson's research (2010), it is suggested that it may be more difficult in general for non-arts graduates to write at M level due to very different assessment processes within their bachelor's degrees. The last two concerns relate to time and workload. These concerns have also been expressed in general regarding the workload of teachers and lecturers, who are more likely to work unpaid overtime than workers in any other occupation, according to figures from the Trades Union Congress (Howgego, 2012). Time is clearly a problem for HE ITT tutors who have the usual contractual duties of teaching and research, but must also undertake a professional role, via school-based observations and assessing against Professional Standards, in order to be able to make recommendations for QTS. Therefore, it is not surprising that workload emerged as a concern for tutors who perceive that the M level PGCE may have brought them an additional workload. It must also be acknowledged here that Graham-Matheson's research (2010) was conducted in an HEI offering both PGCE awards.

2.4 M level study in ITT

M level study in ITT represents a significant change in teacher training. For Jackson (2008a, p. 1), "The provision of Master's-level credits in the PGCE is a significant milestone for the teaching profession." However, Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 7) found that M level study was not appropriate for many trainees in her institution "who do not ... have 'good' degrees or are mature students who might not have studied for some time." Therefore, it is suggested that caution should be exercised regarding the model

of PGCE chosen, so that all trainees can undertake the programme at an appropriate level. Also, the number of M level credits in PGCEs varies significantly across providers (ESCalate, 2008; UCET, 2003). Although, most providers award an average of 60 M level credits, as advised by UCET, the TDA, the QAA and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008), Hawley (2008, p. 4) recognises this incoherence, commenting that “there is no standard number of M credits offered by PGCE courses – this can vary between 40 and 120 credits.” Consequently, Hawley (2008, p. 4) asks “How will a 40-credit NQT compare against an NQT with 120 credits? How can a school offer appropriate professional development to both – perhaps through highly differentiated CPD?” Therefore, Hawley (2008) is pointing out that there may be a huge difference in the experiences of NQTs who have gained 40 M level credits in comparison with an NQT who has gained 120 M level credits and also that differentiated PD is needed as a result, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development. It must also be acknowledged, of course, that many NQTs will not have any M level credits and some will not have an academic qualification at all.

Moving to the M level PGCE required further work for providers, in order to re-validate their programmes, implement curriculum development changes and support tutors’ professional development. It should also be acknowledged that some providers could have chosen to re-validate to the M level PGCE for recruitment purposes – an important financial consideration, as a failure to fully recruit to the places allocated could lead to the TDA reducing future allocations. In line with the changes, Barker (2007, p. 20) commented that:

Training institutions with traditional hands-on courses are hurrying to create masters level programmes to attract students seeking the postgraduate gold standard. Many universities ... say they support the change. But some experts

believe it will lead to classroom craft being devalued and an over-emphasis on academe.

These views differ somewhat from those of Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008). Whereas Barker (2007) considers the M level PGCE as the 'gold standard' to which trainees will aspire, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) see it as a 'surplus' model. Obviously, there will be a greater emphasis on 'academe' for those who undertake the M level PGCE, as it does present a greater academic challenge. However, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008, pp. 5 - 6) do not consider the M level PGCE to be much more difficult, but they do acknowledge that:

there may be additional elements to a PGCE M-level programme which would not be evident in the PGCE H-level. These could include specific study skills sessions focusing on such aspects as writing in a critically reflective way, accessing and reading journal articles, using methods of referencing texts consistently, research methods, and data collection and analysis techniques... Study at M-level requires autonomy, independence and time for reflection.

Therefore, it would appear that those who undertake the M level PGCE have an additional workload, due to the requirements of M level study. However, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell 2008, p. 6) stress that "the PGCE M-level does not entail more work than the PGCE H-Level; indeed it may even require less", as some M level assignments have been devised so that trainees do fewer, longer assignments, which represents a lesser workload than more, shorter assignments. Therefore, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) conclude that, whilst they recognize that there are additional elements to the M level PGCE, it primarily entails a different - rather than additional - workload. On the contrary, Domaille (2008, in Sewell 2008, p. 73) believes that writing in a formal way to gain masters credits "is the element of additional work that cannot be underestimated" and recognizes that the additional work is necessary to inform trainees' practice at a deeper level.

Also, it should be noted that the move to the M level PGCE – incorporating a greater theoretical content at M level – significantly contradicts government interventions in recent decades for a more practical programme of school-based training (as outlined above). Barker (2007, p. 20) captures these contradictions, reporting that one professor of education believed that M level study was “anathema to what PGCE should be about ... For years, governments have been telling us teacher training needed to be a hands-on school business, and the next thing we discover, it has to be an academic discipline. This may devalue the craft of the classroom and privilege academic rigour.” Revell (2005, p. 153) supports this position, believing that ITT should only result in QTS as “the start of a teacher’s professional training.” Therefore, the introduction of the M level PGCE significantly moves on from the 1970s when teaching became a graduate profession and it became necessary to qualify as a teacher – which gave rise to the ‘original’ PGCE. However, over thirty years later, it could be considered that teaching has started to become a partly postgraduate profession (rather than a graduate profession) for some entrants, particularly as trainees’ M level credits can usually be transferred towards masters degrees following ITT and encourages teachers to complete a full masters degree. As the M level PGCE obviously contains M level credits, some providers, which are also HEIs, encourage NQTs to continue studying at M level towards a masters degree after ITT. Sewell (2008) supports the idea of NQTs undertaking M level study immediately after ITT, considering this is a good time as the relationship between theory, research and practice is still fresh in their minds. However, this is not an altruistic strategy since some HEIs encourage their trainees to keep their credits within the same institution – thereby increasing the uptake of M level programmes by teachers (ESCalate, 2008). Also, this is in contrast with Jackson’s findings (2009) that trainees at the end of the M level PGCE were keen to continue with M level study, but

not as NQTs – they preferred to resume their studies when established later in their career. This is also in contrast with Graham-Matheson’s research (2010) that M level was not appropriate for everyone. Furthermore, not all HEIs accept M level PGCE credits towards their masters degrees. As Sewell (2008, p. 109) advises trainees, “It is noteworthy that some institutions will ask you to ‘hand back’ your PGCE if you wish to use the credits as part of a Masters award.” This is due to the notion of ‘double-counting’ – ie. using the same credits for two different awards, under guidelines for the accreditation of prior learning (APL).

It is suggested that there are many benefits of M level study for trainees and teachers. Jackson (2008a, p. 1) considers that “Study at Master’s level may arguably have the potential to enrich the professionalism of teachers, build capacity in the profession and foster critical awareness, not only in the teachers themselves but also in the children and young people they serve.” Therefore, the benefits could be widespread for the profession and pupils’ attainment. Jackson (2008a, p. 2) illustrates the benefits and impact of the M level PGCE, commenting that:

One teacher educator at the 2007 UCET conference suggested to us that one of the benefits to children of Master’s level would be that they would be ‘learning from a teacher who has been given “stilts” and can see over and beyond the immediate, the obvious, the accepted, the norm.’ An exciting prospect indeed.

In particular, Jackson (2008a, p. 3) believes that those who have undertaken the M level PGCE “will want to know more about why things are as they are, they will want to challenge and ask ‘what if we were to try a different way’”. Certainly, M level study should equip trainees to be able to conduct small-scale research and be more enquiring. Also, Graham-Matheson (2010, p. 7) found that the M level PGCE was “thought to be particularly important for primary trainees, who need the confidence and

skills to question policies and initiatives”. Therefore, there may be some differences between the primary and secondary phases and potentially different advantages and disadvantages.

Clearly, the M level PGCE could have a positive impact on pupils and teachers. However, there may be other issues to consider. Hawley (2008, p. 4) believes that the M level PGCE may also have an impact on recruitment and asks:

Which qualification should schools look for in recruiting new teachers? How much should schools value the M-level PGCE over the professional-level PGCE? Will holding a professional or postgraduate PGCE indicate a likely difference in the teaching approach of an NQT?

To-date, it would appear that some schools are not sufficiently aware of the M level PGCE to consider these issues (Jackson, 2009). Also, it would appear that the links between theory and practice have been insufficiently linked for there to be a major difference in the teaching approach employed by NQTs who have undertaken the M level PGCE (Jackson, 2009).

Hawley (2008) also considers that the M level PGCE may have significant implications for CPD and a particular impact on NQT induction and EPD and how these are managed in the future. For example, Hawley (2008, p. 4) asks “How should schools manage the NQT induction year? Should there be different approaches for those with M-level PGCE and those who have completed professional level PGCEs?” Obviously, NQTs are entering the profession with very different qualifications and forms of training and so Hawley (2008) is suggesting a review of NQT induction and EPD. Furthermore, as shown above, there are also many routes into teaching now, other than the H level and M level PGCE, which means that NQTs have had very different ITT/assessment experiences and maybe further consideration should be given to the nature and content of NQT induction and EPD in light of the changes which have arisen over the years. Hawley

(2008, p. 4) believes that the “planning of EPD routes for beginning teachers needs to follow the trend now expected in teaching pupils; in becoming much more flexible and personalised”. Certainly, differentiation has long been implemented by teachers in pupils’ learning and there is now greater flexibility and personalisation in pupils’ learning, so surely this should be applied to teachers’ learning too.

Great progress has been made in ITT via a range of programmes and the introduction of the M level PGCE, which has raised the status and quality of teaching. At a regional MTL consultation event the TDA (2008c) confirmed this, describing ITT as ‘world-class’ in England. However, criticisms were made regarding the next stage of a teacher’s career - EPD. Therefore, in Chapter 3 current arrangements for teachers’ professional development in England post-qualification is explored.

Before moving on to consider the future of the PGCE, it is appropriate to consider in greater depth the specific nature of ‘M-levelness’ in ITT, according to QAA guidance (2008).

2.4.1 ‘M-levelness’ in ITT

Defining ‘M-levelness’ is problematic, as it relates to M level pre- and post-qualification and M level across different courses, such as the MA and MTL, and other professional programmes with a range of different credits. Consequently, the descriptor for a qualification at M level (QAA, 2008) (see Appendix G) is broad, articulates the intended learning outcomes and wider attributes students are expected to achieve for full masters degrees (eg. the MA, MTL and integrated masters degrees) and is a reference point to be used for other qualifications at the same level – ie. postgraduate diplomas (PGDips), PGCerts and the

PGCE. Therefore, this descriptor reflects achievement in M level qualifications which are both pre- and post-qualification and reflects a wide range of credits, which essentially demand different volumes of learning and differing levels of intensity, complexity and density of study. As a result, this presents a tension since not all of the qualifications at M level will meet all of the expectations of the qualification descriptor, although for the award of full masters degrees all criteria must obviously be met in full. QAA (2008) guidance states that the title of masters should be used only for qualifications that meet, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptor at level 7, and, therefore, it may be more appropriate for HEIs to use the term 'level 7 PGCE' and to refrain from the term 'M level PGCE' (which has become common), as this would be more in the spirit of QAA guidance and may assist HEIs in dealing with some of the problematic issues concerning level 7 work in ITT. As stated in the framework, when used with the stem 'postgraduate', "the title 'certificate' should normally signify learning outcomes which would imply study equivalent to at least one-third of a full-time academic year" (QAA 2008, p. 32). Consequently, the PGCE at level 7, which requires students to spend only 34% of the programme on academic study, represents no more than the minimum level study required to achieve a level 7 qualification. Typically, it is suggested that a PGCE programme at level 7 might have outcomes requiring demonstration of understanding and critical awareness of some current issues at the forefront of an area of professional practice, but not a practical understanding of techniques of research, which could come later following greater professional experience as part of progression to a full masters degree. Therefore, although the PGCE at level 7 indicates a smaller volume of learning than a PGDip or full masters degree and an associated differentiation in the range of learning outcomes HEIs can reasonably determine that PGCE programmes where most outcomes are assessed at level 7 should be at level 7.

However, it is also suggested that some of those studying at level 7 within an ITT programme may not have sufficient professional experience upon which to base their research and that, consequently, richer and more meaningful research may be more likely to be produced by teachers working at level 7 post-qualification.

As the PGCE is “an academic programme providing both professional training leading to QTS and a course of academic study leading to an academic qualification” (www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/PGCEstatement), HEIs are responsible for trainees’ professional training and academic education. This is significant and sometimes problematic, since HEIs have a dual role and also a greater academic role since the introduction of the level 7 PGCE. However, it is a dual role which has worked very successfully for many years leading to world-class ITT (TDA, 2008a, c) and recognition by Ofsted (2010) that the most outstanding ITT is found in HE-led provision, for which M level ITT may have played a part. Therefore, it is suggested that this must continue to be part of the conversation around the professional education of teachers, despite the current moves to school-led ITT. This literature review has also shown the level 7 PGCE to be very successful and it is suggested that ‘M-levelness’ may be the last hook HEIs have in ITT, with the level 7 aspect residing with HEIs, as a measure to ensure some control over the quality assurance and enhancement of ITT and to create a more distinctive role for HEIs in ITT at a time of change to a school-led system.

In addition to HEIs’ current responsibility for the professional training and academic education of most trainee teachers, HEIs clearly have a responsibility for designing, approving and reviewing academic programmes at the appropriate level. HEIs

also have a responsibility to schools as employers and ITT partners responsible for the school-based element. However, Jackson's (2009) research indicates that trainees and schools have a limited understanding of 'M-levelness', which is somewhat concerning at a time of moves to school-led ITT and also as the level 7 PGCE had been in widespread operation for two years at the time of Jackson's (2009) research. This shows that there may still be much work needing to be done by HEIs to embed level 7 into PGCE programmes, especially as "Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by higher education qualifications" (QAA 2008, p. 6), and is a matter for further research. This further work by HEIs is important so that trainees undertaking the level 7 PGCE can meet (and exceed) the demands of level 7 study and so that schools can support and extend the development of these trainees and ultimately support and extend the development of NQTs they employ, who now have very different experiences of ITT.

2.5 The future of the PGCE

Speaking at the National College Annual Leadership Conference on 17th June 2010 and just weeks into the new Conservative-Liberal coalition government, Gove set out government plans to reform ITT "to shift trainee teachers out of college and into the classroom" (www.education.gov.uk/news/news/nationalcollege), so that trainees gain more practical experience. Then, in June 2011 the new DfE – formerly the DCSF - published a green paper, proposing that more opportunities are provided for a larger proportion of trainees to undertake school-led ITT – expanding SCITT programmes and encouraging a new national network of Teaching Schools to lead on ITT (DfE, 2011). However, as shown above, trainees spend a significant amount of the ITT period in

practice. Also, as Professor Smedley, Dean of education at Edge Hill University in the UK, said “The question we should be asking is what would happen if all schools were made to become involved in teacher training. Mr. Gove will find that many don’t want to. We struggle to get them to take trainees” (Maddern 2010b, p. 11). It is certainly true that some schools do not engage or do not engage fully in ITT and so Gove may find schools less than eager to take on an increasing role. Maddern (2010b, p. 11) concludes the article, suggesting that “If Mr Gove thinks there is any kind of rivalry between schools and academics he would be wrong. Teachers look set to be the dons’ unexpected allies if there is any battle to keep university training departments open.” This could be the case, as schools see their core purpose as the education of their pupils and already have many other priorities above ITT. Nevertheless, some schools – particularly Teaching Schools - will welcome the move due to the attached funding and some Teaching Schools have already applied to become ITT providers as is their right with Teaching School status. However, there were only just over 200 Teaching Schools in 2012 – 13, which is insufficient to lead ITT overall, but Gove’s plans are to increase the number of Teaching Schools over the coming years. Therefore, their remit for ITT could represent a serious threat to HE-led ITT if these schools become ITT providers themselves.

Furthermore, Gove has angered many academics and teachers, by insisting that teaching is a practical activity, arguing that “Teaching is a craft and ... best learnt as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman. Watching others, and being rigorously observed yourself as you develop, is the best route to acquiring mastery in the classroom” (Maddern 2010a, p. 4). However, these views received widespread criticism from a range of key stakeholders, such as schools, teaching unions, UCET, universities and the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, which argue that teaching is more than a craft

and that it is essential for schools and universities to work alongside each other to train teachers (Maddern, 2010a). In line again with the New Right, Woodhead also relegated teaching to a practical craft and criticised the role of HEIs in ITT, following Gove's announcement. Woodhead (2010, p. 9) told a prospective trainee:

Teaching is a practical craft, best mastered in real classrooms working alongside real teachers. There is a place for reflection, of course, but all good GTP placements involve opportunities for students to discuss their progress with mentors. PGCE courses should come later, if at all.

... I would stop funding university departments of education and give the money to schools. Each school could develop a training programme according to its needs, in partnership with universities if it so wished. Or not, if it didn't.

Therefore, these views coincide with Gove's views and it would appear that these are precisely the government's plans, which is extremely worrying for university education departments and also worrying for future trainees who would only be trained in a way to suit one particular school's needs and would be 'encultured' in that environment. To-date it is only a minority who train via EBRs – "Currently, about 33,000 people train as teachers in universities every year and just 5,000 train in schools" (Maddern 2010a, p. 4). However, Gove's plans would reverse this position. James Noble-Rogers, executive director of UCET, warned that this shift would cause havoc (Maddern, 2010a). Furthermore, Noble-Rogers argued that "This will wipe out some good-quality provision in universities across the board and will have a destabilising effect on a system which has consistently been rated as good and excellent by Ofsted ... This has the potential to dumb down training" (Maddern 2010a, p.4). As Noble-Rogers states, ITT is rated very highly by Ofsted (2010) and was heralded as 'world-class' as recently as 2008 (TDA, 2008a, c).

Despite great strides being made in ITT and the introduction of a successful M level PGCE (Paton, 2005; ESCalate, 2008; UCET,

2008a), the future of the previously very stable PGCE looks seriously in doubt due to Gove's announcement to reallocate funding for ITT from HEIs into schools, meaning that universities would not be able to afford to run PGCEs and HE senior leaders will close them down (Kelly, 2010). However, Gove's plans appear to be non-sensical, as PGCE programmes already have a large school-based element and yet still time in universities to ensure that theory and practice can be synthesised. Also, Gove's plans for ITT will reduce the status of the profession, as he described teaching as a 'craft' (Maddern 2010b). Therefore, "Many are worried that these words risk undoing much of the change of the past two decades, which has seen teaching transformed from what was regarded as a semi-professional job to masters-level profession" (Maddern 2010b, p. 10). Kelly (2010, p. 2) considers that Gove has marked the PGCE "for execution or a lingering death" and asks:

Why should the state assume there is only one good way to train a teacher? Why should it and not schools and students decide what works best? And why would the state waste time, energy and potentially large amounts of money fixing a system that all parties agreed before the election has produced the best teachers in a generation?

These questions are certainly very appropriate in light of the widely-regarded success of ITT and the PGCE over many years. UCET is also critical of Gove's plans and their potential implications for the PGCE - quoting TDA data, Noble-Rogers stated that 80% of NQTs rate the PGCE and undergraduate ITT programmes as 'good' or 'very good', and highlighted that "Ofsted reports reach similar conclusions" (2010, p. 27). Noble-Rogers continues to comment that "There are issues concerning the length of the PGCE and the need for teachers to have structured EPD that builds on their initial training, but its quality and relevance is not open to question" (2010, p. 27). Therefore, UCET does not believe that the PGCE is perfect, but considers

that it is of a very high quality and relevant to the needs of trainees and an important starting point for structured EPD.

2.6 Overall discussion of literature

Research by Jackson (2008a, b, 2009) and Graham-Matheson (2010) has been very important to this literature review, due to their findings from the perspectives of key stakeholders regarding the M level PGCE in generic terms. Also, 'popular' literature has been used regarding this field, drawing on the perspectives of eminent academics working within the field. However, it is also acknowledged that there is a paucity of germane research literature in this field, possibly due to university teacher-educators needing to ensure their own survival in recent particularly turbulent times, by working especially hard to recruit to TDA targets, to ensure high levels of student retention and to set up alternative partnership practices with schools.

Consequently, it is suggested that ITT recruitment and retention have been higher priorities for university teacher-educators in recent years, above research and scholarly activity, which may have led to a dearth of research and publications concerning the M level PGCE and the different PGCE models now operating across England. Therefore, it was essential to draw research literature relating to the emergent conceptual/ theoretical issues from other sources related to this field within different educational contexts. In particular, research literature concerning the most important conceptual/ theoretical issues related to this field were drawn from research by Browne-Ferrigno (2003) regarding duality of identity and student choice, research by Tinto (1975) and Thomas (2002) regarding student retention and research by Simkins (2009) concerning the synthesis of theory with practice. The following section provides a distillation of

these four key concepts and a brief discussion of their nature and regarding these sources.

In the absence of research literature concerning identity and choice within the new PGCE context, research literature regarding these concepts were drawn from Browne-Ferrigno (2003). Although Browne-Ferrigno's research (2003) comes from the field of educational leadership and management and is based on the transition to headship, identity and choice were also found to be important issues for students in Browne-Ferrigno's research (2003) and it is suggested that the same principles may apply for trainee teachers. Firstly, due to the launch of the level 7 PGCE, some trainee teachers are unsure regarding where the bias in ITT now lies, which leads to confusion concerning their identity – are they students undertaking an academic programme or trainee teachers undertaking a professional programme? Browne-Ferrigno's research (2003) concluded that teachers often feel some confusion when there is this 'duality of identity' in their professional lives, which may lead to them not assuming additional work/ roles. It is suggested that the same principles apply for this research, in that some trainees may feel confusion regarding their identity if they undertake additional level 7 work – ie assuming a greater student identity - when they had made the conscious decision to become a teacher – ie. assuming a professional role as a trainee teacher, with a focus on professional practice above academic study. Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) research highlights the confusion regarding duality of identity in transition to headship, but it is also suggested that duality of identity may be especially confusing for trainee teachers, who are in the early stages of their career and attempting to adopt a professional identity as a teacher as they move from ITT to actual professional practice, which may be harmful for achievement and retention on ITT programmes, exacerbating teacher shortages. Secondly, due to the widespread

introduction of the level 7 PGCE, trainees now have the choice of the level at which to study the PGCE when undertaking the programme in an ITT provider offering both PGCE awards. In the absence of germane research literature regarding choice between the two PGCE awards, research literature has been drawn from Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) research, which concluded that students who are presented with choice have a more meaningful engagement on programmes. It is suggested that the same principles apply for this research – ie more meaningful engagement on PGCE programmes may arise by allowing trainees the choice of the level at which to study the PGCE, which may be positive in terms of motivation, attainment, the student experience, retention and subsequent employability.

Student retention in ITT is a problematic and complex matter (Whitehead and Postlethwaite, 2002) and another key, conceptual issue to emerge from this literature review. Again, due to the lack of germane research literature concerning student retention within different models of PGCE programmes and the level 7 PGCE, research literature relating to the concept of retention was drawn from Tinto's (1975) and Thomas' (2002) research around models of retention in HEIs. Although it is suggested that these existing models of integration best fit 'typical' undergraduate students, it is suggested that these generic concepts of retention are important to this research, as literature indicates that there could potentially be problems regarding integration for trainee teachers now undertaking different PGCE awards which will need to be managed carefully, and that the same principles may apply in supporting retention.

Finally, another key, conceptual issue to emerge from this literature review concerns the problematic issue of the synthesis of theory with practice. Due to the paucity of germane research literature regarding theory and practice within the context of the

level 7 PGCE, research literature was drawn from Simkins' (2009) research, which shows how blended learning can effectively facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice. Although this model is based on professional development within the field of educational leadership and management, it is suggested that the concept of blended learning to facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice is important to this research, as the same principles may apply for trainee teachers undertaking academic study at level 7 alongside professional practice, as a means to improving their practice.

Summary

This literature review indicates that the M level PGCE was introduced due to international and national demands from the Bologna Process (1999), the establishment of the FHEQ in 2004 and the call from the TDA for ITT providers to declare the level at which they were offering the PGCE. A wide range of perspectives have also emerged regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT from key stakeholders. In particular, key issues have emerged regarding duality of identity, student choice, retention, and the synthesis of theory with practice, which have been drawn from research literature relating to this field from other educational contexts, due to the paucity of germane research literature in this particular field.

The background to this chapter shows that people now enter teaching via a range of routes and with very different qualifications and experiences. This is shown in table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: ITT programmes/ routes in England

ITT programmes/ routes	Qualification/ professional recognition/ experience
Assessment Only route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTS
Graduate Teacher Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTS (sometimes with level 6 or 7 credits)
Teach First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTS • Leadership training • Level 7 credits optional
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTS • Level 6 PGCE • Level 6 credits
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTS • Level 7 PGCE • Level 7 credits (average of 60 credits and up to 120 level 7 credits).

From a review of the above programmes/ routes, it is evident that there are significant differences regarding education and training. It could also be considered that this variety has potentially created a real difference in status and levels of education and training by the multi-tier system to enter the profession in England, which may have far-reaching consequences in the future for the quality of learning and teaching, career prospects and professional development.

There have also been criticisms of the links between theory and practice in ITT and whether theory is beneficial in ITT at all. However, it is suggested that theory can improve teaching greatly when trainees are given the opportunity to put it into practice, via coaching from experts. Clearly, the move to a largely school-based training model in recent years means more than ever that more effective links between theory and practice need to be made explicit to trainees, therefore.

Regarding research question 1a, it would appear that the introduction of the M level PGCE was imposed upon HEIs due to the Bologna Declaration (1999), which led to the establishment of the FHEQ in England and providers needing to ensure their programmes fitted into the framework and the call from the TDA for all providers to declare at which level(s) their PGCE was offered. In addition, the nomenclature of the 'original' Postgraduate Certificate in Education was confusing, as the qualification was only postgraduate in time which led to confusion amongst trainees who genuinely believed they were undertaking a truly postgraduate course at masters level. The issue of an H level PGCE which was postgraduate in time but not in academic level had also been a matter of concern for many providers, genuinely believing their trainees were operating at a higher level. Consequently, a minority of providers had already taken it upon themselves to re-validate their PGCE at M level. Also, providers and partner schools have been striving for many years to introduce effective strategies to differentiate support, in order to provide better support for 'weaker' trainees to make progress and also to extend the progress of 'stronger' trainees. Therefore, providers offering both PGCEs may use the two awards as a differentiation strategy. In addition, it is suggested that the move to the M level PGCE may have been considered by providers as a measure to regain some of the control previously lost - following government interventions - to a large school-

based element in recent decades and to create a more distinctive role for themselves once more. Consequently, it is maybe not surprising that there has been a recent and increasing trend for providers to re-validate the PGCE to a truly postgraduate programme and the relative speed with which M level PGCEs became available, as providers wanted to be seen to be offering the higher level award, rather than the professional/ H level PGCE.

Regarding research question 1b, it would appear that there are multiple perspectives regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT (ESCalate, 2008; Jackson, 2008a, b; 2009; Graham-Matheson, 2010). It is now clear that the M level PGCE has become firmly established and increasingly widespread since September 2007 (ESCalate, 2008; UCET, 2008a). The M level PGCE has been a success overall, with good pass rates, and is considered to have been well-organized and implemented well by providers (ESCalate, 2008). However, data are not available to show how many trainees have undertaken the M level PGCE, so it cannot be established which PGCE is currently the norm. Data gained from UCET (Barker, 2007) and ESCalate (2008) demonstrate that only a small minority of providers now offers only the H level PGCE but that the M level PGCE has quickly become widespread and firmly established – either as the only award or alongside the H level PGCE. Overall, providers are now operating different PGCE models: the H level PGCE only, the M level PGCE only or both PGCE awards (see table 2.3 above).

In addition, issues of workload have emerged, but literature is contradictory in this area – regarding whether this has brought about an additional or different workload for trainees. However, the M level PGCE seems to have brought about additional workload for tutors. Also, it would appear that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT are useful in terms of self-interest to

HEIs, aiming to increase student numbers by encouraging trainees to transfer their M level credits towards masters degrees in their institutions. However, some feel that M level study contradicts the drive in recent years for more practical school-based training, which devalues professional practice and over-emphasises academe.

M level work within ITT requires trainees to undertake more sophisticated work than at H level, to reflect more significantly on their teaching and to be able to synthesise theory with practice. For trainees, in general, it has emerged that those completing the M level PGCE need to access a greater amount of theory, in order to meet M level criteria. However, as Hobson (2003) highlighted above, theory has traditionally not been a particularly popular aspect with trainees and the greater school-based element has given them what they wanted. However, can teachers fulfil their ever-increasing and changing roles effectively, without access to educational theory? Is M level study now needed in ITT to ensure teachers keep pace with changes in education and increased professional requirements? The M level PGCE brings theory to the forefront more prominently than before and demands that theory and practice be synthesised. At this stage it is also necessary to acknowledge that M level study is often perceived as relating purely to the writing of assignments, but it is suggested that M level study should permeate throughout the programme for effective synthesis of theory and practice (Sewell, 2008).

Another theme to emerge is that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT have brought about a two-tier system by the re-validation to the H level and M level PGCE. It is also considered that the two awards may have consequences for pay and status. Issues of teacher shortages and recruitment – especially within the inner city areas of England – have led to different ITT

programmes/ assessment routes which could now be leading towards a multi-tier teaching profession, in which some have experienced no training but assessment only, some have experienced very practical training, some have experienced a far more academic approach and in which some trainees have experienced leadership training. It is also perceived that the changes in the PGCE have brought about confusion for trainees and prospective trainees, who are wondering whether they have to study at masters level. Also, there is a general lack of awareness of the two PGCEs by schools. In addition, the M level PGCE and M level work may create more reflective and more analytical teachers or may foster a greater interest in lifelong learning, education and the benefits of M level study – further improving standards in the profession and/ or supporting retention.

It is suggested that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT could have been measures to enable providers to regain some of the control previously lost due to the move to a large school-based element and the need for providers to assert a more distinctive role for themselves once more. Therefore, the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT could be perceived as providers (and especially HE ITT providers) re-asserting the view of ITT as ITE – ie. an academic discipline – and re-asserting their place in the process, by ensuring that theory and M level study become more prominent. In this way, it is suggested that some providers may be using the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT to make clearer distinctions between the PGCE and EBRs, which are predominantly school-based and focus on QTS. Therefore, it would appear that HE ITT providers have tried to move away from what has largely become competence-based training via the Standards for QTS to programmes with more academic rigour. This also gives trainees an entitlement to M level study, which may be continued into masters degrees in their institutions, thereby encouraging teachers to maintain greater relationships

than before with HEIs. The M level PGCE and M level work in ITT may also be one supporting factor in Ofsted's findings (2010) that there is more outstanding provision in HE-led ITT programmes than in other programmes.

Overall, it is suggested that the introduction of M level ITT represents a landmark for the teaching profession, which could bring about many benefits, such as more critically reflective teachers who will be able to respond more creatively to challenges in education and foster more critically reflective pupils in turn. However, it is necessary for providers offering M level ITT to ensure that this aspect permeates throughout the programme by working more closely with schools to integrate M level work further. Also, although there are many benefits of M level work in ITT it is necessary to consider the implications of this for recruitment and for how NQT induction and EPD are managed, since NQTs are now entering the profession with a range of professional and academic qualifications and different professional experiences.

However, the future of the PGCE looks seriously in doubt in favour of a shift to school-led ITT. So, why the move to greater school-led training and the transfer of funding away from universities to schools? The right-wing ideological position is that teaching is a practical craft and that theory is not important in ITT. Also, school-based programmes such as the GTP and the assessment only route can be completed in as little as one term, whereas the PGCE is undertaken over one academic year. Nevertheless, questions must be asked regarding this decision, as ITT was considered to be 'world-class' (TDA, 2008a, c) and what this will mean for the future of high quality ITT. Unfortunately, this could spell the end for the very well-regarded PGCE and also the now very successful M level PGCE.

Finally, by the introduction of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT, it is suggested that M level study may support more effective teaching and raise the status of teaching as a profession. Although 'M-levelness' is problematic, as it relates to M level pre- and post-qualification and different courses and professional programmes with a range of different credits, it has been very successful in ITT and could be the last remaining hook HEIs have in ITT and its quality assurance and enhancement. These themes will be taken up again in the next chapter, in examining aspirations for a masters level profession for qualified teachers.

Chapter 3 Review of literature: Professional development for teachers, aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL

Following on from research regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT, this chapter focuses on the professional development of qualified teachers. This helps the study by reviewing key literature regarding changes in PD in the last decade, aspirations for a masters level profession and the MTL. To start to address research question 2 - regarding the rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL and perceptions of key stakeholders - these issues are reviewed within the following contexts:

- professional development for teachers;
- M level professional development for teachers;
- the Masters in Teaching and Learning.

3.1 Professional development for teachers

In order to examine aspirations for a masters level profession in England it is important to consider the situation regarding PD undertaken by teachers before plans for a masters level profession and the MTL were launched. In this section, PD is discussed under the stages of EPD and CPD. EPD is defined as PD for NQTs and recently qualified teachers (RQTs) – ie. those in their first five years of teaching. CPD is defined as PD for teachers with more than five years of experience.

3.1.1 Early Professional Development

There have been many criticisms in recent years regarding PD and EPD, in particular. The GTCE, former professional body for teaching in England (which was abolished by the coalition government in 2012), and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), a teaching union, jointly commissioned a study to bring together key messages from a range of research and evaluation projects concerning teachers' PD. The GTCE/ ATL survey (2006) showed that current EPD provision in England could be substantially improved and that, in contrast with high levels of satisfaction regarding ITT, only 20% of NQTs felt their professional needs had been met. The survey also showed that there is insufficient support from schools for PD. In addition, teachers have been critical of NQT induction and EPD. For example, Ofsted (2003) published NQTs' criticisms regarding induction. One assistant head reported that "For many teaching staff, especially in their early career, the quality of development and support they receive is a bit of a lottery" (Carrington 2010, p. 7). Also, the TDA (2009a) declared that PD should take account of previous knowledge and expertise. Jackson (2008a) warned that "If no account is taken of the Master's study that NQTs have undertaken, it will perhaps be difficult to tailor induction training and further CPD to be relevant to these beginning teachers" (www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/how-could-masters-level-pgces-affect-cpd-3171). This is in line with literature in the previous chapter which discussed the implications for teachers who had undertaken different forms of ITT and concurs with Hawley (2008) who considers that there may be a huge difference in the experiences of NQTs now, which needs to be addressed. The TDA also outlined that EPD is considered as the stage when the quality and quantity of training declines (TDA, 2008a, c; www.ternsrcseminars.net/michaeldaybio.htm). At the UCET

Annual Conference, Dr. Michael Day, former Executive Director for Training at the TDA, and Professor Chris Husbands, Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London in the UK and a former appointed Board Member of the TDA, set out the case for the MTL in improving induction - stating that NQTs enter teaching with a range of professional learning needs and although some schools, LAs and HEIs work closely together to meet these needs, the quality of induction is variable and the quality of support for professional learning declines after induction (2008a).

Following induction, teachers become part of performance management procedures and should continue to engage in further EPD activities, but often there are few opportunities post-induction and little structure for EPD. Therefore, there is a need for a consistent infrastructure, in order to develop NQTs' knowledge, understanding, skills and teaching through the guidance of expert, experienced and qualified educational practitioners (Kyriacou and O'Connor, 2003). It is only when teachers start to engage in CPD activities later in their career that further PD activities typically arise. This next stage of professional development is examined in the following section.

3.1.2 Continuing Professional Development

The James Committee of 1972 reported that in-service education and training (INSET) should be given the highest priority and pointed out that the most successful and motivated teachers had benefited from INSET (Gaunt, 1997). The committee also "highlighted the importance of wider opportunities for research by practising teachers" (Gaunt 1997, p. 10). Following these recommendations, the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers (ACSTT) was established in 1974, stating

that INSET should meet “not only the needs of individual teachers, but also the needs of ... the school” (Gaunt 1997, p.3). Ofsted (2002) also concluded that schools in general failed to allow enough time to support effective PD and to ensure that acquired knowledge and skills were consolidated, implemented and disseminated. Although all teachers now take part in some form of PD during the annual 30 hours of mandatory PD, this is low in comparison with some of the highest performing school systems across the world, which provide their teachers with up to 100 hours of mandatory CPD (McKinsey, 2007). Although the amount of CPD is low in England, there are also other concerns regarding PD. For example, Boyle *et al* (2005, p. 4) criticize the brevity of many typical, traditional methods of CPD, arguing that:

traditional approaches to professional development such as short workshops or conference attendance do foster teachers’ awareness or interest in deepening their knowledge and skills. However these approaches to professional development appear insufficient to foster learning which fundamentally alters what teachers teach or how they teach.

It is suggested that the typical approaches to CPD are lacking if teachers are to enhance their knowledge and skills. Boyle *et al* (2005, p. 5) believe that PD “that has a substantial number of contact hours and is sustained over a period of time has a stronger impact on practice and is more consistent with systemic reform efforts than professional development of a more limited duration.” More CPD is needed, but it is also essential to reconsider the nature of CPD if standards in schools are to improve. Kennedy (2005) also highlights the need for more time to be given to CPD, but considers that this should include greater reflection, criticality and analysis – features typical of M level descriptors (Appendix G). It is also generally considered that teachers who engage in reflection are better teachers (Reed *et al*, 2002). Of PD, Boyle *et al* (2005, p. 4) comment that “Recent research has shown that PD activities now take the form of

collaborative action research which is of a more long-term nature than the usual PD activities. ... teachers who get involved in this type of PD activity can become more reflective, critical, and analytical.” Therefore, much CPD has shifted to more sustained PD. Furthermore, the key words of reflective, critical and analytical show that CPD has begun to include intellectual challenge and moved towards a higher level. For example, in the previous decade, two new bodies were established - the NCSL (a former government quango and now an executive agency) and the GTCE (an independent body for teachers, but which was abolished in 2012) - with a remit for teachers’ PD, leading to professional recognition and also M level credits, if desired, via the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). NCSL programmes and the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA) – former PD strand of the GTCE and now owned by the Cathedrals group of universities and university colleges (www.gtce.org.uk/tla/tla_update) - became increasingly popular with schools, leading to the conclusion that the profession has moved towards more sustained, in-depth CPD.

Finally, Jones (2010) set out the current climate for PD as having three elements: the *political* element (the government stating how PD *must* be done), the *professional* element (HEIs stating how PD *should* be done) and the *pragmatic* alternative (teachers stating how PD *will* be done). Furthermore, Jones (2010) suggested that it is the pragmatic alternative which will win over in difficult economic times and that teachers will decide for themselves which form of PD they will undertake.

3.2: M level professional development for teachers

The section above shows that teachers’ PD in England has become more sustained and sometimes also leads to professional

recognition and M level credits. In addition, with the move to more sustained PD activities it appears that recognition of the importance of reflection, criticality and analysis – features of M level study – has emerged. Therefore, the recent history of PD shows a path leading to some examples of M level PD for teachers.

Greater choice in CPD and new funding arrangements in England forced changes in the role of HEIs, now having to compete in an INSET market. Consequently, many HEIs re-designed courses and offer programmes which are flexible and accessible to teachers studying part-time. Gaunt (1997, p. 6) outlines that:

This ... involved changing course structures, content, modes of delivery and assessment while maintaining academic rigour. Most providers have changed from linear to modular schemes, which offer greater scope for ...study, flexibility in pace and modes of attendance, a variety of entry and exit points, recognition of prior and parallel learning and credit accumulation and transfer schemes.

Therefore, many HEIs provide flexible opportunities for teachers to embark on masters degrees, which encourage them “to research and evaluate their own practice” (Gaunt 1997, p. 6). As a result, some teachers now take advantage of APEL – which recognizes existing knowledge and skills – or the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) – which allows teachers to transfer credits from ITT, for example, onto a masters degree in some HEIs. Also, some teachers who undertook ITT through the Teach First programme have also continued with M level study to complete a masters of arts (MA) in educational leadership, which is fully-funded for those who complete within three years of starting Teach First. Also, although many HEIs do provide effective M level study for teachers which are designed to help them develop as practitioners (Hoare, 2010a), the TDA (2008a) considered that more needed to be done to meet teachers’ PD needs. The perceived benefits of sustained PD were already

acknowledged and teachers were starting to gain M level credits from a range of routes. Also, Wakeling (2005, p. 506) commented that:

Notwithstanding the phenomenal expansion of undergraduate numbers during the 1990s, recent postgraduate growth in the United Kingdom has been even more remarkable ... As the bachelor's degree becomes ubiquitous, its relative advantage in the labour market is diminishing.

Therefore, the increasing number of adults with bachelor's degrees – possibly due to the widening participation agenda - has led to an upgrading of qualifications and the desire for many to pursue postgraduate courses. To put this into context, in 2007 Oxford University in the UK recruited more postgraduates than undergraduates for the first time and Durham University in the UK saw an increase of 50% in its postgraduate intake in 2007 – 08 compared with the previous year (Gilbert, 2008).

The majority of postgraduates are part-time (Wakeling, 2005), which implies that most postgraduates work full-time and are studying in order to improve their qualifications and chances in the career market. The “accelerating need to train and retrain” (Wylie 2010, p. 2) has also become increasingly popular due to the downturn in the economy. In addition, Tobin (2010, p. 7) reports that “In the face of a fearsome job market and high graduate unemployment levels, postgraduate academia is booming. More than 270,000 students returned to university to add a dash of sparkle to their CVs in 2007 – 08: demand for master's degrees surged 27%.” Also, according to the Higher Education Careers Service Unit, demand for masters degrees increased by 7.4% in 2009 – 10 (Tobin, 2011). Therefore, there has been a general increasing appetite for M level study nationally. However, there are also “growing fears in academia that the rise in undergraduate fees ... will leave domestic students too indebted to afford a postgraduate education ... which could

become the preserve of foreign students” (Tobin 2011, p. 6). In addition to opposition from academics, the National Union of Students and the Society for Research into Higher Education have also voiced concerns regarding the uptake of postgraduate study, due to cuts to HE and increased undergraduate fees (Lipsett, 2011). Therefore, the difficult economic climate could start to reverse the trend for postgraduate study, particularly for English students. Also, Tobin (2010, p. 7) conveys the conclusions of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) that postgraduate study may “no longer carry the weight it used to, as increasing numbers of postgraduate qualifiers compete for jobs in UK workplaces”. Clearly, it is being suggested that a greater number of postgraduates will mean that masters degrees may also become ubiquitous, as has happened with bachelor’s degrees, and that their value may diminish as a result.

Nevertheless, it was perhaps to be expected that the former government pledged in 2007 to make teaching a masters level profession. The next section of this chapter focuses on M level study by teachers before this announcement.

3.2.1 Masters level study by teachers prior to the publication of the *Children’s Plan*

Masters level study has not been widely encouraged by schools and a minority of teachers undertake M level qualifications (Revell, 2005). However, as discussed above, the NCSL and TLA encouraged some teachers to gain M level credits via APEL and HEIs encouraged former trainees to transfer credits from ITT via APCL in order to continue studying towards masters degrees. At the start of the century, some teachers took advantage of former government funding via Best Practice Research Scholarships (BPRS) for M level study, which was subsequently replaced by

the TDA-funded postgraduate professional development (PPD) programme. From 2006, many HEIs had access to PPD funding for qualified teachers and, as a result, teachers could complete M level study via a modular approach, leading to a minimum of a postgraduate certificate. However, this funding was withdrawn at the end of 2010 – 11 by the current government.

Therefore, more opportunities had emerged for teachers to gain M level credits and complete masters degrees – as part of one or more of the above programmes. Revell (2005, p. 152) concludes that:

Thousands of teachers do go on to further study ... but they are a minority, partly because of the extra work and effort required, but mainly because there seems to be no recognition that learning is something that a teacher ought to be involved in. There are no salary rewards for a Masters ... Further study is not a requirement for any promoted post.

Revell (2005) states that only a minority of teachers undertake M level programmes, giving some possible reasons for this, and seems to suggest that teachers should receive additional payment and be eligible for promotion on achieving a masters. Pay is a general issue which is deeply dissatisfying for many teachers – Rhodes *et al* (2004b) found this to be the top factor most likely to lead to teachers leaving the profession. Sewell (2008) also discusses opportunities for promotion and pay, believing that having a masters degree will probably support teachers' career aspirations and the potential for future pay increases. Revell (2005, p. 155) also concludes that some of his suggestions “would create a more professional, more able teaching force. Teachers would be better prepared for the job ... the Masters degree would wipe out the current insecurity and inferiority that bedevils the profession.” Certainly, teaching does not have a high status and moving to a masters level profession could be a strategy to further professionalize teaching, which could give teachers

professional confidence and a professional language in which to articulate and share good practice regarding their practice.

Despite the overall trend towards postgraduate study it was still as few as 3 - 5% of teachers who engaged in masters level study, according to research by UCET (2008b), which indicated that M level study would be hugely beneficial in improving learning and teaching, but acknowledged that the number of teachers undertaking this between 2006 and 2008 decreased. The following reasons were cited: (i) lack of professional currency for academic credits, (ii) perception that M level credits are linked to individual teachers' improvement, rather than school improvement, (iii) cost, (iv) time, (v) perception that M level study is highly academic and the lack of awareness that PD has an intellectual content, and (vi) poor marketing by HEIs.

Firstly, the lack of professional currency for academic credits may be due to other PD options, such as NCSL programmes and the TLA. The second point that M level credits are perceived to be linked to individual teachers' improvement, rather than linked to school improvement, is probably true in many instances, as many teachers undertaking masters programmes do this independently and are self-funding. Therefore, they are likely to choose to study in an area linked to their own interests or career aspirations, rather than linked to their institution. Gaunt (2005) and Simkins (2009) also reinforced the general issue that PD is often perceived to relate to individuals' improvement. In particular, Simkins (2009, p. 396) considers that there is "on-going tension in much work-based learning activity between prioritising the needs, respectively, of the learner and organisation". Thirdly, cost is also obviously a barrier. M level study is perceived to be expensive, although it is suggested that it is more cost-effective and beneficial to support teachers' PD within sustained programmes, in comparison with several one-day

courses. Another barrier cited for not engaging in M level study is time. The workload of M level study could be considered by head teachers to reduce teachers' time for planning, preparation and assessment. Also, many teachers would be concerned about the work-life balance. For example, for anyone to learn and achieve, a number of basic needs have to be met first. Maslow (1943) suggested that before people can operate at a higher level, they must have their more basic needs met – ie. people must be sure that their physiological, safety and love/ belonging needs can be met, before considering other 'higher' needs relating to esteem and self-actualization. Financial cost is discussed above, but 'emotional cost' relating to time is also a barrier, which supports teachers' decisions not to undertake additional work. Crawford (2007) calls this 'emotion-weighted decision making', which arises as a result of self-awareness. Also, Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) research shows that people often feel some confusion when there is a duality of identity in their professional life, which may lead to them not assuming additional work. Another reason cited is the perception that M level study is highly academic and the lack of awareness that PD has an intellectual content. Clearly, M level study presents an academic challenge (Sewell, 2008). However, it is suggested that teaching is complex (TDA, 2008b), so it is appropriate that PD has an intellectual content. Also, teachers are graduates so it is important that PD has some intellectual challenge. Sewell (2008) argues that teachers have bachelor's degrees (an H level qualification), so should be able to bridge the gap to M level study, with support from HEI tutors. However, adults have different ability levels and it must surely be the case that M level study is too academic for some teachers - a theme which also emerged in Chapter 2 regarding the M level PGCE. Finally, poor marketing by HEIs is also cited as a barrier to M level study. All HEIs employ members of staff with marketing expertise, but there is obviously work still to be done in this area. HEIs' prime

concerns are research and learning and teaching, but it is clear that marketing is also a necessary activity and will become increasingly important in order to attract students, due to recent cuts to HE and higher fees.

Obviously, the brief nature of one-day courses is no longer considered sufficient as PD for a 'world-class' education system. Also, although greater professional experience can improve teachers' skills, reflection is an important aspect of effective PD (Eraut, 1994). The McKinsey report (2007) – commissioned by the former government to consider high quality education systems across the globe - disseminated information that masters level study in Finland had been very successful in improving the quality of 'instruction' in its schools. Consequently, the next section of this chapter considers the Finnish education system and any lessons which may be learnt.

3.2.2 The Finnish education system

Finland is a popular source of inspiration for those looking to emulate the success of its education system, as Finnish schools are repeatedly described as the best in the world (Dutton, 2010a). The former government was influenced by Finland's success and its masters level teaching profession was a contributing factor in aspirations for a masters level profession in England. The current government has also made changes to ITT recruitment in England, emulating the Finnish model.

Through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), school systems across the world are compared and Finland has consistently scored well in the last decade. However, Professor Janhunen of Helsinki University in

Finland, has been critical of judging Finland's success by PISA ratings, as the Finnish spelling system is very simple, meaning that children find it easier to learn to read and write in the first place (Dutton, 2010a).

Tryggvason, an academic at Mälardalen University in Sweden, has researched the reasons why Finnish schools are so successful (2009, p. 370) and concludes that "One important reason may be that Finnish teachers are generally highly educated because every ... teacher must have a masters degree." However, the situation is not quite as it seems. Finland education board head, Timo Lankinen, explains that "In Finland there is a strict qualification framework to become a teacher. You need a masters degree and you must have teacher education. But we have a problem. We have many teachers who do not fulfil these qualifications ... but certain schools take them on anyway" (Dutton 2010b, p. 17). Therefore, the rhetoric of the M level teaching profession in Finland is somewhat different than what happens in practice.

Another academic, Dr. Nevanpää, head of teacher education at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, also closely examined the situation in Finland. Nevanpää (Maddern 2010c, p. 35) highlights the status of ITT in Finland:

Primary education is one of the most popular courses ... to get a place graduates have to show a strong commitment to work. We have a system where teachers are highly educated, viewed as experts and given power. Teachers research their own work and they have masters level qualifications in their own subjects.

It is clear from the views of these academics that masters degrees and the high status of teaching have been a contributing factor to improvements in schools in Finland. In addition, Professor Wiliam reinforces Nevanpää's comments that ITT has a high status in Finland, stating that "In Finland, the smartest people want to be teachers" (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Also,

whereas teachers in Finland have masters degrees in their own subjects, Wiliam set out his belief that “subject knowledge does not make you a better teacher” and insists that it is “pedagogical practice which matters” (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170).

Wiliam’s views contrast with the New Right perspective – outlined in Chapter 2 – which does not value pedagogy. However, despite attributing Finland’s success partly to a masters level profession, questions should also be asked regarding whether this will necessarily bring the same levels of success to England’s education system. Wiliam is fearful of the recent tendency to attempt to import and transplant key features of successful foreign school systems, calling this ‘policy tourism’ which is dangerous because models of education do not necessarily work elsewhere (Baker, 2009). Most often, it is suggested that success is inextricably linked to context.

Although there have been recent reports of poor behaviour in Finland’s classrooms and poor teacher retention (Dutton, 2012), higher degrees are encouraged and supported in Finland – leading to a society which largely respects education and teaching.

Dutton (2010a, p. 34) reports that “Educated Finns have always been accorded a kind of elite status even if they are not wealthy... By contrast, British people can be suspicious of the highly educated. Gordon Brown could emphasise that he has a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – but he doesn’t.” Former Labour Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, is an excellent example. He graduated from Edinburgh University in the UK with a First Class Honours degree and then completed a PhD. The UK had a highly-educated leader, who could promote HE and act as a role model in this area, yet appeared to ‘play down’ his qualifications.

Furthermore, Vince Cable, Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – the department responsible for HEIs - actually berated his PhD qualification. His response to a question asking what he considered to be his greatest regret was

“Wasting three years on a PhD thesis which only three people read” (Greenstreet 2010, p. 6). From these two examples of two very prominent politicians, there may be some indication that higher degrees and education, in general, are not valued and respected in the UK as highly as in many other countries, such as Finland.

Overall, although the Finnish model may be inimitable in many ways due to very different types of society, the McKinsey report (2007) gave further credence to M level study for teachers to raise standards in schools. However, M level study was not a widespread entitlement for trainee teachers prior to the M level PGCE and has been a rarity for qualified teachers (Revell, 2005; UCET, 2008b), despite BPRS, PPD and Teach First funding and opportunities for teachers to gain M level credits via APEL. The following section of the chapter examines key documentation regarding aspirations for a masters level profession in England.

3.2.3 The *Children’s Plan* and aspirations for a masters level teaching profession

In December 2007, the former government published the *Children’s Plan* (DCSF, 2007) – outlining its vision for the 21st Century school, as a place of excellent learning and teaching. For Denby *et al* (2008, p. 2), through the *Children’s Plan* (DCSF, 2007), the former government recognized CPD “as vital to the future of good education.” The aim of the *Children’s Plan* (DCSF 2007, p. 4) was to improve the school workforce, calling for “A system-wide intervention ... to put in place a structured masters-level early professional development programme ... to create World Class Teachers” and calling for teaching, over time, to become a masters level profession for all teachers. ITT provision was already considered to be ‘world-class’, but it is at the EPD

stage that reform was considered to be particularly needed (TDA, 2008a, b, c). In addition to findings that masters level study had enhanced the school system in Finland, the McKinsey report (2007), which was a key influence in the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007), also concluded that it is essential to recruit the best talent in the first place and that the best school systems have structured EPD programmes.

The *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) declared that to keep pace with international competitors it is necessary to further improve the quality of those entering the profession and to further improve the status and expertise of teachers by making teaching a masters level profession. In certain aspects, there are real concerns about the need for improvement to support pupil progress, especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, in the UK (Clark, 2008). Subsequently, 268 secondary schools were named in 2007 – 08 as 'National Challenge' schools – schools where fewer than 30% of pupils gained five or more good General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) passes, including English and mathematics. ('Good' GCSE passes are classed as grades C and above.) These schools were targeted for government intervention and additional funding to support improvement, including being some of the first schools to have access to the MTL.

The *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) highlighted the need for a more structured approach to teachers' EPD and was potentially a document which could have made far-reaching changes to improve PD in England. McAteer *et al* (2010, p. 1) also perceived widespread changes, considering that "The proposal to make teaching an all-masters profession is perhaps the biggest change in teacher education since the early 1980s, when a bachelor's degree became a requirement for all new teachers in the United Kingdom." The changes could have brought about a major change

in PD and could have had a big impact on the profession. However, this was not necessarily an all-masters profession, but rather an entitlement for teachers to engage in M level work.

Aspirations for a masters level profession (DCSF, 2007) were well-received by many key stakeholders. Steve Sinnott, the late National Union of Teachers (NUT) General Secretary, said that “Teaching being a profession in which teachers are expected to hold a masters degree is an idea whose time has come” (Frean and Bennett 2007, p. 1). Also, it would appear that the *Children’s Plan* (DCSF, 2007) started to have a fairly profound impact on ITT tutors in HEIs and NQTs. For example, Hoare (2010a, p.10) reported of one ITT tutor, from the University of Exeter in the UK, that “CPD is now a large part of her job description. When the current crop of PGCE students leave to take up their first teaching posts their links with the university remain.” This tutor emphasised that lifelong learning was now an expectation as NQTs recognised the push from the (former) government to make teaching an all-masters profession (Hoare, 2010a). In fact, the tutor reported that “This year we have 160 newly qualified teachers coming to us part-time to take the Masters in Education” (Hoare 2010a, p. 10). Therefore, the former government’s aspiration for a masters level profession may have had a big impact on many NQTs who undertook further M level study and also had a positive impact on HEIs, boosting numbers to their masters degrees. However, NQTs may be undertaking M level study in the hope that it will aid career progression, rather than due to the former government’s aspiration for a masters level profession. Although not specifically mentioned, the University of Exeter only offers the M level PGCE and so the vast majority of NQTs will probably have gained 60 M level credits, which could also have been an influencing factor in continuing with M level study, due to being able to transfer these credits to a masters degree.

The next section of this chapter reviews *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* (DCSF, 2008) - the key document regarding preparations for the MTL.

3.2.4 *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* and preparations for the MTL

On 7th March 2008 at the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) union conference the former Labour Secretary of State for Education announced the new MTL programme to fulfil ambitions set out in the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007). On the same date *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* (DCSF, 2008) was published – another key source for this research which outlined more specific plans about the action to be taken to ensure that teachers have the talent and skills needed to meet the challenges ahead. Linda Rowe, former Executive Member of the TDA, led on developing the MTL until the end of the consultation process and described this document as “the bedrock for the MTL” (TDA, 2008a), as it set out certain key factors of the programme. In the document (DCSF 2008, p. 3), special consideration was given to teachers’ PD, highlighting that “No profession will be able to meet the demands of the new century without the strongest commitment to its own continued development. This is especially true of teachers”. Also, it was noted that “we want to make a step change in the status and capacity of the teaching profession by bringing in a new Masters qualification for all” (DCSF, 2008). This document (DCSF 2008, p. 4) outlined proposals for the new qualification:

We will introduce a wholly new programme leading to a Masters qualification, known as ‘Masters in Teaching and Learning’ ... Our aim is that the qualification over time should be open to all teachers and our expectation is that every teacher would want to complete it at some stage in their career. We need to ensure that quality finds its way to where it is most needed, including

where the greatest challenges are to be found. Our new Masters programme should play a significant part in achieving this objective.

It is clear that the former government considered one reason for making teaching a masters level profession was to ensure children achieve better levels of attainment. It was also suggested that the MTL would support the raising of standards especially in the ‘challenge schools’ and some teachers employed in ‘challenge schools’ were to be targeted in the first cohorts, which is discussed later in this chapter. Also, it must be acknowledged that the MTL was an entitlement for certain cohorts, yet the former government wording, such as ‘expectation’, suggests that it was expected that all teachers would complete the programme. However, would a masters level profession bring about these desired improvements and was the MTL the right vehicle for this? Also, why introduce a new programme, when there are existing MA Education/ Masters of Education (M.Ed) programmes, which could be used/ re-designed, to focus specifically on improving learning and teaching? Clearly, the former government was not satisfied with current HE provision for teachers’ PD and wanted a new programme. However, the fact that the former government engaged HEIs in teachers’ PD could be seen as a vote of confidence in HE, which makes sense since Britain is currently the second most popular country in the world for students and has the best HE system in the world, after the United States of America (USA) (Vaughan, 2010).

The publication was followed by consultation events regarding the MTL for LA induction coordinators, representatives from providers with responsibility for ITT (rather than representatives from providers with responsibility for masters degrees), NQTs and head teachers (TDA, 2008a, c). The TDA confirmed that representatives from providers with responsibility for ITT had been invited (rather than those with responsibility for masters degrees), as the former DCSF wanted to build on what was being

delivered in ITT and on the M level PGCE, but wanted the MTL to be radically different from existing masters degrees.

Obviously, there is a difference in perspective between the former and current governments' views here. Whereas the former government wanted the MTL to build on ITT and the M level PGCE, the new government has put in place measures which may now spell the end for the PGCE and will hinder M level PD for teachers.

During consultation events, delegates were asked to give feedback regarding the content, design, delivery and assessment of the MTL (TDA, 2008a, c). The MTL received a mixed response from delegates from schools, LAs and ITT providers. In particular, concerns were raised regarding the nature of the consultative process, the fact that NQTs may not be the best cohort to target due to the demands of induction, the content and assessment of the MTL, the role of and support for school-based coaches (SBCs) and the view of many delegates that SBCs should have a masters level qualification themselves (TDA, 2008a). However, NQTs continued to be the target cohort and the SBC was not required to have a masters qualification, but was provided with a short training course and a remit of roles and responsibilities, which does not include supporting participants to engage with and make use of theory to develop practice. Supporting participants to link theory with practice is the sole domain of the HEI tutor. However, ignoring the most experienced classroom practitioner in this aspect seems illogical, especially as the links between theory and practice are known to be problematic and although practice can be greatly advanced if this issue is addressed effectively (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999). However, if there is real synthesis of theory and practice, this is extremely powerful for improving learning and teaching. As advocated by Simkins (2009), blended learning can effectively facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice, as theory and

reflection via collaborative learning are being used to develop practice in the context. Simkins (2009) produced a model of factors in NCSL blended programmes, in which he fully integrated the role of the school in participants' learning, which could improve the linkage between theory and practice for MTL participants – see figure 2.1 above.

The final section of this chapter examines literature regarding the MTL.

3.3 The Masters in Teaching and Learning

This section of the chapter has been structured to provide a review of: (i) background information, (ii) the perspectives of key stakeholders and, (iii) the MTL and its legacy.

3.3.1 Background information

Many masters degrees across the country have teachers among their student body, but often modules are designed for a wider range of education practitioners and are sometimes not focused entirely towards teachers' needs, although it is also the case that some masters degrees and modules are designed specifically for teachers' needs. The MTL was intended to develop and improve teacher quality and build on the 'New Professionalism' agenda – which aims to respect teachers as highly-skilled individuals, as leaders of learning and teaching and as learners who engage in lifelong PD. The MTL was established as a type of 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in a similar format to some NCSL programmes – ie. participant, SBC and training provider, and also in a similar format to ITT programmes. For McAteer *et al* (2010), the MTL is different from other masters programmes in

four ways: (i) the programme was developed collaboratively with schools, LAs and HEIs, (ii) the Professional Standards were integrated alongside M level requirements, (iii) the new relationships between the participant, SBC and HEI, and (iv) its design to build on ITT. The MTL was designed to build on ITT and take account of the NQT's route into teaching (McAteer *et al*, 2010), so those NQTs undertaking the MTL did have some experience of personalised and differentiated learning, but this is no longer the case for NQTs now that funding has been withdrawn. However, the MTL is still a worthwhile example of M level study and is informative regarding teachers' professional development. Also, there are many teachers across the country now progressing towards completion of the MTL.

From April 2010, NQTs from the North West and NQTs employed in 'challenge schools' were entitled to start the MTL, although the original cohort was to be NQTs in the North West who had undertaken the PGCE – but this was changed to all NQTs after complaints. Therefore, the former government seemed to be making a judgment about who M level study was for – ie. those who had undertaken an ITT programme with a balance of theoretical study and professional practice, rather than those who had just undertaken a predominantly practical-based form of ITT. The TDA estimated that 3,000 – 4,000 NQTs would be eligible to enrol for the MTL in the first year (Hoare, 2010b). Thereafter, it was envisaged that this would spread in the following year to all NQTs across England and also to newly-appointed heads of department (HoDs) in 'challenge schools' before being open to teachers in the first five years and later rolled out to all teachers.

The target cohort of NQTs caused much concern and debate. It is well-documented that NQTs find induction a difficult time in managing their workload (Ofsted, 2003) and “most newly qualified teachers ... are glad to escape the classroom come 5pm”

(Wylie 2008, p. 1), especially as it is universally accepted that induction is a highly-pressurized period in which NQTs often have to quickly familiarize themselves with a new school context and also manage their workload effectively. Also, NQTs are still developing their teaching skills and have assumed real responsibilities for their own pupils for the first time (McNally, 2002). Nevertheless, some NQTs are keen to continue studying. However, not all NQTs are able to meet the demands of induction and not all NQTs are able to meet the demands of M level study, in the same way as not all trainees are able to meet the demands of ITT or the demands of M level study – as discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, NQTs obviously have very little experience of teaching upon which to base theory.

3.3.2 Perspectives of key stakeholders regarding the MTL

This section focuses on the perspectives of key stakeholders: the former GTCE, teaching unions, UCET and the international professional development association (IPDA), academics, administrators, and the teaching profession and the LA.

The GTCE

Following the announcement of the MTL, former GTCE Chief Executive, Keith Bartley, commented (www.gtce.org.uk/media_parliament/news_comment/masters_pilot_270608/) that:

The new Masters in Teaching and Learning promises to be an important strand in promoting effective professional learning opportunities for teachers. ...

We look forward to working closely with the Training and Development Agency for Schools as the Masters qualification evolves to secure an opportunity for all teachers.

However, this was incredibly generous, given that the MTL appeared to impinge on what was the GTCE's own PD strand at the time, the TLA. Unsurprisingly, not all members of the GTCE were as enthusiastic about the MTL. Sarah Stephens, former Director of Policy at the GTCE, expressed concerns that "There is a question ... as to whether such intensive spend ... is sustainable... There are issues of equity ... because it's not available to all teachers" (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Firstly, the huge expenditure in the downturn in the economy was a natural area of concern and the withdrawal of funding perhaps now shows that this was unsustainable. Secondly, the MTL was only offered initially to a target cohort of NQTs, rather than being open to all teachers as was the GTCE's TLA.

Teaching unions

The perspectives of the four biggest teachers' unions - the NUT, the National Association for Schoolmasters and Union for Women Teachers (NASUWT), the ATL and the ASCL - emerged from literature searches regarding the MTL. Overall, unions welcomed the move to the MTL, in principle. Dr. Mary Bousted, ATL General Secretary, believed it would "lever up standards in schools" (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). However, the NUT received complaints from trainee teacher and NQT members that they were being pressurised to enrol on the MTL or were told it was a statutory requirement, which was not true (*The Teacher*, 2009a). It is understandable why trainees and NQTs felt pressurised, as the former government's announcements came close to making the MTL sound compulsory – as highlighted above. However, just before the MTL was launched it was considered that there may be a risk that it would be seen as essential for any teacher wanting to gain promotion or a higher salary (Baker, 2009). In contrast, Chris Keates, NASUWT leader,

believed that “Teachers are behind it. They support it” (Hoare 2010b, p. 6). On the contrary, Bangs, former head of education at the NUT, said that “Headteachers have never been convinced the qualification is essential to ... teachers, or that it will be able to be integrated into the school day” (Maddern 2010d, p.13). Therefore, it would appear that teachers were not fully behind the MTL and that there was a mixed response regarding its merits.

The NUT particularly voiced its scepticism regarding the MTL and was concerned that NQTs were being targeted (*The Teacher*, 2009a), which was also a concern for delegates attending consultation events (TDA, 2008a, c), as discussed above. The NUT considered that “induction ... is a demanding time and NQTs who fail induction are not able to continue teaching in maintained schools. The union fears some NQTs may find it difficult to balance their work on the MTL with induction” (*The Teacher* 2009a, p. 23). Workload was obviously a concern and, in general, work-life balance is deeply dissatisfying for many teachers (Rhodes *et al*, 2004b).

Shortly after the announcement of his retirement, Bangs (2010, p. 29) attacked the MTL stating that:

It is clear that the one-size-fits-all Masters in Teaching and Learning inhibits early professional development. It needs radical rethinking. Any masters programme should be linked to an entitlement to a sabbatical for experienced teachers and not imposed on teachers fresh out of initial training.

Certainly, the MTL does appear to be a one-size-fits-all model of EPD, which is contrary to the andragogic model for effective adult learning (Knowles, 1990), as NQTs were expected to undertake it with no offer of alternative forms of fully-funded professional development. Also, as this was a government initiative, the content was prescribed – so participants were not able to choose modules of interest, as in other masters degrees.

Also, Bangs (2010) set out his view that masters programmes should be for experienced teachers – rather than NQTs – and supported by a sabbatical, which may be more appropriate and a differentiated approach for a group of teachers, following substantial experience, who may feel the need to be re-energised by M level study and a period of reflection via a sabbatical. He also advised that “The Government should recognise that teachers must own their learning. ... teachers should be able to choose their CPD and receive an annual funded entitlement for it” (Bangs 2010, p. 29). This is in line with Browne-Ferrigno’s research (2003) discussed in the previous chapter, indicating that students who embark on study with clearly-defined reasons have a more meaningful engagement with the programme. The ATL concurred with the NUT regarding the target cohort. Dr. Boustead set out her union’s view that the MTL is more appropriate for those with several years of experience than for NQTs (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170), commenting that:

Our view is that ... once you’ve been teaching three or four years then you’re in the position of having ... the fundamentals of professional practice under your belt and that’s the ... time when you could really do with starting to think and reflect about what you’re doing. ... In the first ... years you’re really focused on getting through.

The teaching unions did not agree fully with each other regarding the MTL, however. In contrast, Keates of the NASUWT, hailed the MTL as a development geared to NQTs, who are often least able to afford the time or money to undertake further qualifications and pointed out that teachers wanting to undertake masters degrees to-date have often had to do this at their own expense and in their own time (Hoare, 2010b). Keates stated that “The union felt it best to start with NQTs who could enhance the credits they had built up” (Hoare 2010b, p. 6). Therefore, whereas the NUT and the ATL were opposed to NQTs as the target cohort, the NASUWT felt this was the right cohort to target first. However, Keates’ comment was seriously flawed, as many

NQTs who undertook undergraduate, EBITT or the H level PGCE routes into teaching did not have M level credits to bring forward to the MTL.

In addition, the NUT told the former government that, whilst generally being in favour of a masters level profession and the MTL, the means to achieve this should have been developed in partnership with teachers and that all teachers should have had access to the qualification, with the appropriate support of time and funding required for work at this level for those wishing to undertake the MTL (*The Teacher*, 2009b). Clearly, the NUT was also concerned about the issue of equity, as raised by Stephens of the GTCE above.

Another issue for the unions was the tight timescale to introduce the MTL. Bangs called for a “pause in the introduction of the course to give more time for universities and schools to prepare” (Maddern, 2009b). Also, Maddern (2009b, p. 6) reported the views of John Dunford, ASCL General Secretary, who said:

If this is to be a degree to which all teachers are encouraged to aspire, it has to be of the highest quality, and this cannot be produced in the short timescale the Government has set. A year’s extension would give the Government, the TDA, the universities and the profession time to plan a degree that will be of sufficient value to make it worth the time that teachers will need to put in.

The MTL was supposed to start in September 2009, but was delayed until April 2010. However, a year’s extension was a sensible suggestion, considering the time needed to prepare for the programme and to fully consult with schools, but the former government obviously wanted the MTL in place before the May 2010 election. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that HEIs agreed to this timescale in their tenders.

Finally, another issue for the ATL was that of the school-based coach. Bousted expressed her concerns that “No-one’s coerced

into taking on that role” and regarding the workload of the coach and the support needed (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). These issues were also fully debated and concern expressed by teachers, LAs and ITT providers (TDA, 2008a, c), to ensure that the role was successful for all concerned.

UCET and IPDA

UCET also gave its support to the principle of a masters teaching profession and advised the former DCSF and TDA regarding these issues. However, the announcement of the MTL received a mixed reception from UCET. Noble-Rogers urged caution and stated that the MTL would need to be a credible masters qualification if it was to have the desired impact on pupils’ learning, stating that “A centrally prescribed qualification lacking in depth and academic rigour would have little if any credibility and only marginal impact on classroom performance ... It is essential this does not become a Masters in Teaching Lite. It has to be a proper masters” (Milne 2008, p. 10). These comments were triggered by wording used at consultation events (TDA, 2008a, c), suggesting that the MTL would be a ‘masters-type’ qualification and that the qualification would be at ‘MTL level’, which angered some academics. However, there was a shift towards a truly M level perspective. Graham Holley, then Chief Executive of the former TDA – who resigned shortly after the announcement that the TDA functions would largely revert to the DfE - confirmed this position, stating that the university tutor “brings a wider perspective and makes sure that their [MTL participants’] work genuinely represents learning at masters level” (2010, p. 41). As a result, terminology was amended accordingly to reflect that the MTL is an M level qualification.

UCET (2008b, p. 2) agreed that “The introduction of the MTL could represent one of the greatest step-changes in teacher status and professionalism since teaching became an all-graduate profession.” However, it must be noted that the MTL would not have had the impact being heralded, as only a small proportion of teachers were undertaking it and this will not happen now that funding has been withdrawn. UCET considered - if certain recommendations were put in place - that M level study would have a very positive impact and bring about the improvements the former government intended to make, however (UCET, 2008b). UCET (2008b, p. 3) declared that “A Masters qualified teaching profession would do a great deal to enhance the collective and individual status of teachers, and so make a valuable contribution to recruitment and retention. It would also impact on how teachers do their jobs.” However, there is conflicting research regarding whether engagement in PD programmes has a positive impact on teacher retention (Ofsted, 2003; Rhodes *et al*, 2004b) and whether M level study has a positive impact on how teachers do their jobs (Revell, 2005; TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b; Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Also, as discussed above, teachers’ uptake of M level study has been fairly minimal (Revell, 2005; UCET, 2008b) despite funding initiatives and not had a major impact, therefore, which may provide a message for the MTL but also for future M level initiatives. For the MTL to bring about the desired improvements, UCET (2008b) made several recommendations including that: (i) the MTL builds on the success of the TDA’s PPD programme, (ii) measures are taken to ensure that NQTs without M level credits are not disadvantaged, and (iii) the costs are properly assessed and funded in full. The first point highlights the success of the PPD initiative, although this was undertaken by a minority of teachers. Regarding the second point, it would appear contradictory that UCET asked for measures to ensure NQTs without M level credits

were not disadvantaged, as UCET supported the move to the M level PGCE (with M level credits), and the implications of this recommendation were not to allow M level PGCE credits to be transferred to the MTL. Nevertheless, the TDA allowed NQTs to transfer up to 30 M level credits from their PGCE to the MTL and exempted them from some elements of assessment (TDA, 2008a), so all participants would fully engage with the MTL – rather than be exempted from large elements by claiming APL. However, this could be regarded as de-valuing the M level PGCE somewhat, as only 30 M level credits could be transferred to the MTL. Furthermore, this contradicts how some HEIs interpret APL regulations. Some HEIs perceive this to be ‘double-counting’ and do not accept credits from an M level PGCE onto their masters degrees, yet would need to accept them towards the MTL, which they have validated in their own institutions.

IPDA also joined the debate regarding the MTL. IPDA’s members are mostly academics, but also from local government, schools and a wide variety of professional training agencies and organizations. IPDA’s chair, academic Cliff Jones (2008), criticised the MTL, arguing that “Too much time has been spent making sense of government’s proposals for the ... MTL. We should be telling them what to do.” Therefore, Jones (2008) considered that universities – as professional educators - should have taken a more forceful stance against government proposals regarding the MTL.

Academics

As shown above, UCET – representing academics - expressed concerns initially, when the TDA called the MTL a ‘masters-type’

qualification, questioning its credibility. However, this matter has largely been resolved and many academics are satisfied that the MTL is a credible M level qualification with benefits for teachers. For example, Kit Field, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK, declares that “The introduction of the MTL assessed by Universities provides a sense of credibility ... University systems provide an element of rigorous independence and externality. This provides a basis for social respect for the profession” (2010, p. 11). Therefore, Field (2010) is also suggesting that the MTL could raise the status of the profession. Also, McAteer *et al* (2010) point out that the MTL will benefit teachers in equipping them with higher-order skills and the desire for lifelong learning. McAteer *et al* (2010, p. 7) also see clear benefits of the MTL for schools and pupils, considering that “Schools in the twenty-first century are changing rapidly, and will continue to do so. The recruitment and retention of highly qualified and well motivated staff is a cornerstone in the provision of high-quality learning experiences for children and young people.” This suggests that the MTL should have a real impact on improving pupils’ learning. Also, the MTL placed a greater emphasis on higher qualifications and the motivation of teachers to aspire to these. McAteer *et al* (2010) also considered that the MTL would provide structured support for NQTs and provide them with evidence of engagement with PD – when this is needed later for performance management procedures. Hagger also endorsed the qualification, asserting that “MTL recognizes that learning continues, the importance of collaboration and raises teachers’ aspirations” (TDA, 2008b). Roger Woods, former Dean of the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences at Birmingham City University in the UK, called the MTL a “once-in-a-generation development” (UCET 2008b, p. 19). Therefore, there was enthusiasm for the MTL by some academics, as it was the first time that an all-masters profession had been suggested in England and a development which could have had a widespread

impact if rolled out to all teachers and a positive impact on university education departments.

As discussed above, there is research claiming that M level study is beneficial in improving school standards (Revell, 2005; TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). However, Wiliam argues that there is evidence to show that gaining a masters degree does not make teachers any better at their job (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170), which concurs with other literature (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010). Nevertheless, Wiliam makes the distinction between other masters degrees and the new MTL - other masters degrees may not make teachers better at their job, because they were never intended for that purpose whereas the MTL was designed with this purpose (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Therefore, despite efforts to make masters programmes more accessible and flexible for teachers (Gaunt, 1997), it is suggested that their core design is not fully compatible with improving classroom practice (Baker, 2009). In addition, Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality, a research and policy group in the USA, asserted that there has been no significant correlation between advanced degrees and teacher performance in the USA (Robertson, 2010). Nevertheless, the MTL was designed with the intention of improving learning and teaching in the classroom.

For Chris Philpott, Head of Secondary Education at Greenwich University in the UK, the assessment of teachers within the MTL was a key issue to ensure that the programme does make teachers better at their job. Philpott believes that universities need to develop a qualification which does not depend entirely on academic assignments (Hilborne 2007, p.14), insisting that:

We want our teachers to show they are analytical and reflective. They could demonstrate this through designing a new curriculum rather than writing an

essay ... We need a qualification that recognises masterly performance as a teacher rather than the ability to write a 20,000 word dissertation.

This perspective is similar to that of the TDA, which explored a range of alternative assessment modes to ensure the MTL enhances teachers' skills in the classroom.

Husbands also discussed current practice in teachers' professional development (TDA, 2008b), stating that:

MTL needs to learn sensibly ... from HEIs and schools and to look at best practice in those sectors, but it also needs to be new. Although there are examples of good practice in ITT and CPD, there are inconsistencies. There needs to be collaboration between HEIs and schools on equal terms ... CPD is over-reliant on courses and there is not enough sustained, structured, in-depth CPD in schools.

Obviously, Husbands is speaking as an academic, highlighting that the MTL needs to learn from best practice in PD in schools and HEIs. However, he was also speaking as former appointed Board member of the TDA, as he reinforced the TDA position that the MTL was to be a new qualification and highlights weaknesses in current PD. He also emphasises the collaborative nature of the MTL. Although Husbands criticises the brief nature of some CPD courses, Simco, former Dean of Education at the University of Cumbria in the UK, takes another viewpoint - that masters degrees may not be suitable for everyone (Hilborne, 2007). Simco considers that "At first sight some teachers might find the whole idea of a masters demanding or frightening" (Hilborne 2007, p. 14). This is a pertinent point. Although brief courses are probably insufficient PD activities, was it going too far to expect NQTs and eventually all teachers to undertake the MTL? There are issues regarding the pressures experienced by some NQTs as part of induction, but also M level work may not be suitable for everyone for other reasons, such as academic ability and assuming other responsibilities. Also, questions should have been asked regarding the consequences of the former government's

expectation that teaching would become an all-masters profession – for example, could this exacerbate the already high attrition rate of NQTs and RQTs?

In contrast with two of the teaching unions, some academics support the idea of NQTs undertaking M level study immediately after ITT, despite the pressures of induction. For example, Sewell (2008) considers this is a good time, as the relationship between theory, research and practice is still fresh in their minds and also feels that M level study supports NQTs' development and career aspirations, which have a potential link to pay. However, this is not an altruistic venture, as HEIs can boost numbers to their masters degrees/ the MTL, by encouraging former trainees to continue with M level study.

Sean Cavan, head of CPD at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK, highlights another perspective regarding the MTL concerning partnerships, stating that “This is the first time we have all worked together on such a programme. It's setting a new standard” (Carrington 2010, p. 7). Obviously, Cavan was positive about the closer HE partnerships forged as a result of the MTL and about overall standards of M level programmes being raised.

In addition, MTL providers were concerned about levels of interest from schools. According to Smedley, “Headteachers are negative about becoming involved” and would not allow their teachers to undertake the programme (Maddern 2010d, p. 4). Also, Woods believed that head teachers had not yet fully grasped the concept of the MTL (Maddern 2010d, p. 4), commenting that:

They've already got so much on their plate and are under so much pressure. NQTs ... are being told they cannot go on the course. The solution is a 'hearts and minds' job, but that takes time. The course will take some time to settle in. People are inevitably going to be wary of something so big, but this is frustrating for us and we could do with a bit more understanding from schools. It won't divert attendees from their work.

As Woods acknowledges, head teachers have many other priorities above the MTL. However, it would appear that the MTL has started to have a positive impact. Peiser and Faragher from Liverpool John Moores University in the UK shared their experiences of delivering the MTL in its first year and declared that “early indications are that MTL is having a positive impact on teacher development and school development” (2010). Therefore, it would appear that there were indications of success for individual teachers and raising standards in schools during the first year of the MTL.

The administrators

This section focuses on the perspectives of the administrators – ie. the former DCSF, the new DfE and the TDA. As highlighted above, it was in teachers’ EPD that the former government considered it necessary to intervene, believing that the MTL would be a key lever to improve teacher quality in the EPD stage. In a letter to Holley, Jim Knight, former Minister of State for Schools and Learners, stated (www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/cpd/cpd_letter_from_minister_april_08.pdf) that:

our intention is that the MTL should focus initially on teachers in the first five years of their careers and build on their initial training and induction. ... The development of the MTL should provide an opportunity to address the concerns that some teachers have about their experience of induction.

Therefore, administrators anticipated that the MTL would build on ITT and NQT induction, but also improve induction and EPD. In June 2008 Beverley Hughes, former DCSF Minister for the North West, announced that the North West would be the first region in which the MTL would be launched for NQTs who had entered PGCE programmes in September 2008 and that other

regions would follow (Hoare, 2008). However, the TDA revised its policy following criticisms so that all NQTs employed in the North West and ‘challenge schools’ were entitled to undertake the MTL, regardless of their ITT route. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what this original message said about former government views of other ITT routes, in comparison with the PGCE. It is also necessary to consider what this says about the MTL and also about M level study in general for teachers. Is it really most suitable for those who have undertaken a more theoretical ITT programme? Or, did this convey messages regarding the high quality of the PGCE? Hughes also said (Hoare 2008, p. 9) that:

I am determined that this country will be the best for our children. It is a very ambitious aim but I am convinced that the Masters in Teaching and Learning can help us get there by raising the status of teachers and giving all young people the world class education they deserve.

... I know you will grasp this opportunity with both hands and help us shape a national qualification which will ultimately raise standards and narrow the achievement gap for all children and young people.

However, NQTs did not fully grasp the opportunity – only 2,182 out of an eligible 4,000 NQTs in the North West and nationally in ‘challenge schools’ started the MTL in its first year (Maddern, 2010e). This figure was fairly disappointing, as this was the initial starting number of participants, which would inevitably decrease as pressure points drew closer, such as the submission of assignments alongside other teaching commitments and the demands of the profession. However, the fact that 2,182 NQTs started the MTL shows some interest and may vindicate the administrators’ decision to target NQTs as the first cohort, but is not a ringing endorsement of the MTL (as Keates of the NASUWT predicted above) and has messages for one-size-fits-all models of professional development, as they are likely to meet with resistance. Therefore, it should be fully considered why administrators decided to target NQTs. The TDA said that this was due to practical, financial reasons (TDA, 2008a). John Carr,

former Director of the MTL at the TDA who took over responsibility for the MTL from Rowe, justified NQTs as the target cohort, reporting that around half of those who undertook the TDA PPD programme were teachers “in their early careers” (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). However, this argument is flawed, as only 7% of those who accessed PPD funding were NQTs (www.ternesrcseminars.net/michaeldaybio.htm), which means that these early career teachers accessing PPD funding were RQTs who had successfully completed induction, rather than NQTs. Also there could be other reasons, as most initiatives are launched under the most favourable conditions for success. For example, were NQTs targeted because they are generally considered to be more malleable than experienced teachers? Also, HEIs were able to support administrators in their aim to recruit NQTs from their trainee teacher cohorts. For example, some HEIs enrol trainees onto their masters programme automatically at the end of ITT and as NQTs they have to withdraw from the programme, if they do not wish to continue. This system may put NQTs under pressure to continue with M level study out of loyalty to their ITT provider or because their ITT tutor may be one of their referees. However, HEIs clearly needed to boost their student numbers at a time of cuts (Curtis, 2009; Vaughan, 2010). Obviously, administrators knew this and enlisted HEIs to enrol participants on the MTL – which they did with some degree of success, as they have a key relationship with NQTs who were their trainees the previous year. Holley (2010, p. 41) recognised these concerns, commenting that “I know that some colleagues, perhaps drawing on experiences of more “traditional” masters-level study, have worried about the MTL becoming a burden rather than an opportunity for their professionally younger colleagues.” However, it is suggested from this literature review of key stakeholder perspectives that other masters degrees and the MTL are more suitable for experienced teachers, who have successfully completed induction, are established (ie.

professionally integrated) and have sufficient professional practice upon which to base their studies.

Alongside Hughes' announcement, Holley set out his aspirations for the new qualification (Hoare 2008, p. 9):

The radical, new Masters in Teaching and Learning will give us the chance to make a dramatic contribution to further improving the high quality of our teachers. This programme is part of a long-term vision to transform teaching through structured, high quality, practice-based professional development.

This development will help to support the teaching profession to become one that is recognised the world over for its consistency in delivering to the highest standards for every child in every school.

Therefore, there were hopes at the highest levels that the MTL would have a major impact on raising standards in schools. Holley (2010, p. 41) was also very positive about levels of interest in the weeks leading up to the start of the programme, insisting that:

Luckily, there has been such enthusiasm around the MTL ... The process of engaging schools continues, but early reports are encouraging. Headteachers we have talked to have been quick to recognise the educational benefits, and are excited about the role MTL can have in recruitment and retention. At the same time, we are seeing a great deal of interest from NQTs, who are keen to study the course and value its benefits.

Nevertheless, despite Holley's positive tone, the TDA ran an extensive campaign to raise awareness of the MTL in the months prior to its start.

Holley also highlighted the opportunities for partnership between HEIs and schools, purporting that "At the heart of the MTL is a new and exciting relationship – one in which higher education institutions ... and schools work together as consortia and both design and deliver the MTL in schools" (2009, p. 6). Clearly, the MTL brought about a further opportunity for HEIs to work in partnership with schools. Rowe also emphasised the benefits of the MTL to partnerships, describing the MTL as "absolutely

unique” and a “real chance to make a difference” as delivery would be “a joint process” between schools and HEIs and also stressing that “It is not an ITT partnership, it’s beyond this” (TDA, 2008a). Therefore, the MTL should have been able to strengthen partnerships between HEIs and schools. However, Holley also acknowledged difficulties in partnership (2010, p. 41), commenting that:

Universities are used to devising and delivering their own courses as autonomous institutions, and they have sometimes been uncomfortable with the demands of working as partners in a national programme. Some schools, on the other hand, have been unsure about taking on responsibility for teachers’ professional learning at this level.

Initiatives which involve a range of partners are often difficult to manage. Also, HEIs have the freedom to design their courses, but this was a different way of working for them, as the MTL was a government-funded initiative with a prescribed content. In addition, this was new to schools, as most teachers have not experienced M level PD.

In addition, the tight timescale caused the start of the programme to be postponed (Maddern, 2010d, e). Holley (2010, p. 41) admitted that “the MTL has been delivered within an exceptionally tight timeframe for such a major programme”, but believed that the enthusiasm surrounding the programme meant that “many of our colleagues have been ready to accommodate a shorter timescale than might normally be expected.” However, MTL providers obviously needed to support their universities as the programme would bring much-needed income and managed to validate the programme more quickly than the usual HE timeframes.

Holley (2010, p. 41) was also positive about the programme’s potential impact, commenting that “I’m confident that the MTL is set to have a huge impact in helping teachers be the best they can be and in providing the best education outcomes for our children

and young people.” However, literature is contradictory regarding the benefits of M level study (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010; Revell, 2005; TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b).

Workload was also raised by administrators. According to Holley (2010, p. 41) measures had been taken “to guard scrupulously against it bringing extra workload and stress.” However, masters level study does bring extra work and another TDA spokesperson concurred with this view, acknowledging that “A masters qualification will always demand additional work” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). However, is the extra work too much for those who are new to teaching and completing induction? Administrators did make it clear that, although it was anticipated that time would be created for participants, they would be expected to study in their own time (TDA, 2008a) – as they would if undertaking any other masters degree. As with the rhetoric of NQTs having an entitlement to a 90% timetable and the practice that this is still not the case in all schools, there has also presumably been variable practice in the same way in MTL participants being released or not released to undertake study. However, Rowe asserted that “Ministers are adamant that there is release time for participants and coaches” and that those wishing to undertake the programme would be entitled to do so (TDA, 2008a), but those teaching in schools with a poor ethos of PD may have found access to the MTL and the entitlement of release time difficult or impossible to attain.

Furthermore, Rowe set out her vision that “If MTL has done its job, it’s that those who have completed the programme will want to learn more” (TDA, 2008a). Therefore, it was intended that the programme would engage teachers in lifelong learning. Also, Carr stated that “I don’t see MTL as a replacement for other masters programmes ... and don’t see MTL as **stealing** candidates from other masters, but will drive up demand for other masters level

qualifications for teachers” (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). However, the MTL was fully-funded (for the first cohort) in contrast with other masters programmes which often cost several thousands of pounds, so it is suggested that teachers would not choose to undertake other masters programmes with no funding attached when they could access the fully-funded MTL. Also, will the withdrawal of funding from the MTL drive down demand for M level study, if teachers consider this as undermining its importance? Nevertheless, the fact that the MTL was only offered to a restricted cohort may have created an interest in masters programmes for those who lay outside the initial cohort.

Finally, Gove expressed a wish for more teachers to have higher degrees (Maddern, 2010f) and has continued to fund the M level PGCert for SENCOs and allocated some funding for M level study via National Professional Development Scholarships. However, this seems somewhat contradictory to his policy that trainee teachers do not need an academic training. Also the funding now attached to M level study - £2 million for the scholarships - is substantially less than allocated for the MTL and not likely to have a great impact.

The teaching profession and the Local Authority

The perspectives of NQTs, RQTs, senior teachers and the LA are included in this section. This has been undertaken to give a range of perspectives from those who are the target cohort, those who have recently undertaken induction and those who have responsibility for supporting NQTs with the MTL and induction. Firstly, NQT-participants themselves have spoken about the MTL, which received a mixed response. Maddern (2010e, p. 13) reported from a survey conducted by the TES regarding participants’ perspectives:

Of those who had started the course, 29 per cent said it was “not enjoyable and not helpful professionally”. However, 70 per cent of the 235 respondents said the course was a good idea. Of those who have started studying, almost 40 per cent said it was “not enjoyable but useful professionally”.

Therefore, although many participants appear to feel the MTL is not enjoyable, almost half do see its benefits professionally. However, comments that the course is not enjoyable may mean a high attrition rate. Nevertheless, one NQT started the MTL because he “thought the positives outweighed the negatives” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). Also, another NQT decided to undertake the MTL, commenting that “I want to keep on being reflective and the course will help improve my teaching ... this course is funded and it’s better than a masters in my subject – science – because it covers teaching” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). Therefore, this NQT saw the MTL as having a positive impact on his teaching and considered the fully-funded nature of the programme and its focus on pedagogy rather than subject knowledge to be positive. However, this may not be a typical view of secondary school teachers, who often have strong subject allegiances (Smethem, 2007). Despite the advantages, both NQTs expressed concern about the additional work. One NQT said that the additional workload is “a major worry” and stated that “I don’t know if the extra work will be counterproductive. We were told it wasn’t essential to do the course, and a few of us decided not to because of the workload” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). The other NQT also stated that “Completing essays will add a lot to my workload” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). Therefore, although these NQTs decided to take the MTL, they were concerned about workload and realised that many of their peers had decided against it due to this. Also, the survey revealed that “Sixty-eight per cent of those who responded to the survey said they were concerned about workload” (Maddern 2010e, p. 13). Participants are obviously concerned about the additional work, but M level study is demanding and cannot be completed without additional

effort. However, this additional work comes at an already demanding time of the induction period, which suggests that NQTs may not be the best target cohort for M level study.

Secondly, an account of a RQT, Laura Roberts, who undertook masters level study as an NQT is explored. Roberts declared that “there were many benefits: I acquired a greater knowledge of my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher” (2010, p. 41). However, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages for Roberts, who commented that: “It was tough. I was trying to find my feet as a teacher and balance the demands of the profession with planning my action-research project ... I was too young to fully appreciate what I acquired” (Roberts 2010, p. 41). Finally, Roberts (2010, p. 41) concluded that:

Although I realise that the MTL is a new and different qualification, I remain sceptical. To ask those who have just entered the profession to take on further study, on top of all the pressures they face, could repel rather than attract graduates. Yes, there will be NQTs who are eager to register for the MTL and they will reap the rewards, but there is a severe risk that the majority will crumble under the burden. An NQT needs time. Lots of it. They need space and guidance.

Therefore, in line with some teaching unions and delegates at consultation events (TDA, 2008a, c), Roberts (2010, p. 41) sees the induction period as being too demanding for additional study and suggests that it is offered to “teachers once they have completed their third or fourth year.” It is suggested that accounts from RQTs are particularly valuable, as they have recently completed induction and can speak authoritatively about the demands on NQTs. Therefore, from the overall perspectives of key stakeholders, it is suggested that masters degrees are generally more suitable for experienced teachers. However, there are clearly some NQTs who willingly accept this challenge and believe it is an appropriate time to continue with their studies, as shown above.

Thirdly, the perspectives of senior teachers are explored. One primary school head teacher said (Maddern 2010d, p. 4) that:

Our NQTs will be able to develop their skills in a classroom context which will have a direct impact on our pupils. The qualification offer will also help our school recruit and retain excellent teachers by ensuring they have the training and experience necessary to progress and make improvements.

Although numbers of MTL participants are lower than expected, some school leaders see many benefits for NQTs in completing the programme and see M level study as improving teachers' skills and having a direct impact on raising standards and supporting recruitment and retention. Lindy Stone, vice-principal of a National Challenge school, also believed that the MTL would prompt schools to adopt a learning mindset and a culture of lifelong learning, which is particularly relevant in turbulent times (Hoare, 2010b). Stone says that "By adopting the MTL, we are modelling the sort of behaviour we expect from our kids. We impress on them that learning doesn't stop at the school gates" (Hoare 2010b, p. 7). Therefore, teachers studying for higher degrees act as role models in lifelong learning for their pupils. Also, assistant head teacher, Tora Hodge, was positive about the MTL as it is "practically-based within the classroom" (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Another assistant head teacher, Lucy Harrison, also sees the MTL as positive, but expressed caution regarding the role of the SBC, considering that "it's an attractive proposal, as long as the training and support is there". Concerns regarding the role of and training and support for the coach were also voiced by the ATL (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) and were debated during consultation events (TDA, 2008a, c). These concerns appear to be somewhat founded, as the support for the SBC was fairly minimal and training delivered in a short timescale prior to participants starting the MTL. Whereas some senior leaders are in favour of M level study for NQTs, others consider experienced teachers to be

a more suitable cohort. One assistant head “is planning to study for a masters ... to help him deal with the demands of management... he said that a masters degree was more suitable for experienced teachers than those learning how to do the job and that it might scare people off teaching” (Hilborne 2007, p. 14). Therefore, concerns were also expressed by some senior leaders regarding M level study for NQTs, considering that it is more experienced teachers who benefit most from this, perhaps as they are more likely to be fully able to synthesize theory with practice and produce high quality work after a greater amount of professional experience and often substantial leadership and/ or management experience. Concerns were also expressed regarding retention. Furthermore, Maddern (2010d, p. 4) reported that “Heads are barring their staff” from studying for the MTL “because they fear it will be a distraction” and that university tutors warned that the MTL “is threatened by a lack of support from school leaders”, which is in contrast with what Rowe insisted would not happen.

Finally, the views of LA members are reviewed. Overall, LAs were in favour of a masters level profession, but expressed concerns around the role expected of them (TDA, 2008a). LAs were initially expected to train the SBCs, but refused to accept this responsibility. Nevertheless, despite the many criticisms of the role of and training and support for the SBC, Peter Jordan, a LA school workforce development manager, considered school-based coaching for NQTs was the aspect that would have the biggest impact (Carrington, 2010). He also saw wider benefits for the SBC, commenting that “Coaching colleagues is a super way of enhancing your own performance” (Carrington 2010, p. 7). Coaching and mentoring are widely accepted as excellent PD and usually the coach and ‘novice’ both gain from this process (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002; Rhodes *et al*, 2004; Forde and O’Brien, 2011). Also, the efficacy of learning linked to the

school context coupled with the involvement of experienced SBMs/ SBCs is widely accepted (Walker and Dimmock, 2006). However, as discussed above, the role and responsibilities of the coach must be clear and appropriate training and support provided for the coach to be effective.

3.3.3 The MTL and its legacy

The researcher attended each round of consultation events and participated in the focus group, in order to gain as much information as possible at each evolving stage of the development of the MTL (TDA 2008a, b, c). The consultation process contributed to the identification of the following four key content areas: (i) teaching and learning, (ii) subject knowledge (iii) how children and young people develop, and (iv) leadership and management. The MTL is split into eight modules over three phases

(www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/mtl/teachers/whatsinvolved.aspx) and is shown in Appendix I. In phase one, participants draw on what they learnt during induction. Phase two aims to broaden and embed participants' subject knowledge and skills. In phase 3, participants specialise according to their own interests and learning needs. It is expected that the programme should take around three years to complete and the exact content and structure of the MTL varies depending on the MTL provider. However, there are several differences between the MTL and other masters degrees – for example, there are no interim exit awards and the only grading is Pass/ Fail.

In the months prior to the launch of the MTL, there were concerns that the programme was in trouble before it had even started (Maddern, 2009b). The main concerns were around the lack of information about funding and which schools were deemed

as ‘National Challenge’ schools, uncertainties about participant numbers, the tight timescales for HEIs to validate and prepare for the delivery of the programme and the need for greater information to be disseminated to schools to stimulate the interest of teachers and head teachers (Maddern, 2009b). Validation was also problematic for HEIs, as they had to validate a new award – ie. there had been no such award to-date of MTL. The issue of stimulating the interest of head teachers was particularly concerning, as they have a huge part to play in the success of PD initiatives. McAteer *et al* (2010, p. 7) highlights the important role of the head teacher in the MTL:

Although not charged with specific responsibilities in the provision of the MTL, head teachers will have a central role in supporting NQTs in their schools who are engaged on the programme. Funding for the MTL will come directly to the NQT’s school, and so head teachers will have responsibilities in terms of the deployment of this funding.

Therefore, it was crucial for the success of the MTL that head teachers considered the programme a positive initiative for their teachers and school. However, in the current economic climate, it is suggested that head teachers did not consider this a priority and at the end of 2010 Gove announced the withdrawal of funding from the programme. Financial problems have been identified as a theme related to student drop-out (Bennett, 2003, in Rhodes and Nevill, 2004a), so this withdrawal of large-scale funding may mean that many teachers do not pursue M level studies, especially in the current economic climate and higher fees. Nevertheless, prior to the withdrawal of funding, Hoare (2010b) concluded that whatever the outcome of the MTL it will have changed the ground rules for CPD in schools forever.

Maddern (2010f, p. 18) reported on a letter dated 6th December 2010 to the TDA from the Secretary of State explaining his decision for the withdrawal of funding from the MTL:

The quality of teaching and teachers' professional development are of utmost importance, and I am committed to developing a strong culture of professional development where more teachers acquire postgraduate qualifications like Masters and Doctorates and where teachers are supported to progress further academically and deepen their subject knowledge. However, I also believe that teachers should decide for themselves which Masters level course is the right one for them and that a single Masters degree prescribed by Whitehall is not the right approach.

Gove's statement shows that there is still some government support for higher degrees for teachers and that this should be chosen by teachers. However, this is somewhat contradictory. For example, Gove believes that teachers should choose which M level course is best for them, but states that this should be around subject knowledge. Also, Gove wants teachers to deepen their subject knowledge and decide for themselves which form of PD is most appropriate, but is only funding M level study in the areas of English, mathematics, science and special educational needs (SEN) via National Professional Development Scholarships (www.tda.gov.uk/teacher/developing-career/pd-scholarship.aspx) and the PGCert for SENCos. The National Professional Development Scholarship scheme was announced in July 2011 to provide funding for M level study for teachers. However, very few teachers will be able to access these scholarships due to the small amount of funding available and their impact is likely to be minimal in comparison with what the impact of the MTL could have been, therefore. In addition, Gove has continued to allocate funding for the PGCert for SENCos, but again this will be for a limited number of teachers and will not have widespread impact. Nevertheless, Gove reinforces his opposition to government-prescribed programmes and a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development.

Carr considers the legacy of the MTL to be that an innovative, practice-based, rigorous, highly-valued and recognised M level qualification has been established, which is now part of the M level portfolio in HEIs in England (TDA, 2010). Obviously the

withdrawal of funding will adversely affect the MTL, but some HEIs will keep the award within its portfolio. Nevertheless, Karen Hopwood, NASUWT national executive member for Greater Manchester, considers that “whereas before teaching was on the way to being a masters-level profession, we are now going backwards because Michael Gove thinks it’s just a ‘craft’” (Maddern 2011, p. 27). Therefore, the whole M level agenda may have been seriously hindered by the current government’s position regarding teaching as a ‘craft’. However, many key stakeholders were very positive about the move to the masters level profession, rather than the MTL *per se*, so this may have set in motion a desire for M level study in teachers’ professional development. Although funding has largely ceased for M level study, the MTL has been a very beneficial experience for bringing the educational communities together within a joint initiative. Overall, there does appear to still be some appetite for teachers to undertake M level study, but clearly not in the manner intended via the MTL.

Summary

Criticisms have been made regarding PD over many years, especially concerning NQT induction and EPD. Since the 1970s PD has gradually been given a higher priority by schools and its benefits valued more greatly. Consequently, in the 1980s 30 hours of mandatory training were introduced for teachers to develop individuals’ skills and whole school development planning. However, this is low compared with some other countries (McKinsey, 2007). Also, PD and the priority it is given are inevitably variable according to the school’s ethos.

One-day courses were very popular, but in the last decade there has been an acknowledgement that more sustained, in-depth PD is

more beneficial and there has been a shift to many teachers engaging in programmes of this nature. With more sustained PD came recognition of the importance and potential impact of reflection, criticality and analysis – features typical of M level study. Maybe not surprisingly, masters level study – which represents these features as sustained, in-depth PD - started to be offered to more teachers. Also, M level study in ITT brought many entrants to the profession with credits, which could be transferred – at the discretion of the HEI – to masters degrees.

Obviously, teachers have completed masters degrees over the years, but these have usually been undertaken independently and at teachers' own expense. However, due to various initiatives, increasing opportunities have existed for teachers to undertake M level study. Also, the former Labour government commissioned the McKinsey report (2007), which concluded that one reason why Finland has a high-performing school system is that its teachers are educated to masters level and was an influencing factor, leading to the former government announcing its aim that teaching would become an all-masters profession. However, it is acknowledged that Finland and England are very different countries and that often initiatives which are successful in one country may not be successful in another.

The McKinsey report was a key document, which influenced the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) – which set out for the first time the aim to make teaching a masters level profession in England - and *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* (DCSF, 2008) was the key document outlining the MTL. These documents showed the former government's aim for a masters profession, but this was an entitlement and not likely to have the huge impact the all-graduate profession had as a compulsory measure for new entrants in the 1980s.

Although many considered the MTL to be the biggest change in teacher education since the introduction of the all-graduate profession and the announcement of a masters level profession did seem to have an impact – combined with the M level PGCE, with many trainees continuing with M level study as NQTs. Overall, it would appear that M level study in ITT, the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) and the trend for postgraduate study (Wakeling, 2005; Gilbert, 2008; Tobin, 2011) had an impact on M level PD for teachers in England.

Although M level study is in-depth, sustained PD, there has been criticism that 'traditional' masters degrees are not considered appropriate for teachers' needs. Consequently, the MTL was introduced as a new and different type of masters degree, with the aim of improving learning and teaching in schools (DCSF, 2008).

For the former government, the MTL was an intervention strategy to put in place a structured masters level EPD programme with the aim of creating 'world-class' teachers (TDA, 2008a, c). However, it was only open to a small, restricted cohort of NQTs. Therefore, it is suggested that the MTL was not likely to have the huge impact anticipated, as numbers were restricted to small cohorts of very inexperienced teachers, who were not likely to benefit fully from M level study in order to make major changes in learning and teaching.

Clearly, the former government had given the MTL a high level of importance, but the new government withdrew funding for it. In addition, funding for the PPD programme was also withdrawn. Nevertheless, some funding has been allocated for other M level initiatives – the PGCert for SENCOs and National Professional Development Scholarships – so there is still some government interest in teachers pursuing postgraduate study but not in the widespread manner proposed via the MTL.

Overall, it appears that the perspectives of key stakeholders were positive regarding a masters level profession as a strategy to improve learning and teaching. The MTL was also welcomed to a certain extent, although there were many issues which it would appear remain unresolved. Concerns regarding the MTL particularly focused on NQTs as the target cohort – some believed it should be open to more experienced teachers and some believed that the MTL should be open to all teachers equitably. There was also concern that the MTL is a one-size-fits-all approach to PD, but that teachers should be able to choose the type of PD they would like to undertake for themselves. Other concerns were around the additional workload, the perceived rushed introduction/ tight timescale implemented, the role of and training for the SBC, the centrally-prescribed content, lack of interest by schools, funding and rulings regarding APL.

Despite concerns about the MTL itself, some considered that it may be better placed than other masters degrees to ensure improvements in learning and teaching and achieve positive outcomes, as it was designed with this intention. However, although 30 mandatory hours of training and one-day courses may be insufficient, is a masters degree going too far as PD for some teachers? It is suggested that masters degrees may not be suitable for everyone for a variety of reasons and many key stakeholders considered masters degrees/ the MTL inappropriate for NQTs with their limited professional experience. However, typically, many academics are in favour of masters degrees/ the MTL for NQTs, but this is not an altruistic venture since NQTs are a cohort which typically have strong links to HEIs as trainees in the ITT period and these links can be encouraged to boost student numbers.

Also, there was a certain level of interest in the MTL, but this was not a ringing endorsement of the programme. In addition, some of these teachers will naturally decide not to complete the whole programme and will be left without any interim award(s).

Finally, it is important to consider what the legacy of the MTL will be for PD. Has the MTL brought about real aspirations to continue working towards a masters level profession? Will the MTL continue as part of the M level portfolio in HEIs in England? Or will the withdrawal of funding lead to the collapse of the MTL and aspirations for a masters level profession? Only time and further research will tell, but aspirations for a masters level profession and the MTL were potentially major strategies which could ensure England has a world-class education system, improve the quality of learning and teaching and raise the status of teaching. M level study could be a key lever in the transformation to a world-class system and support changes across the profession, if guided and fully supported by key stakeholders, and undertaken by greater numbers of teachers with significant experience upon which to base their study. However, many teachers will not continue M level study without funding. Also, it is suggested that despite criticisms regarding the MTL, the fact that the former government brought HEIs and schools closer together was a positive move. M level study/ the MTL - if rolled out to more teachers - could have meant greater involvement for HEIs in teachers' CPD, which could have had a greater impact than the current ITT partnerships. The fact that the former government engaged HEIs in schools' CPD could also be seen as a vote of confidence in HEIs and what they could bring to supporting the teaching profession to progress further. Nevertheless, the current policy shifting ITT into schools and the withdrawal of funding for the MTL is also being seen as a vote of no-confidence in HEIs and what they bring to the teaching profession.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1 Introduction

This design chapter has been structured to provide a consideration of wider frameworks and the research strategy. Research is systematic enquiry, which should be informed by theory, open to scrutiny and presented in a form which communicates its findings coherently to its intended audience and key stakeholders (Bassegy, 1990). The important contribution of research is that it saves one from staying with views based on beliefs rather than a reality (Korthagen, 2001). In order to achieve this, it is essential to design research questions (see Chapter 1) to direct and frame the study and to demonstrate the themes these research questions will address. Research questions should form the basis for the ‘operationalisation’ (Cohen and Manion, 2000) of the research, to address the research issues. The first set of research questions link the theoretical background to one of the two main areas of research – the introduction of the M level PGCE and perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT. The second set of questions link the theoretical background to the other main area of research – aspirations for a masters level teaching profession, the move to the MTL and perceptions of these.

4.2 Wider Frameworks

This study can be categorized as ‘humanistic research’, as it attempts to collect and apply human experience to develop practice. Working within an interpretivist paradigm, the majority of data collected are qualitative but mixed methods were also employed. Data were mostly collected via interviews and focus

groups, which relate well to an interpretivist approach. However, questionnaires were also used which relate more to a positivist approach, but this was necessary to gain responses from large cohorts of trainee teachers. Also, in line with Burke Johnson *et al* (2007, p. 117), the researcher considered that both qualitative and quantitative methods were useful to address the research questions and that it is not necessary for research to be constrained purely to one paradigm, “because each approach has its strengths and weaknesses and times and places of need”. However, overall, “Data in the form of numbers” (Robson 2002, p. 550) were largely considered to be unsuitable for this type of research, with a few exceptions – where this was the most appropriate form of data to be collected. For Denscombe (2003), quantitative research tends to be associated with numbers as the unit of analysis, large-scale studies, a specific focus, researcher detachment and a pre-determined research design - most of these features are the opposite of the type of research being undertaken. Bassey (1990, p. 17) asserts that “To the positivist there is a reality “out there” in the world that exists irrespective of people...Discoveries about the reality of the world can be expressed as factual statements – statements about things, about events, and about relationships between them.” However, this research is clearly interpretivist – following the logic of discovery and the collection of much qualitative data. For example, most data collected is from gaining the perspectives of key stakeholders. The research also shows features of postpositivist research as themes have emerged with which the majority of people agree.

The interpretivist paradigm is often referred to as ‘constructivist’ or ‘naturalistic’ and is illuminative of practice through qualitative research and cultural hermeneutics - a philosophical tradition concerned with the nature of understanding and interpreting human behaviour and social traditions, focusing on

actual situations and the people within them and “seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors” (Cohen and Manion 2000, p. 182). However, regarding a mixed-methods approach, Morrison (2002, p. 24) warns researchers that “caution needs to be exercised in relation to the view that using a combined approach to research *necessarily* provides a balance between the shortcomings of one approach and the strengths of another.” Therefore, it is not taken for granted that mixed methods will achieve a balanced approach to research, but it is acknowledged that it was important to collect qualitative data and some quantitative data – which complement or connect with each other - in order to address the research questions fully.

4.2.1 Philosophical Approach

Morrison (2002, p. 3) declares that “what constitutes educational research is complex” and qualitative methodology has been chosen as the favoured approach, therefore, as it is based on the researcher’s ontological stance that knowledge and truth are the product of individuals’ perceptions and that there are multiple realities shared by groups of people. Therefore, the researcher’s ontological stance has significant implications for the research design and a researcher’s ontological assumptions also determine the researcher’s epistemological position – that knowledge is based on multiple truths, experience and insight. Scott and Usher (1996) define ontology as a particular version of the world and an epistemology as a particular way of knowing the world. As epistemology is concerned with knowledge and its construction, it has a direct effect on the research strategy adopted (Cohen and Manion, 2000). Therefore, qualitative data are a more natural medium to use for analysis in this case. From the emerging research purposes, questions and design, it was necessary and most appropriate to collect some quantitative data for certain

purposes of this study, but the majority of data collected was qualitative – since using words as the unit of analysis should produce more meaningful and richer descriptions and enable complexities to be fully explored, within an in-depth case study – aiming to explore and evaluate particular situations/ stories/ lived experiences.

4.3 Research Strategy

These research questions invite a largely qualitative design with an interpretative stance, embracing a phenomenological social perspective (Burton and Bartlett, 2009), focusing on key stakeholders' interpretations and giving rise to multiple realities that may be shared by groups of people. Cohen and Manion (2000) describe the characteristics of phenomenology as the granting of primacy to the subjective consciousness of participants, understanding the consciousness to be an active meaning-bestowing force and the idea that there are certain structures to consciousness which can be explored through reflection. The phenomenon being investigated in this case involves members of staff and trainee teachers in two HEIs and a group of NQTs in one secondary school, so a case study approach has been used to examine similarities and differences. The phenomenological approach taken uses multiple methods, engages with cultures in situ, is subjective – with the researcher being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis – and elevates key stakeholders' accounts above all other sources of information (Walford, 2001). In addition to the wider theoretical frameworks guiding the research process, decisions have also been taken regarding the research strategy - which encompasses methodology, methods and management and how these are engaged in the research and the approach to knowledge

highlighted above. The research methodology, methods and management are outlined in the section below.

4.3.1 Research methodology

For Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 20), methodology is “a broad array of ideas, frameworks, concepts and theories which surround the use of various methods or techniques employed to generate data.” Commensurate with the interpretivist approach and the collection of mostly qualitative data, a multiple case study is used, in order to explore key stakeholders’ perceptions and experiences as they naturally occur. For Denscombe (2003, p. 32), “Case studies focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance.” Therefore, the selection of institutions and participants was a vital aspect of the case study. This case study is descriptive, since it provides a narrative account of the rationale for the M level PGCE in each HEI, aspirations for the M level profession, the move to the MTL and also explores how the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT were perceived and how aspirations for a masters level profession and the MTL were perceived. This type of case study has been used as the narrative should provide an opportunity to lead to more critically-informed opinions, in order to be able to address the research questions. Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 181) consider that the case study “provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Indeed a case study can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together.” Therefore, the case study approach should be beneficial to this research and facilitate dissemination to colleagues working in these fields.

Case studies rely on qualitative data and Scott and Usher (1996, p. 181) claim that “The paradigm most naturally suited to case study research ... is the interpretive.” Scott and Usher (1996, p. 181) reinforce that case studies can “penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis. ... case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interaction of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance.” The case study also encourages different research methods to capture the complexity of the instance, allowing for a “rich and vivid description of events within the case” (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995, p. 17) and facilitating the validation of data through triangulation. The case study itself is not generalizable, as it is an in-depth study of single institutions and Stern (1995, p. 23) warns that “Researchers should be aware of the difficulty of drawing general conclusions from a single case study.” However, findings may be of interest to other ITT providers and HEIs which deliver the same or similar awards so that they can reflect on their work in this area. The findings may also be valuable to other key stakeholders involved in and concerned with ITT and M level study. Nevertheless, the use of contrasting methods offers the possibility of different perspectives regarding an issue, enhancing the validity of the data (Denscombe, 2003) and may result in more generalizable findings. Once decided on the research questions, the information needed and based on a review of existing information regarding the theme, the sample and method of data collection were considered. Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 50) state that “Sources of data ... may be classified into two main groups: primary sources ... and secondary sources.” The case study methodology is based on collecting primary data and secondary data, as a result of reading the findings of experienced researchers.

4.3.2 Research methods

Although “there is no general ‘best method’”, Robson (2002 p. 304) emphasises that “The selection of methods should be driven by the kind of research questions you are seeking to answer.” Bell (1999, p. 101) outlines further that “Methods are selected because they will provide the data you require to produce a ... piece of research. Decisions have to be made about which methods are best for particular purposes and then data collecting instruments must be designed to do the job.” A range of different research methods - interviews, focus groups and questionnaires - was deemed appropriate to address the research questions. Data were collected via interviews (Appendix A and E), focus groups (Appendix B and F), questionnaires (Appendix C) and primary evidence (Appendix D). Each method has its particular strengths and weaknesses and this multi-method approach can be combined to produce differing but mutually complementary ways of collecting data. The opportunity to corroborate findings can enhance the validity of data, as the researcher can see consistency across the methods, lending support to data analysis and triangulation. The questionnaires and focus group questions were formulated by consideration of the literature review and the semi-structured interview questions were developed to provide a deeper understanding of the issues identified within the focus groups and questionnaires.

Primary evidence

In addition to interviewing HEI tutors regarding the rationale for introducing the M level PGCE in their institution, the researcher undertook a survey of ITT providers in the English West Midlands, using data available on the GTTR website (www.search.gttr.ac.uk/cgi-

bin/hsrun.hse/General/gttr_search/gttr_search.hjx;start=gtr_search.HsForm.run), in order to start to assess the extent to which providers had re-validated to the M level PGCE in the region. The GTTR is currently one source of intelligence regarding M level PGCE programmes - as it includes a filter for professional and postgraduate courses and gives information regarding which providers operate at which level(s). Results from this survey demonstrated that all ITT providers across the West Midlands – with the exception of one – had re-validated their PGCE to operate at both levels or were only offering the M level PGCE: 27% of these providers chose to re-validate their PGCE at M level only, 64% chose to offer both PGCE awards and one provider – which represented 9% of the providers - chose not to re-validate their PGCE at M level and chose to continue to offer only the H level PGCE. In order to gain this information at a national level, the researcher again undertook a survey using data from the GTTR website (www.search.gttr.ac.uk/cgi-bin/hsrun.hse/General/gttr_search/gttr_search.hjx;start=gtr_search.HsForm.run). For the purposes of this survey, information was collated and summarised to highlight the extent to which providers were operating at M level, at H level or at both levels (see Appendix D). As Appendix D shows, 52% of providers chose to re-validate their PGCE at M level only and 30% chose to offer both PGCEs. Only a small minority - 18% of providers - chose not to re-validate their PGCE to M level and chose to continue to offer only the H level PGCE. Therefore, there is a different picture nationally from that in the West Midlands. Although both sets of data show that a minority of providers have opted to continue with the H level only PGCE, more providers nationally chose the M level only PGCE whereas in the West Midlands the majority chose to offer both awards.

Interviews

One method commonly used within case studies is the interview. Interviews took approximately one hour and were recorded. These were then transcribed by the researcher. Interviews were chosen, as the data were likely to be based on emotions, experiences and feelings and be based on privileged information “with key players in the field who can give privileged information” (Denscombe 2003, p. 165) and for the depth of information and insights they can provide. Denscombe (2003, p. 189) considers interviews to be “particularly good at producing data which deal with topics in detail ... The researcher is likely to gain valuable insights based on the depth of information gathered and the wisdom of ‘key informants’.” However, interviews have to be skilfully planned and executed for maximum benefit. As Bell (1999, p. 70) comments:

A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings ... The way in which a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc.) can provide information that a written response would conceal. Questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified.

The researcher ensured that interview responses were clarified, as necessary, and found that rich data pertinent to the key issues were produced. However, although interviews are “particularly good at producing data which deal with topics in depth and in detail” (Denscombe 2003, p. 189), Denscombe (2003, p. 190) believes the following to be the main disadvantages of interviews (including group discussions, in the form of focus groups):

- Time-consuming
- Data analysis
- Reliability
- Interviewer effect
- Inhibitions
- Invasion of privacy
- Resources.

The researcher concurs with Denscombe (2003) regarding the disadvantages of interviews. However, the ability to interview key stakeholders gave an insight into the issues which could not have been provided otherwise and which it was considered outweighed these disadvantages.

There are different types of interviews. In this case, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of members of staff in two HEIs who were responsible for the management of and/ or teaching of secondary PGCE programmes – operating at H level and/ or M level – and the Deans who were fully up-to-date with the agenda regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL, as they had overseen a collaborative regional bid to deliver the programme. Six tutors and the Dean were interviewed from each HEI to represent a range of post-holders from subject tutors, subject leaders and senior management. This type of interview was undertaken, so that respondents could speak relatively freely and to allow respondents to express themselves at some length, but also within the parameters of the research. Semi-structured interviews allow for a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be asked, but within this format the interviewee is given greater opportunity to “develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised” (Denscombe 2003, p. 167). Regarding conclusion drawing and verification, all interviews and focus groups (discussed below) were transcribed by the researcher, easing the complexity of raw data analysis (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). (An example of a transcription can be found in Appendix J.) Although this is a very time-consuming process, it enabled the researcher to engage closely with the data, to look for emerging themes and to draw initial conclusions at the start of fieldwork, which can be ‘*verified* as the analyst proceeds’ (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 11). Verification also meant repeating answers to check the

researcher had not misinterpreted their words and sharing transcriptions with interviewees later.

Focus groups

The term ‘focus group’ originates from the idea that groups are ‘focused’ on a collective activity, while the researcher is present to facilitate and guide the discussion with prepared open questions. The focus groups took approximately one hour and were recorded. Again, these were transcribed later by the researcher. Whilst interviews were appropriate for many of the participants in this research, focus groups were also chosen “to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas” (Denscombe 2003, p. 169) regarding the M level PGCE from secondary school trainees’ collective perspectives and regarding aspirations for the M level profession and the MTL from secondary school NQTs’ collective perspectives. Focus groups are a very useful way of discovering the collective view, rather than individuals’ views and can “lead to insights that might not otherwise have come to light” (Denscombe 2003, p. 169) within a one-to-one interview. The collective view is important, as participants can prompt each other to give information which may not have been considered by individuals in a one-to-one interview. Particular advantages of focus groups are their cost-effective nature and their practical way of developing discussion and generating a wide range of responses (Cohen and Manion, 2000). Focus groups generally comprise of between six and ten people with shared characteristics. For Research Question 1, a minimum of six and a maximum of nine trainees were chosen as focus group participants - representing secondary school trainees across a range of subjects undertaking the H level or M level PGCE in HEI 1 and undertaking the M level PGCE in HEI 2. In total, twenty-one trainees participated in the focus groups – six undertaking the H level PGCE in HEI 1, six undertaking the M

level PGCE in HEI 1 and nine undertaking the M level PGCE in HEI 2. As a result, data collection differed in that two focus groups were undertaken in the HEI offering the H level and M level PGCE. In the HEI only offering the M level PGCE one focus group was undertaken. A focus group of secondary NQTs was also established to gain their perceptions of aspirations for a masters level profession and the MTL regarding Research Question 2. Nine secondary school NQTs from a range of subject areas and who had undertaken a range of ITT routes were interviewed, as NQTs were to be the first target cohort for the MTL, due to the priority being given to NQTs employed in the North West and ‘challenge schools’ – and all ‘challenge schools’ were predominantly secondary schools. Also, this is consistent with the focus groups of secondary school trainees interviewed for Research Question 1. The scheduling of the focus groups was also an important factor and a full range of responses was achieved, as the focus groups of trainees were conducted at the end of the PGCE and the focus group of NQTs was conducted at the end of the induction period. This meant that respondents had a significant amount of experience of the PGCE and NQT induction, to enable them to comment fully on the issues being researched.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was chosen as a data collection instrument, as a rapid means of collecting the views of a large number of trainees at a crucial, yet busy time – in the final week of their PGCE. Questionnaires were distributed to 189 trainees: 97 trainees in HEI 1 - from across the entire cohort, consisting of those who had been eligible to undertake the M level PGCE and chose to do so (31%), those who had been eligible to undertake the M level PGCE and chose not to do so (11%) and those who had not been eligible to undertake the M level PGCE (58%) - and

92 trainees in HEI 2 – where only the M level PGCE was in operation. Denscombe (2003) believes that questionnaires can ensure consistency and standardisation in collating responses, especially “when used with *large numbers* of respondents” (p. 145). Munn and Drever (1990, p. 2) summarize the following as advantages of using questionnaires:

- An efficient use of time
- Anonymity (for the respondent)
- The possibility of a high return rate
- Standardised questions.

The researcher concurs with each element of this summary from this research. However, Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 168) highlight the following as weaknesses of the questionnaire:

- people will not respond due to ‘questionnaire fatigue’
- depends on extensive planning and pre-testing of instrument
- always a danger of people not understanding the question – leading to response bias.

A common disadvantage of postal questionnaires is their low response rate. In order to maximise the response rate in this research, questionnaires were disseminated to trainees by their tutors in a designated time for the end-of-year evaluation and an explanation of the research was provided. These were collected by the researcher at the end of the day. This approach provided an overall response rate of 89%, which should yield confident results. In HEI 1, 92% of trainees responded and in HEI 2 85% of trainees responded. The researcher piloted the questionnaire beforehand to avoid trainees not understanding the questions. However, some questionnaires were incomplete or poorly completed – a typical disadvantage of the questionnaire (Denscombe, 2003).

Despite the limitations of the questionnaire, carefully produced and piloted questionnaires disseminated to a target audience are

invaluable as data collection instruments – when used in addition to and compared and contrasted with other data. In addition, data collection differed in that different questionnaires were disseminated to the cohorts, according to which award they had taken (see Appendix C).

4.3.3 Research management

In order to address the first set of research questions, research involved collecting data from trainees and tutors in two HEIs. For the second set of research questions, data were collected by interviewing the Deans from the education departments in the same HEIs with overall responsibility for the bid to deliver the MTL. Also, data were collected by establishing a focus group of NQTs, as the future target cohort for the MTL.

Cohen and Manion warn that “investigators cannot expect access ... as a matter of right” (2000, p. 354). However, access was possible as the researcher was a former school-based Senior Professional Mentor with responsibility for trainee teachers from both institutions and also met with colleagues in both institutions at TDA partnership meetings due to managing a SCITT in the region and working as PGCE and GTP Subject Leader for Modern Languages over eight years. Also, the researcher was an internal researcher as an employee in HEI 2 as a Principal Lecturer with responsibility for the MA Education, which included leadership of a module for NQTs and a module for middle/ senior leaders. In addition, information was given to respondents regarding the research being undertaken, anonymity was assured and respondents were given every opportunity to disclose their thoughts within a safe environment.

For the first set of research questions, interviews were negotiated and arranged with a member of the SMT with responsibility for ITT and conducted with a range of tutors. Tutors were chosen to represent a range of post-holders from subject tutors, subject leaders and senior management. Subject tutors and subject leaders were chosen, as they have an overview of the programme and trainees' progress across the entire ITT period. Tutors were also chosen according to their subject specialism, to represent a full range of PGCE subjects offered within the institution. This was considered necessary as respondents may give differing perspectives based on their subject specialisms. For example, those from practical subjects may view issues differently from those from academic subjects and so a breadth of sample respondents was specifically chosen in an attempt to ensure a wide coverage of responses. Members of the SMT were chosen, as those with management responsibilities and who would typically have the benefit of being involved in the decision-making process of revalidating the PGCE to M level. The focus groups were negotiated and arranged in a similar way. Within HEI 1, which offers both PGCE awards, two focus groups were set up by the course leader to include trainees from different subject areas. For the first focus group, trainees were chosen from those who were eligible and elected to undertake the M level PGCE. For the second focus group, trainees were chosen from those who were eligible but elected not to undertake the M level PGCE. Within HEI 2 which only operates an M level PGCE, one focus group was established by the course leader to include trainees from different subject areas. The questionnaires were piloted by eight trainee teachers. Those who participated in the pilot were asked to comment on the length of time the questionnaire took to complete and if the questions were clear and straightforward. Participants were also asked to make further suggestions for improvement. Robson (2002, p. 301) fully supports the piloting process, declaring that "The first stage of any data gathering should, if at

all possible, be a 'dummy run'. The piloting process was invaluable in evaluating the questionnaire and it is anticipated avoided problems in collecting and analysing the data from a wider sample. Questionnaires were then amended, following suggestions made, before distribution.

For the second set of research questions, interviews were arranged with the Dean of education from each HEI. A focus group of NQTs was arranged with a senior teacher in a previous partner secondary Training School. Nine NQTs participated in this focus group and were chosen from across a range of subjects and who had undertaken different ITT programmes.

The sample of the two HEIs were chosen for their accessibility and also as a representative sample of universities with established ITT programmes within the same locality and which were operating the M level PGCE for the first time, but in different formats. They were also chosen as a representative sample of universities tendering to deliver the MTL within the region. Both HEIs are also 'new' universities which introduced the M level PGCE from September 2007 and with similar sized trainee cohorts. Both HEIs also run masters degrees in education. The purpose of sampling is in order to get "evidence from a portion of the whole in the expectation ... that what is found in that portion applies equally to the rest of the 'population'" (Denscombe 2003, p. 11). Purposive sampling was used, with the knowledge that those chosen for interviews, focus groups and the completion of questionnaires were a representative cross-section of key people in the population. Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 89) explain that "In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs." Within purposive sampling, stratified sampling was used, to add "some boundaries to the

process of selection” (Denscombe 2003, p.13) – as outlined above regarding access, for example.

In order to address Research Question 1, HEI tutors’ responses were compared and contrasted with responses from trainee teachers participating in focus groups and responses from questionnaires completed by trainees from across the HEIs (again, undertaking the same secondary PGCE programme as the focus group cohorts). In order to address Research Question 2, data collected from interviews with the Deans and the focus group of NQTs were compared with each other.

Denscombe (2003, p. 273) defines reliability as “whether the research instruments are neutral in their effect, and would measure the same result when used on other occasions.” Therefore, a good degree of reliability means that the research instruments used should produce the same data each time they are used. Interviews and focus groups, for instance, may have an adverse effect on reliability. Denscombe (2003, p. 190) warns that “The impact of the interviewer and of the context means that consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve. The data collected are, to an extent, unique owing to the specific context and the specific individuals involved.” Therefore, the researcher aimed to step into the background by asking questions during the interviews and focus groups but then allowing respondents to talk freely, without intervening except to clarify or develop points. The questionnaires produced were piloted and then modified in order to eliminate potential bias before distribution.

Validity

The issue of validity is particularly important to researchers working within an interpretivist paradigm. For Bell (1999, p.

104), validity “tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe.” Therefore, some kind of safeguard is needed within research to minimise threats to validity and a number of strategies were used, in order to attempt to achieve validity. Internal validity – the extent to which findings can be justified by the data presented - is most appropriate to this research, rather than external validity – the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other settings. In particular, the use of interviews and focus groups can increase validity. As Denscombe (2003, p. 189) points out “Direct contact at the point of interview means that data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected.” Focus groups may also be considered to be high in validity, due to their ability to generalize the results to a wider population. This multi-method approach allows for “findings to be *corroborated* or questioned by comparing the data produced” (Denscombe 2003, p. 133). However, it is not taken for granted that this eclectic approach will automatically provide total validity, but as Denscombe (2003, p. 133) further explains:

Seeing things from a different perspective and the opportunity to corroborate findings can enhance the *validity* of the data. They do not *prove* that the researcher has ‘got it right’, but they do give some confidence that the meaning of the data has some consistency across methods and that the findings are not too closely tied up with a particular method used to collect the data.

Therefore, researchers need to recognize the appropriateness of a range of methods for the purposes of the research and to employ checks regarding interpretation. To ensure validity and reliability, triangulation and a mixed-methods approach to research was used.

Denscombe (2003, p. 133) defines triangulation as “involving locating a true position by referring to two or more other coordinates.” It is anticipated that by using several methods of data collection, “the researcher will be able to know where the

‘truth’ lies” (Denscombe 2003, p. 134). Therefore, triangulation was used as a strategy for increasing validity to crosscheck findings against each other, by comparing and contrasting the accounts from the range of coordinates: interviews, focus groups and questionnaires.

Analysis of data

Speaking at the first West Midlands *Becoming a research-engaged Training School* conference (2006) organized by the TDA, Caroline Sharp, Principal Research Officer at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), highlighted the complexity of analysis, emphasising that data collection is relatively easy in comparison with data analysis which is described as “the tricky part – working out how to pull the data together and make sense of it.” Although data collection has its own complexities, data analysis is particularly complex, but “necessary because, generally speaking, data in their raw form do not speak for themselves. The messages stay hidden and need careful teasing out” (Robson 2002, pp. 305 – 306). It was recognised that the interviews and focus groups conducted would need particularly thorough and careful analysis. In analysing interview data, the researcher drew up a grid with interviewees along the top and issues/ themes which emerged from the transcripts down the left-hand side. A tick was then made in the appropriate box for each issue/ theme with a brief note regarding context, as necessary, and the issue/ theme was colour-coded to support the researcher in being able to see patterns across the data. For focus group and questionnaire data, issues/ themes were also colour-coded. Sharp *et al* (2005, p. 79) highlight the following as action points to aid the complex process of data analysis:

- Revisit the research questions and decide which information can be used to address each point. Consider whether you wish to add to or refine your original questions in response to what you have found
- Analyse your results by reducing the information (e.g. summarising, coding and counting), displaying your emerging results in relation to each question and reflecting on their meaning
- Devise a structure for your report/ presentation in relation to your purpose, questions and audience.

These action points were undertaken to aid the data analysis process and the analysis of qualitative data was informed by the approach developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), who define analysis as consisting of three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/ verification. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) describe data reduction as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.” The key outcome of data reduction in this research was the identification of themes/ issues which emerged from the data. Themes and issues which emerged were made more accessible by grouping quotations together. These themes/ issues are presented and discussed in the next two chapters. For Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11), data display is described as “an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action.” Although the “most frequent form of display for qualitative data ... has been *extended text*”, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11) acknowledge that text is “terribly cumbersome” and claim that “we drastically overweight vivid information, such as the exciting event that jumps out.” Although findings are largely in the form of text, data have also been displayed in a range of ways, in order to avoid these potential pitfalls and to exemplify findings. Data were displayed in charts, for example, to capture themes and theories. Regarding conclusion drawing and verification, all interviews and focus groups were transcribed by the researcher, which enabled the researcher to engage closely with detailed data, to look for

emerging issues/ themes and to draw initial conclusions at the start of fieldwork from arranging issues/ themes into grids and colour-coding these to enable patterns across the data to emerge from the data.

Limitations of the design

The case study itself is not generalizable, as outlined above. Therefore, findings from research into the two HEIs and the findings from NQTs may not be an indicator of the experiences in other HEIs and of other NQTs across England. However, the HEIs chosen represent a sample of universities, with established ITT and masters level education programmes. Also, trainees and NQTs participated in focus groups at the end of their ITT year and induction year respectively, so that they could contribute fully from personal experience. However, trainees and NQTs were only selected from the secondary school phase and it is acknowledged that trainees and NQTs from the primary school phase may have given different responses. Nevertheless, secondary school NQTs were the largest target cohort for the MTL, due to those in ‘challenge schools’ being selected in the initial cohort – and ‘challenge schools’ were predominantly secondary schools. Also, the sample of respondents undertaking the M level PGCE in HEI 1 was naturally smaller than the sample undertaking the M level PGCE in HEI 2, due to HEI 1 offering both PGCE awards and HEI 2 only operating the M level PGCE.

Also, although the HEI tutors had a real overview of the impact of the M level PGCE, this could be a weakness – since they are likely to be positive about an initiative, which they set up and developed. Similarly, the Deans who tendered to deliver the MTL were also likely to be positive about an initiative which would recruit increased numbers of students to masters level study.

Also, these HEIs had only delivered the M level PGCE for one year and the MTL had not started at the point of data collection, so perceptions may also change over time.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations are a very important principle of research, especially when acting as an internal researcher within an organisation. Regarding ethics, Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 359) comment that researchers “generally have a responsibility not only to their profession in its search for knowledge and quest for truth, but also for the subjects they depend on for their work.” Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 359) describe ethical behaviour as taking “into account the effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings.” Ethics “are usually taken as referring to general principles of what one ought to do” and “ethical dilemmas lurk in *any* research involving people” (Robson 2002, p. 30). Although people were fully involved in the gathering of data for this research, it was obviously considered that there should be no interference with the participants’ physical or psychological wellbeing and that they should not be put at risk. The participants were not considered to be vulnerable to the procedures and research issue proposed, but it was essential to maintain participants’ confidentiality and assure them of this.

According to Denscombe (2003, p. 134), researchers are expected to ensure the following:

1. Respect the rights and dignity of those who are participating in the research project.
2. Avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research.
3. Operate with honesty and integrity.

Therefore, at the outset a member of the SMT with responsibility for ITT and the Dean for education in each HEI were consulted, information provided regarding the research and permission gained to conduct the research. In the secondary school a senior teacher was also consulted, information provided regarding the research and permission gained to conduct the research.

Discussions took place regarding data collection instruments and members of the institution who would be involved. The interview and focus group questions and the questionnaire were shared with a member of the SMT. The HEI tutors and Deans who participated in the interviews were contacted personally to ask if they were willing to be interviewed and were assured of their anonymity - all agreed. The tutors who participated in the interviews and the trainees and NQTs who participated in the focus groups and/ or questionnaires were made aware of the purpose of the research and assured of the confidentiality of their responses and an offer given of the right to withdraw from the research. In addition, all participants were told that they would be informed of the general outcomes of the research if they wished to have this information and that it was intended for a thesis from which papers may be published within an educational journal. The findings were subsequently reported to senior staff in the HEIs and school for dissemination, as appropriate.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) provides ethical guidelines detailing what researchers ought to do, from which seven guidelines were deemed to be particularly relevant to this research (see Appendix K). This approach to research ethics made a significant contribution to meeting the BERA guidelines highlighted in Appendix K, in anticipation of the future publication of papers for an educational journal.

Summary

The research was undertaken within an interpretivist paradigm, but mixed methods were also employed. However, it is not taken for granted that this approach would achieve a balanced approach to research, but the range of data collection tools employed was considered the most appropriate and fit for purpose to collect all relevant data. For this research, it was recognized that it was necessary and most appropriate to collect some quantitative data for certain purposes of this study, but that the majority of data collected was qualitative – since using words as the unit of analysis should produce more meaningful and richer descriptions and enable complexities to be fully explored, within an in-depth case study. Educational research is concerned with complex problems, which are multivariate and involves interpreting human actions. Therefore, working within an interpretivist paradigm is most appropriate for researching and analysing human action, multiple truths and complex issues.

The next chapter presents the findings from the interviews, focus groups and questionnaires.

Chapter 5: Presentation of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on data collected from members of staff and trainee teachers in two university education departments and from NQTs in one secondary school. Although findings are largely in the form of text, data are also presented as charts. Research questions 1 and 2 have been used to structure this chapter in turn.

5.2 Research Question 1

The findings for research question 1a are presented and then summarised in section 5.2.1, the findings for research question 1b are presented and then summarised in section 5.2.2 – for the perceptions of HEI tutors – and in section 5.2.3 – for the perceptions of trainees.

5.2.1 Research Question (RQ) 1a: The rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI

From interviews with 12 HEI members of staff (6 in each HEI), participants adhered to the following most common issues/ themes, which are presented below in rank order:

- competing with other providers (6 tutors: 3 from each HEI);
- international and national demands (4 tutors: 3 from HEI 1 and 1 from HEI 2);
- trainees' access to the opportunity to work at M level (2 tutors: 1 from each HEI).

Three tutors in each HEI stated that the main reason for introducing the M level PGCE had been to be able to compete with other providers in the region. A member of the SMT from the education department in HEI 2 had compared her institution with similar institutions and found that all similar HEIs in the region would be offering the M level PGCE and considered it necessary to do likewise, in order to compete regionally. A tutor from HEI 2 also felt that it was:

“important for the reputation of the university to keep in line with what other universities were doing”.

However, HEI 1 decided to offer both awards, considering this to be the most suitable model for its “broad range of trainees.”

In addition to competing with other providers, 4 tutors cited international and national demands as a reason for introducing the M level PGCE. One member of staff from HEI 1 commented that this had been key in the decision-making process:

“National requirements and the introduction of the Bologna agreement, where anything with PG in the title has to be at postgraduate level ie M level.”

The TDA had requested that providers declare the level(s) at which their PGCE would be offered, due to the Bologna Agreement (1999) and FHEQ introduced in 2004.

One tutor in each HEI also cited trainees’ access to the opportunity to work at M level as another reason for the introducing the M level PGCE, stating that:

“Our ethos was to give those who could do the level 7 the opportunity to go for it and it was about progression.”

Although data gained from the GTTR (Appendix D) and UCET differ (Appendix H), there has been an overwhelming trend across providers nationally to offer the M level PGCE either as a sole

award or alongside the H level PGCE, with a minority of providers now only offering the H level PGCE as a sole award.

Some additional points also emerged from individual tutors regarding the rationale for introducing the M level PGCE:

- decision taken by SMT (1 tutor: HEI 2);
- influence of UCET (1 tutor: HEI 2);
- differentiation from EBRs (1 tutor: HEI 2);
- perception that the PGCE was probably already operating at or near M level anyway (1 tutor: HEI 1);
- increasing the uptake of teachers taking M level programmes (1 tutor: HEI 2);
- perception that it would improve aspects of the existing programme (1 tutor: HEI 2);
- increasing the capacity of tutors to teach at M level (1 tutor: HEI 2).

It is noticeable here that these issues largely emerged from tutors in HEI 2, so it would appear that these tutors felt there were more reasons to re-validate the PGCE just at M level and may have been a supporting factor in the decision to offer the M level PGCE only. However, this decision may just have been made by the SMT, as one tutor said.

Some illustrative comments relating to the above points are shown below:

“Pressure from SMT - no choice.” (HEI 2)

“We used various UCET papers in our decision-making.” (HEI 2)

“We wanted the PGCE to be different from EBITT routes and have differentiation from other routes.” (HEI 2)

“Course runs at level 6+ anyway.” (HEI 1)

“Impact of M level PGCE ... from ITT to masters degrees.” (HEI 2)

“Could also improve ... aspects of course.” (HEI 2)

“Increased ... tutors’ confidence and teaching ..., capacity building – 4 ITE staff wanted to teach on the MA.” (HEI 2)

With the exception of the decision being taken by the SMT, these comments – although being made by individuals – show the wide range of issues considered by HEIs regarding the introduction of the M level PGCE.

Summary (RQ1a)

The most common reasons cited for introducing the M level PGCE by both HEIs, in rank order, were: (i) competing with other providers, (ii) international and national demands, and (iii) trainees’ access to the opportunity to work at M level. Other reasons were also cited by individual tutors, as outlined above. The next section considers how the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT were perceived by members of staff in both HEIs.

5.2.2 Research Question 1b: HEI perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT

The most common theme to emerge was an improved programme overall and improvements in trainees’ skills (10 tutors: 5 from each HEI). This theme was also raised as part of the rationale for introducing the M level PGCE in the section above by an individual tutor in HEI 2. Clearly, all members of staff, with the exception of one tutor in each HEI, highlighted that the M level PGCE and M level work had contributed to an improved

programme and improvements in trainees' skills. Tutors reported the improvements as:

“A level of thoughtfulness and analysis I'd rarely seen in trainees' work before.” (HEI 1)

“Trainees became more analytical and critical.” (HEI 1)

“We have a better and more reflective programme, as a result of integrating M level. Trainees are also able to articulate better what they're doing in the classroom.” (HEI 2)

“M level has improved lots of aspects of the course and External Examiners said that trainees were more thoughtful and reflective than previously.” (HEI 2)

“The M level PGCE actually helped to support trainees better.” (HEI 1)

It is particularly beneficial to see these improvements also being reported by External Examiners, who had a more objective knowledge of the programme before and after the move to M level and had had the opportunity to meet cohorts of trainees before and after the change. Also, many comments from the tutors above demonstrate evidence that trainees are obviously working within the descriptor for a qualification at masters level (Appendix G). In addition, it appears that M level is enabling tutors to differentiate support for trainees, where both PGCE awards exist.

Other points, in rank order, which emerged were:

- different qualifications can be divisive (5 tutors: HEI 1);
- additional workload for tutors and trainees (4 tutors: HEI 1);
- concerns regarding the ability of some trainees to operate at masters level (3 tutors: 2 from HEI 1 and 1 from HEI 2);
- staff enjoyed working at a higher level (3 tutors: HEI 1);
- need for staff development to operate and assess at masters level (3 tutors: 1 from HEI 1 and 2 from HEI 2);
- different workload for tutors and trainees (2 tutors: HEI 2).

The divisive nature of different qualifications was only raised in HEI 1 and was a particularly emotive issue for some tutors – due to the operation of both awards. Tutors considered that:

“The disadvantage of the level 7 Postgrad course is that it created the level 6 Prof Grad course. It’s a bit like grammar schools creating secondary modern schools. Trainees with the Prof PGCE felt they’d come out with second best, although tutors tried to dispel this.” (HEI 1)

“My initial thoughts were, this is dreadful – like the old CSE/ O level differences.” (HEI 1)

Notably, the divisive nature of different qualifications was raised by most tutors in HEI 1. Only one tutor interviewed from HEI 1 did not raise this as an issue.

An issue which emerged for four out of six tutors from HEI 1 was the additional workload for tutors and trainees created by the M level PGCE. A typical response was:

“There was an increase in the academic work.” (HEI 1)

It is pertinent to note here that only the tutors in HEI 1 - offering both awards - perceived that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT had created additional work.

Tutors in both HEIs were concerned about trainees’ ability to operate at M level. A typical response was:

“Team members were wary due to the calibre of the students and concerned some wouldn’t get through.” (HEI 1)

It is important to note that, although tutors in both HEIs were keen to provide trainees with the opportunity to work at a higher level, they were also concerned about those who may not be able to succeed at M level. Clearly, this would also be more problematic for HEI 2, which only offered the M level PGCE.

Staff enjoyment of working at a higher level was only discussed in HEI 1. One tutor reported that:

“Tutors really enjoyed level 7.” (HEI 1)

It is interesting to note that comments regarding staff enjoyment only emerged from tutors in HEI 1, which offered both awards and had only a minority of trainees undertaking M level work. Only 31% of trainees undertook the level 7 PGCE in the first year of its operation at HEI 1, although 42% of the cohort was eligible.

The need for staff development to operate and assess at M level emerged from both HEIs. One tutor considered that:

“Tutors didn’t know or felt they didn’t know how to teach writing at masters level.” (HEI 2)

This shows there was still further work to be done to embed the M level PGCE.

Finally, workload emerged again as an issue, but rather differently. Two tutors from HEI 2 perceived that the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT had created different workload issues for tutors and trainees. A typical response was:

“M level isn’t **more** work. It’s just **different** - it was integrated well.” (HEI 2)

Evidently, there is dissonance between tutors in HEI 1 and HEI 2. HEI 1 tutors perceived that the M level PGCE had created additional work, whereas tutors in HEI 2 considered that workload was different. Therefore, it is important to note here that providing both awards appears to create additional work for tutors and trainees.

Summary (RQ1b: HEI perceptions)

The most common issue which emerged regarding perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT was an improved programme and improvements in trainees' skills, which is positive and was also highlighted above, regarding the rationale for the M level PGCE. Other points also emerged and are presented above. In particular, some interesting findings emerged regarding workload. It is suggested that providing both awards appears to create additional work for tutors and trainees, whereas offering the M level only PGCE appears to create a different workload.

The following section considers the same issues, but from the perspectives of trainees.

5.2.3 Research Question 1b: Trainee teacher perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT

This section has been structured to reflect responses from the three different cohorts in the two HEIs. Firstly, data are presented from the H level PGCE cohort in HEI 1. Secondly, data are presented from the M level PGCE cohort in the same institution. Thirdly, data are presented from trainees who undertook the M level only PGCE in HEI 2.

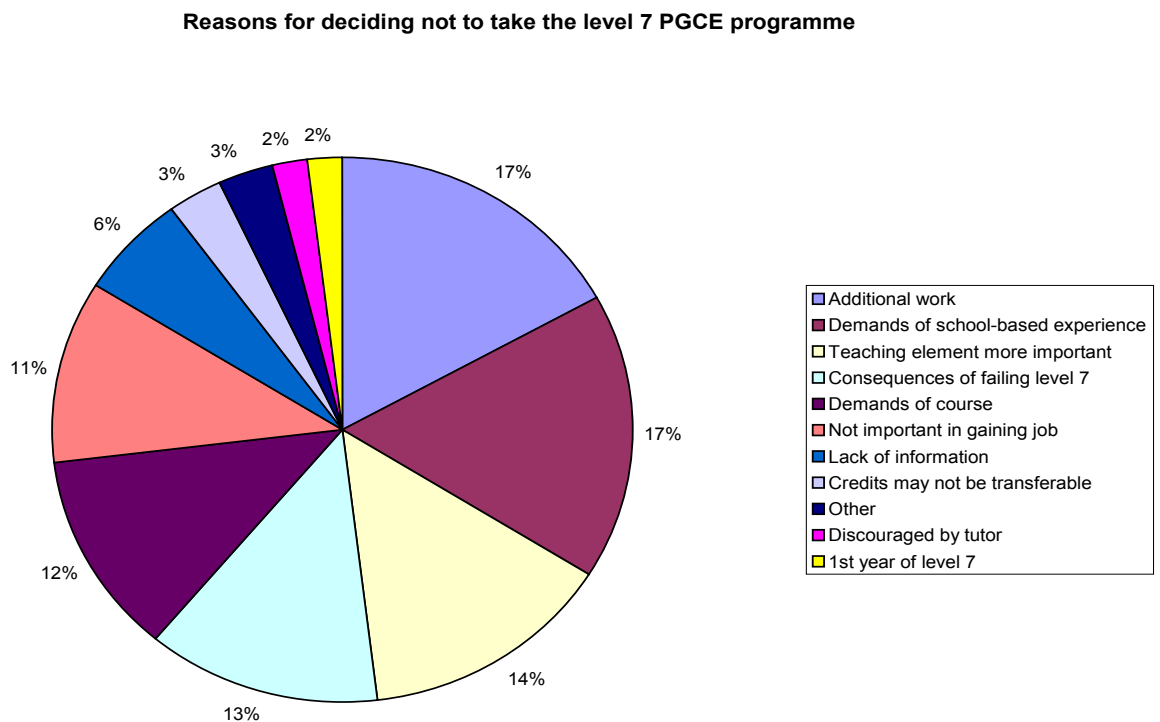
(i) Perceptions of the H level/ level 6 PGCE cohort (HEI 1)

All trainees in this cohort were asked to complete a questionnaire and a representative group was selected from across each subject area to participate in a focus group. Responses are presented below.

Questionnaire responses (level 6 cohort, HEI 1)

Figure 5.1 below highlights reasons given by trainees for deciding not to take the level 7 PGCE.

Figure 5.1: Reasons for not taking the level 7 PGCE

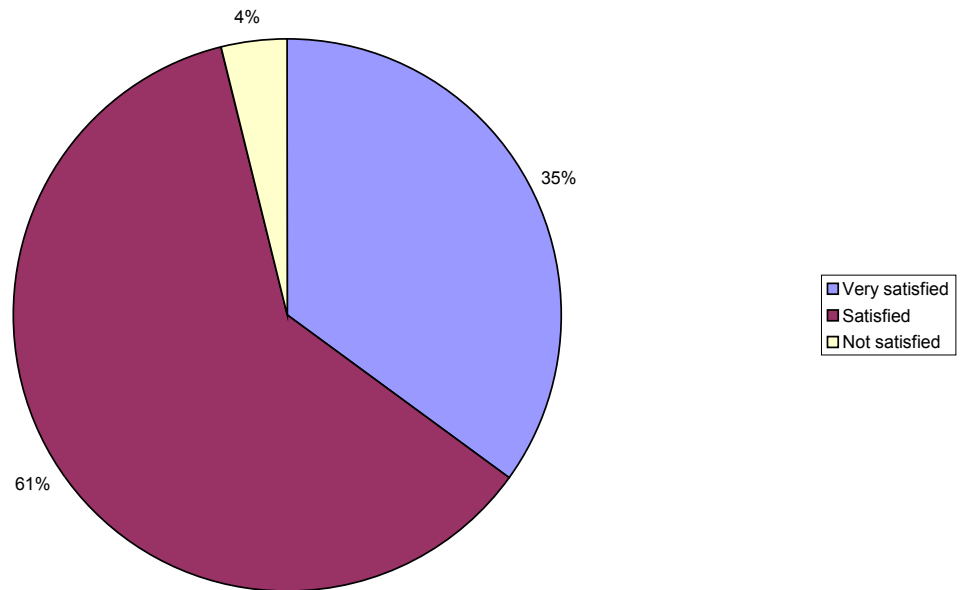


Additional work and the demands of the school-based experience were the most common reasons for not opting for the level 7 PGCE. The other main reasons, in rank order, were feeling that professional practice was more important, consequences of failing level 7, the general demands of the course, the feeling that level 7 may not be important for employability, the lack of information about level 7, an uncertainty whether M level credits could be transferred to other HEIs, discouragement by tutors and participating in the first year of a new award. In the ‘other’ option, all trainees who responded gave ineligibility as the reason.

Figure 5.2 below highlights trainees' levels of satisfaction regarding their decision to take the level 6 PGCE.

Figure 5.2: Trainees' levels of satisfaction

How satisfied are you about doing the level 6 PGCE programme?



Data show that the vast majority of trainees (96%) expressed positive levels of satisfaction – ie. they were either satisfied (61%) or very satisfied (35%) with the level 6 PGCE. An illustrative quotation from a trainee who reported being very satisfied is shown below:

“Very thorough programme.”

Some quotations from trainees who were satisfied with the level 6 programme are shown below:

“I was satisfied with the workload and level to which I was completing the work although worry about any chances in the future ... have disadvantaged myself?”

“It was what I came here to do.”

It is evident from those who were satisfied or very satisfied that the level 6 PGCE was in line with their expectations of ITT. Finally, some illustrative quotations from trainees who were not satisfied are below:

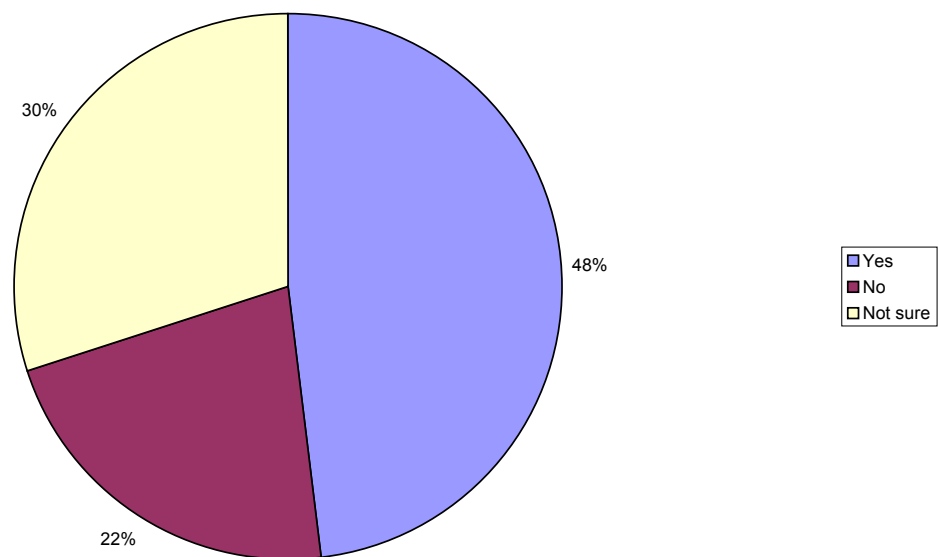
“Regret decision not to do level 7 now.”

“Level 6 is not ‘Post-Graduate’ I have found out recently. Level 7 is only a small amount of extra work.”

Figure 5.3 highlights the advice trainees would give to the following cohort.

Figure 5.3: Would you advise next year’s trainees to opt for the level 6 PGCE?

Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the level 6 PGCE?



This response shows that just under half of trainees (48%) would advise the following cohort to opt for the level 6 PGCE, almost one-third (30%) would not be sure about the advice they would give and almost one-quarter (22%) would advise trainees against doing the level 6 PGCE. It is important to note here that the

advice being given refers to the award these trainees had undertaken themselves.

Some quotations from trainees who answered Yes are shown below:

“Placement 2 ... was very demanding in terms of time and energy. Main focus should be gaining QTS.”

“If they are struggling it is a safer option.”

It is evident that these trainees see professional practice and meeting the Professional Standards for QTS as of paramount importance and consider the level 6 PGCE as a safety net, which does not deter them from their perceived core task.

Some typical comments from trainees who answered Not Sure are shown below:

“Having the choice and being able to select according to your own career path and life position is really important.”

“They need to make their own decision – Give them as much info as possible.”

Therefore, personal choice was an important element.

Finally, an illustrative quotation from a trainee who answered No is below:

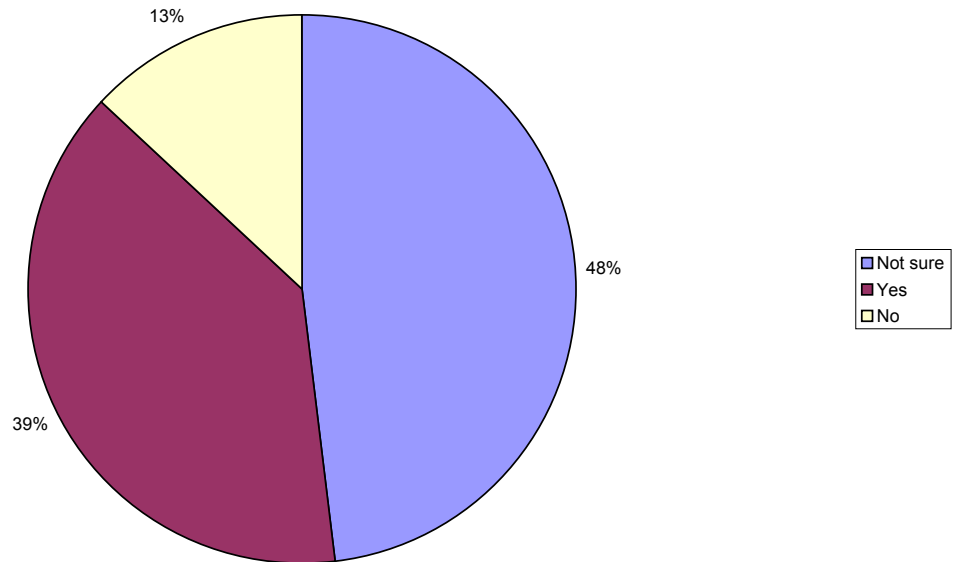
“As level 7 was not really a further workload and all options are then open in the future.”

This comment shows the benefit of hindsight for some trainees at the end of the year, once they had seen both awards in operation. Typically, workload was not perceived to be a real issue.

Figure 5.4 below highlights the extent to which trainees who undertook the level 6 PGCE consider they would undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree.

Figure 5.4: Will you undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a master's degree?



Just under half of trainees (48%) were not sure if they would pursue postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree. Just over one-third of trainees (39%) said that they would, which is perhaps surprising as they were leaving ITT with no credits at M level. Only 13% said they would not undertake postgraduate studies. Some quotations from trainees who answered Yes are below:

“Probable but not in education.”

“It is an important part of CPD, but I won’t do it for a few years yet.”

Therefore, one trainee was positive about undertaking postgraduate study, but not in education, and another was positive about doing this once established as a qualified teacher in a few years’ time. Some quotations from trainees who answered Not sure are shown below:

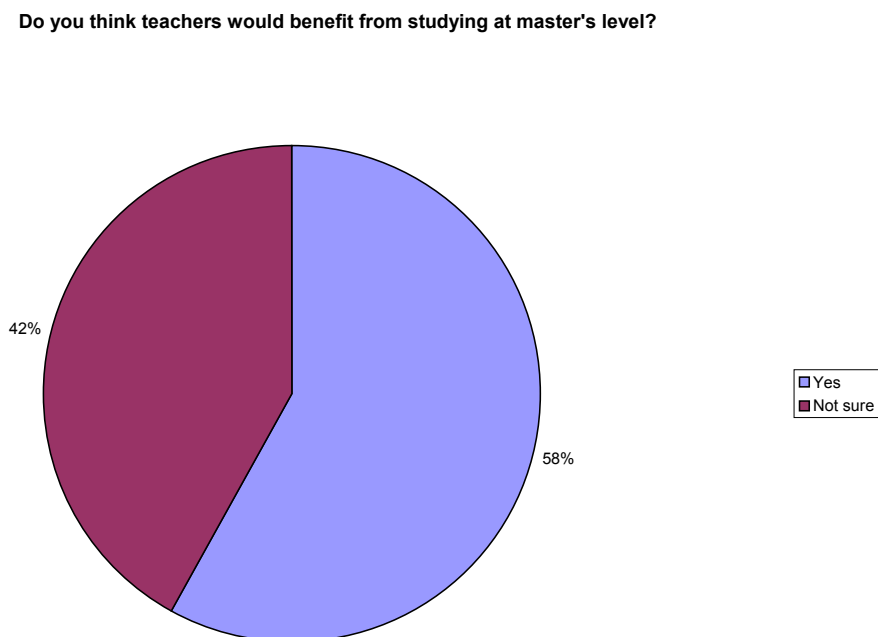
“Probably not in education, probably subject specific.”

“Possibly after NQT year and settled into new school.”

It is particularly interesting to note that a typical response from trainees who answered Yes and Not sure showed a greater interest in studying in their subject area at masters level, rather than in education, and also that further study should be undertaken after the induction period. No further comments were made by those who answered No.

Finally, figure 5.5 demonstrates if trainees consider teachers would benefit from M level study.

Figure 5.5: Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?



These trainees were undertaking the H level PGCE, so it is maybe surprising that just over half (58%) considered that teachers would benefit from M level study. The remaining 42% were not sure, but it is interesting that no trainees thought that teachers would not benefit from M level study. On this basis, it can be assumed that

the ethos of lifelong learning and/ or the benefits of M level study may have been instilled in many of these trainees.

A few trainees gave extended answers regarding the benefits of masters level study, considering these to be: (i) career advancement, and (ii) greater understanding of theory and reflective practice. Trainees made the following comments regarding these points:

“Possible help if looking for senior management roles.”

“Reflecting on own practice and making improvement, keeping up-to-date with current teaching theories.”

The next section of this chapter presents the responses from the level 6 focus group.

Focus Group responses (level 6 cohort, HEI 1)

Data collected concurred with findings from the whole cohort via the questionnaire, but some different issues also emerged:

- concerns regarding the assessment criteria;
- theory at level 7 had no benefits to practice;
- supports later on the road to a masters degree;
- divisive nature of two PGCE awards;
- trainees who opted for level 7 felt isolated if they were the only one from their subject.

Overall, these additional findings are negative, with one exception. In particular, concerns regarding the assessment criteria demands further explanation. Trainees in HEI 1 were required to gain 55%+ in the first assignment to take the level 7 PGCE and many felt they did not have sufficient confidence to opt for the

level 7 PGCE if they only achieved 55% or marginally above this or did not have confidence in the 55% pass rate as an accurate reflection to support their decision. Also, it was considered that those who had failed assignments the first time and re-submitted were at an advantage, as they were given additional time to gain a better percentage on their re-sit and could take the level 7 PGCE, therefore. This seemed unfair to the group and they considered that wider criteria should be applied, such as progress in the classroom and the views of mentors.

Illustrative quotations from different trainees regarding the above points are included below:

“As I only got 56%, I didn’t have the confidence. Those who failed and re-submitted were at an advantage, as they were given extra time to get a higher percentage. ... There should be other assessments of how we’re doing before deciding who does level 7 and wider criteria, like school mentors’ opinions.”

“More in-depth theory has no benefits to practice.”

“Quicker access to masters degree.”

“Possibly put teachers at a disadvantage if other institutions offer level 7 only.”

“Sometimes only one trainee in the subject doing level 7 so no peer support, which made some feel isolated.

However, overall and despite these negative issues, the focus group concluded at the end of the year that there had been no real reason not to take the level 7 PGCE, if eligible.

Summary (RQ1b: Level 6 trainee perceptions, HEI 1)

Overall, these trainees initially perceived the level 7 PGCE to present additional work at a time when they considered the school-based element of professional practice to be more important than M level study. However, they later realised that it

had only involved a small amount of additional work. Also, they perceived there had been a lack of information around the M level PGCE due to the first year of operation and that it was best to avoid a programme in its first year. They were also aware that M level ITT credits cannot be transferred to all HEIs. The majority had been satisfied with the level 6 PGCE and thought this was what an ITT programme should be and nearly half of the cohort said they would advise next year's trainees to opt for the level 6 PGCE. Personal choice had been a key aspect of levels of satisfaction and trainees had been pleased that there had been a choice between the two awards. However, it is suggested that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT had an impact, since over one-third of the cohort said they would undertake postgraduate studies in the future and almost half of the cohort said they thought teachers would benefit from M level study. The cohort considered that M level work in ITT had no benefits to practice, but thought that it would support them later towards a masters degree and with career advancement. However, trainees perceived that it would be better to start M level studies when more experienced after NQT induction. They also perceived the two awards to be divisive and considered that it had been isolating for trainees who were the only ones in their subject area who opted for the level 7 PGCE. Furthermore, trainees considered the assessment criteria applied to judge eligibility to the level 7 PGCE to be flawed. Finally, trainees in this cohort concluded that there had been no real reason not to take the level 7 PGCE, if eligible. Trainees also reiterated HEI comments that the M level PGCE provided an additional opportunity for trainees to work at a higher level, but that different awards can be divisive. The next section presents data collected from trainees undertaking the level 7 PGCE in the same institution.

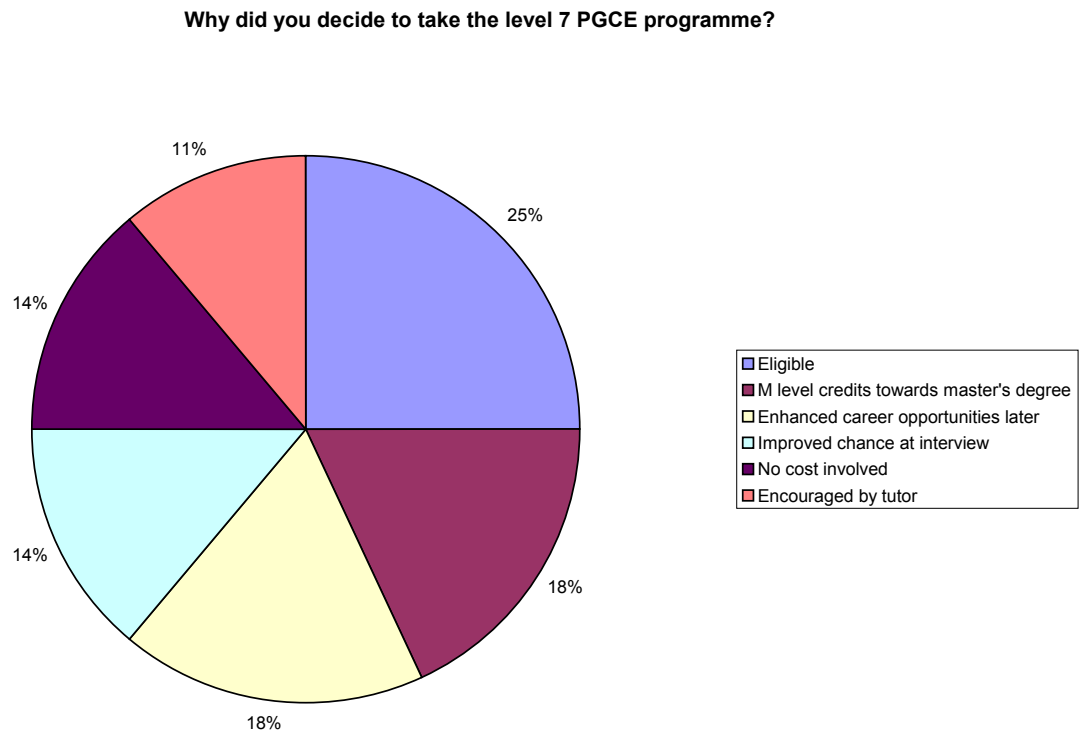
(ii) Perceptions of the M level/ level 7 PGCE cohort (HEI 1)

All trainees in this cohort were asked to complete a questionnaire and a representative group was selected from across the subject areas to participate in the focus group.

Questionnaire responses (level 7 cohort, HEI 1)

Figure 5.6 highlights reasons given by trainees for deciding to take the level 7 PGCE.

Figure 5.6: Reasons for taking the level 7 PGCE

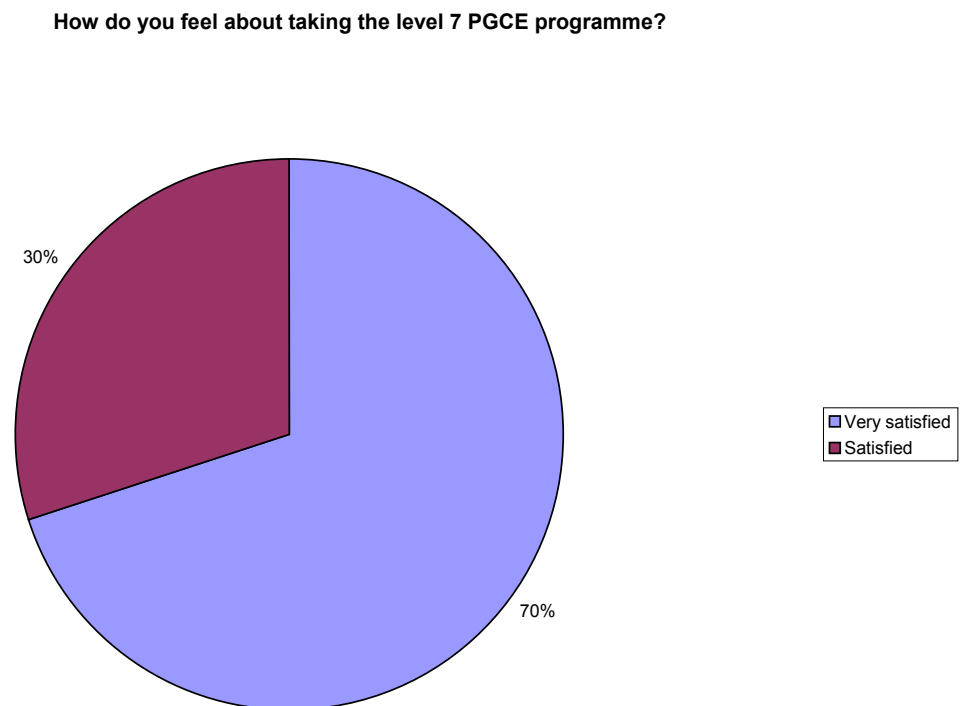


The most common reason for deciding to take the level 7 PGCE was eligibility – ie. trainees had met the assessment criteria of achieving 55%+ in their first assignment. Other reasons were that M level credits could be transferred towards a masters degree, perceived enhanced career opportunities later, improved chances of

securing employment, no cost incurred and also encouragement by the tutor. No-one responded regarding ‘other reason’.

Figure 5.7 highlights trainees’ levels of satisfaction regarding the level 7 PGCE.

Figure 5.7: Trainees’ levels of satisfaction



Data show that all trainees were positive about the level 7 PGCE - most (70%) were very satisfied, in contrast with 35% of level 6 trainees who were very satisfied with their PGCE. Some illustrative quotations from trainees who were very satisfied with the level 7 PGCE are below:

“Masters level credits for no extra costs and deepened my thinking.”

“Level 7 added a new level of challenge and enjoyment for me.”

Notably, the key drivers here appear to be enjoyment of working at a higher level and the fact that no cost was involved.

An illustrative quotation from a trainee who reported being satisfied with the level 7 PGCE is shown below:

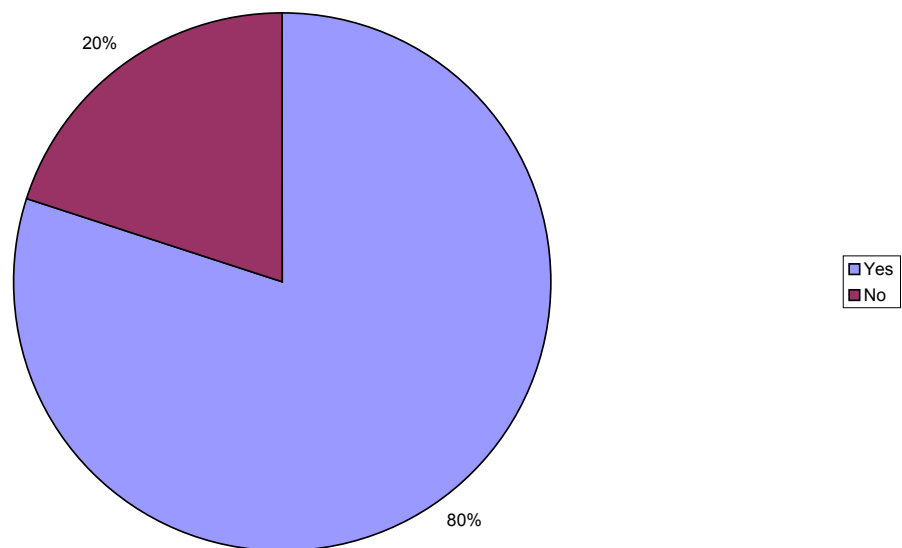
“Subject specific sessions were interesting and useful.”

No trainees said they were dissatisfied with the level 7 PGCE or had no opinion, despite the fact that there had obviously been some additional work and challenge.

Figure 5.8 highlights the advice trainees would give the following cohort.

Figure 5.8: Would you advise next year’s trainees to opt for the level 7 PGCE?

Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the level 7 PGCE?



Most trainees (80%) would advise the next cohort to opt for the level 7 PGCE and a fifth (20%) would not, which is a typical response given the high levels of satisfaction with the level 7 PGCE. An illustrative comment from a trainee who answered Yes is below:

“If you achieve the threshold then there is no reason not to.”

Eligibility is a key issue, therefore.

The following reason was a typical response given by those who answered No:

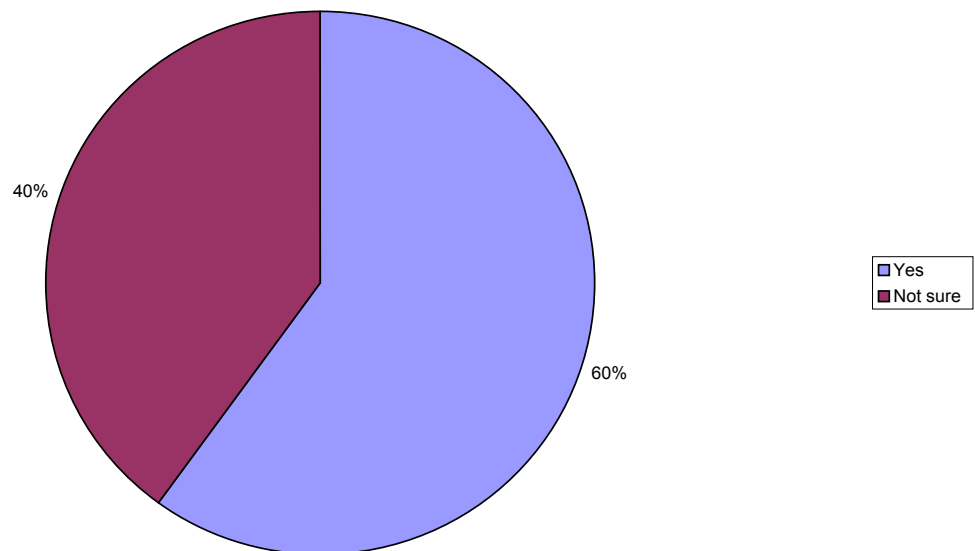
“Level 6 should still remain an option for those who just want to focus on classroom teaching.”

Therefore, choice is a factor which many trainees have fully valued. Personal choice was also valued by the level 6 cohort.

Figure 5.9 below highlights the extent to which these trainees consider they will continue with postgraduate studies.

Figure 5.9: Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a master's degree?



The majority (60%) considered that they would continue towards a masters degree, just under half (40%) were unsure and no-one answered No. It is obviously typical that far more level 7 trainees

than level 6 trainees considered that they would continue with postgraduate studies, as they had already gained 60 M level credits, which could be transferred towards a masters degree within their institution.

A response from a trainee who answered Yes was:

“It will make me think about what I’m doing and why.”

Therefore, it is evident that some trainees see M level study as key to reflective practice. Also, a typical reason given by those who answered Not sure was that they did not want to continue with postgraduate studies in education and expressed a greater interest in studying for a higher degree in their subject area. One trainee commented that:

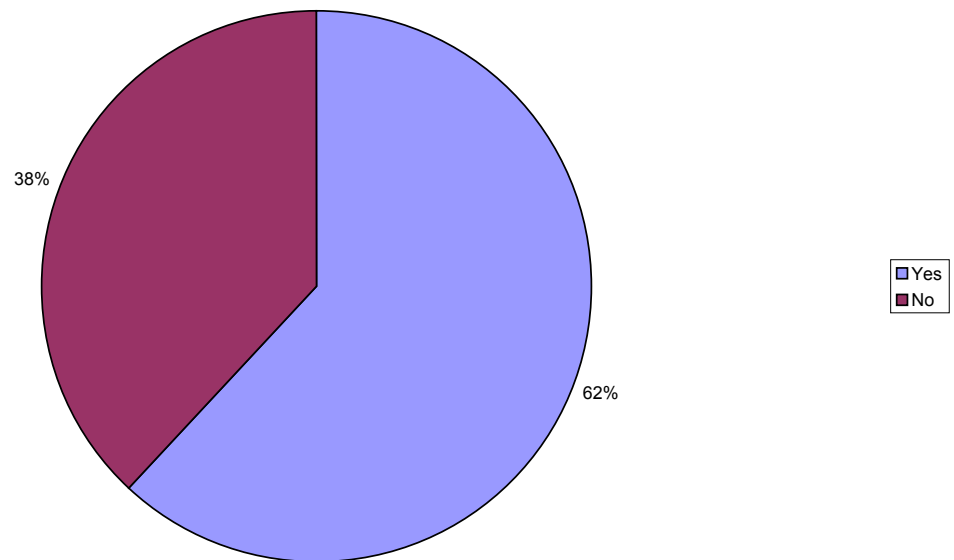
“I would have preferred if the level 7 credits would have counted towards a subject specific masters.”

The interest in subject-specific higher degrees was also shown by the level 6 cohort.

Finally, figure 5.10 demonstrates if trainees consider teachers would benefit from M level study.

Figure 5.10: Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?

Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at master's level?



Only slightly more trainees from this cohort were in favour of M level study for teachers than from the level 6 cohort. More than half of trainees (62%) answered Yes. However, just over one-third (38%) answered No, whereas no trainees from the level 6 cohort answered No. No-one said they were Not sure. The following comment was made by a trainee who answered Yes:

“More awareness, knowledge and understanding.”

This was a typical response and shows the perceived benefits of M level study for teachers. A typical response from a trainee who answered No was:

“Not everyone will benefit from this.”

Again, this shows the element of choice to be important, rather than all teachers undertaking M level study as it was considered that not all teachers would benefit from it.

The next section presents data collected from the level 7 focus group in the same institution.

Focus group responses (level 7 cohort, HEI 1)

Focus group responses matched data collected from questionnaires, but some additional points also emerged:

- there should be a pay incentive as NQTs;
- enhanced employability;
- perception that some head teachers had been impressed, but also that some schools were unaware of the M level PGCE;
- greater focus on analysis, reflective practice and criticality;
- more individual support from tutors;
- important to have a postgraduate qualification;
- a compulsory level 7 PGCE would be less special;
- positive attitude to profession.

These trainees felt they should be placed onto a higher pay scale as NQTs as they had successfully completed the M level PGCE and also felt, overall, this had enhanced their employability and impressed some head teachers at interview, although they recognised that some schools were unaware of the M level PGCE. These trainees also considered that M level work had allowed for a greater focus on analysis, reflective practice and criticality which they valued and they appreciated the greater contact time with tutors which M level study brought. In addition, they wanted a postgraduate qualification and considered this to be important, but considered that this should not be compulsory for everyone as it would then become ubiquitous and less special. Finally, this group thought that undertaking the M level PGCE demonstrated a positive attitude to the profession.

Illustrative quotations regarding the above points are included below:

“A pay incentive is needed. It [the level 7 PGCE] should impact on pay.”

“My head teacher was really impressed I’d done level 7 and chosen to do more work. I think it gives you an edge at interviews.”

“Not sure some schools know about it [the level 7 PGCE].”

“Level 7 made me more analytical and critical.”

“I was more able to reflect critically.”

“Lots of support from tutors. We had more time with tutors.”

“I wanted a **postgraduate** qualification.”

“So many level 7s may make it less special and saturated.”

“Demonstrates commitment to teaching.”

These comments are overwhelmingly positive regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT, although one trainee considered higher level work should be rewarded with higher pay. However, it is important to note that, despite being very positive regarding M level work in ITT, it was not considered that this should become compulsory and that compulsory M level work would demean the qualification.

Summary (RQ1b: Level 7 cohort perceptions, HEI 1)

Trainees perceived that they may as well take the M level PGCE as they were eligible and there was no cost involved. They also considered that M level work in ITT would benefit them in enhanced career opportunities, improved employability and being able to transfer their credits to masters degrees (although they were aware that this could not be taken for granted). Most had been very satisfied with the M level PGCE, which had had an

impact in that 80% of trainees said they would advise next year's cohort to opt for the level 7 PGCE, 60% said they would continue with postgraduate studies towards a masters degree and 62% considered that teachers would benefit from M level study. However, trainees considered that there should be a pay incentive for those with the M level PGCE and that undertaking this proved their commitment to teaching. Trainees also perceived that M level work had supported them to become more analytical, critical and reflective and that they had benefited from the individual support from tutors. They perceived that it had been important for them to have a postgraduate qualification, but thought that a compulsory level 7 PGCE would make it less special. This cohort also considered the element of choice between the two awards to be very positive. Overall, this cohort perceived M level work in ITT to be a more important issue than the level 6 cohort, which is to be expected as they had been deemed eligible and had opted for the level 7 PGCE. Nevertheless, this cohort was also not convinced of the benefits of M level work to practice. In addition, trainee perceptions matched some of the HEIs' perceptions above – ie. trainees reiterated comments regarding additional work for trainees. In addition, many points made by trainees who had undertaken the level 6 PGCE were supported by those who had undertaken the level 7 PGCE. The following common points with level 6 trainees emerged:

- some additional work for trainees;
- uncertainty regarding the transferability of credits across HEIs;
- may support promotion;
- schools are largely unaware of the changes;
- supports on the road to a masters degree;
- unconvinced of benefits to practice.

Therefore, there is much consensus between the perceptions of both cohorts in HEI 1. The next section presents data collected from trainees in HEI 2, undertaking the level 7 only PGCE.

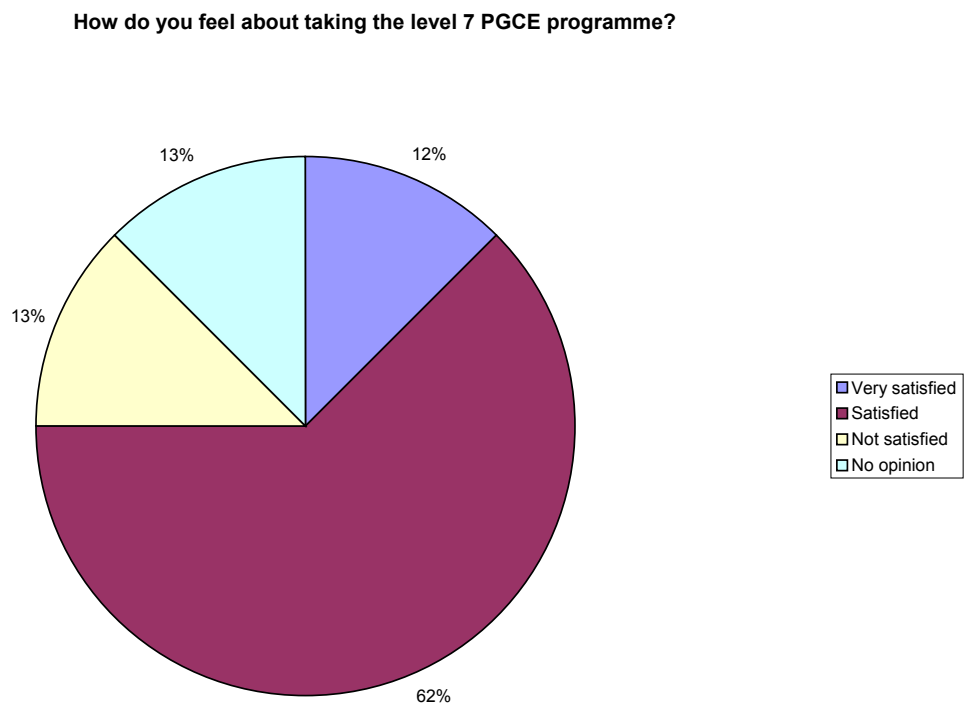
(iii) Perceptions of the M level/ level 7 only PGCE cohort (HEI 2)

All trainees were asked to complete a questionnaire and a representative group was selected from across the subject areas to participate in the focus group.

Questionnaire responses (level 7 only cohort, HEI 2)

Figure 5.11 below highlights trainees' levels of satisfaction regarding the level 7 PGCE.

Figure 5.11: Trainees' levels of satisfaction



Data show that the majority of trainees (62%) were satisfied with the level 7 PGCE. The remainder of the cohort was fairly evenly divided between not satisfied (13%), no opinion (13%) and very satisfied (12%).

An illustrative quotation from a trainee who reported being very satisfied with the level 7 PGCE is below:

“It has greatly improved my ability to write at level 4 and the research-based project was very useful in improving my practice.”

Level 4 relates to HE level 4 – ie. M level/ level 7 (FHEQ). A comment from a trainee who reported being satisfied with the level 7 PGCE was:

“This course has given me the possibility of continuing with a masters course with already obtaining some credits.”

Clearly, the above quotations highlight improved practice and the enrichment and enhancement provided by M level work. However, an illustrative quotation from a trainee who was not satisfied with the level 7 PGCE is shown below:

“did not enjoy all the masters level writing and academic work. I failed my second placement, so I am very disappointed with the level of support received.”

A typical quotation from a trainee who reported having no opinion is below:

“I nearly packed up the course on 2 occasions due to the added work load of the assignments.”

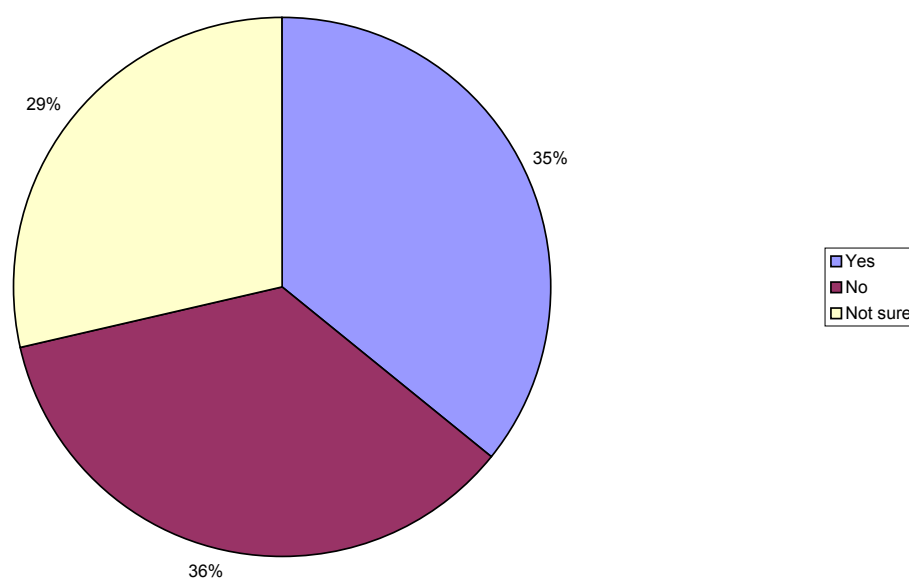
The two trainees cited here who were not satisfied or who had no opinion had attributed aspects of the level 7 PGCE to failing a teaching practice and additional work, therefore. The issue regarding additional work coincides with tutor perceptions in HEI

1, but their own tutors in HEI 2 considered there to be a different workload, rather than an additional workload.

Figure 5.12 highlights the extent to which these trainees consider they will continue with postgraduate studies to gain a masters.

Figure 5.12: Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a master's degree?



These results are surprisingly mixed, considering that 74% were positive about the level 7 PGCE. Just over one-third of trainees (36%) said they would not continue with postgraduate studies, just over one-third (35%) said they would continue with postgraduate studies and just under one-third (29%) were Not sure. However, only 12% had been very satisfied with the level 7 PGCE, whereas 62% had been satisfied, so their feelings towards M level study were not especially strong in comparison with the M level cohort in HEI 1.

An illustrative quotation from a trainee who answered Yes is:

“If I can find the time!”

Obviously, this trainee is anticipating a busy induction period. A comment from a trainee who answered No is shown below:

“Due to expense and having to write a HUGE dissertation.”

For this trainee, it would appear that the cost and extended final dissertation are barriers to progressing towards a masters degree.

A typical comment from a trainee who was Not sure is below:

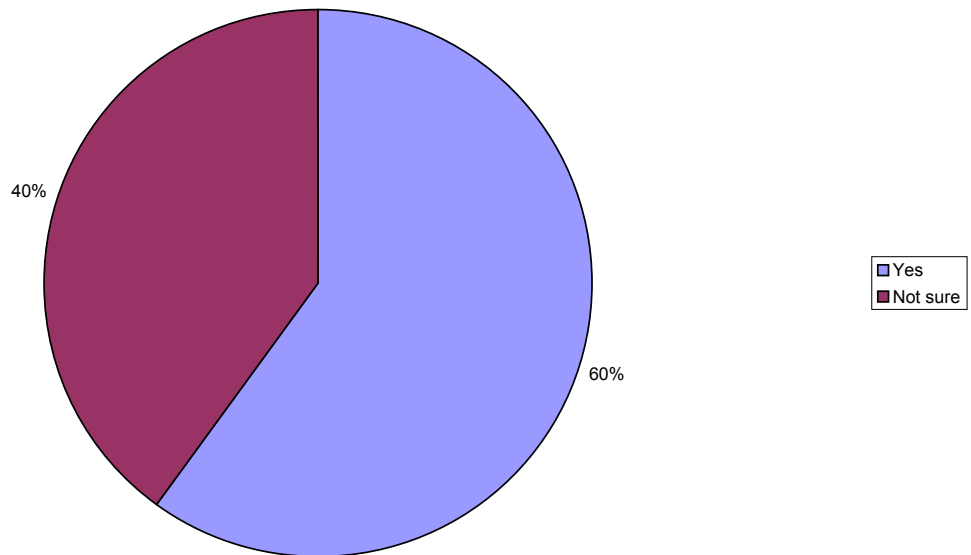
“I ... feel I want to focus on my duties as a teacher and put my energy into planning and teaching an increased timetable without having to worry about ... additional twilight training or additional reading ... for an essay.”

Again, another trainee seems to be anticipating a busy induction period and feels it is more important to commit to professional practice rather than further academic study at this point.

Figure 5.13 demonstrates if trainees consider teachers would benefit from M level study.

Figure 5.13: Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?

Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at master's level?



Just over half (60%) considered that teachers would benefit from studying at M level. It is also interesting that the other 40% were not sure about this, but that no trainees thought that teachers would not benefit from M level study.

A quotation from a trainee who answered Yes is below:

“I think the benefits are that you spend more time reading literature surrounding pedagogy and practice that you might not read otherwise. It opens your mind to different viewpoints. It allows you to do research on your own classes.”

Overall, trainees who considered masters level study to be beneficial to teachers considered the main benefits to be: (i) greater understanding of theory, pedagogy and reflective practice, and (ii) the ability to be able to undertake research within the specific context.

An illustrative quotation from a trainee who answered Not sure is:

“I think the time involved in studying a Masters is off-putting as all the teachers I have worked with dedicate most of their spare time to planning and assessing!”

Therefore, trainees are anticipating the significant amount of time needed for professional practice, so consider further academic study to be unrealistic.

The next section of this chapter outlines data collected from the focus group.

Focus group responses (level 7 only cohort, HEI 2)

Data collected largely concurred with findings from the whole cohort via the questionnaire, although some additional points emerged:

- trainees were unaware that the PGCE could be at any other level than at level 7;
- schools are largely unaware of the level 7 PGCE;
- additional reading provides professional confidence;
- perceived as difficult by many trainees, especially those with little experience of essay-writing in their first degree;
- considered that greater input is necessary regarding writing at M level;
- level 7 PGCE may lead to most teachers having masters degrees, which will then be worthless;
- has not improved their professional practice.

The majority of these additional points are negative regarding the M level PGCE, with one exception.

Illustrative quotations from trainees regarding the above points are below:

“It was the only one [programme] I was really aware of.”

“The teachers that I spoke to were ... unaware that it [PGCE] was masters level.”

“The reading ... I felt helped me to have more professional discussions with people in school, and that way to develop my teaching.”

“My degree was in mathematics. Hadn't written an essay in years and to suddenly go from not writing an essay in years to that depth, it's hard in a short space of time in addition to the rest of the PGCE.”

“We had one session, didn't we? I almost feel like I've fluked the masters a little bit.... It's completely alien to me, so I'm trying to ... teach it to myself.”

“In ten years' time everyone is going to have a masters and it's going to be worthless.”

“No noticeable difference to my teaching, because it wasn't until after I finished teaching that I even started the masters' work so it wasn't until after I had time to finish my planning, evaluation that it started.”

In contrast with the responses of the level 7 focus group from HEI 1, these responses were less positive regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT and also showed the lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the M level PGCE by trainees and those in schools mentoring trainees. The last comment also seems to show that M level work had not been embedded and integrated across the programme.

Summary (RQ1b: Level 7 cohort perceptions, HEI 2)

The majority (74%) had been satisfied or very satisfied with the M level PGCE, but were divided whether they would continue with postgraduate studies, although 60% did consider that teachers would benefit from M level study. However, trainees

were unaware that the PGCE could be at any level other than at level 7 and also perceived that schools are largely unaware of the level 7 PGCE. Overall, they considered professional practice to be more important than academic study at M level, although they recognized that it had supported their reflective practice and that the additional reading involved had enhanced their professional confidence. Trainees also perceived the M level PGCE to be difficult for those with little experience of essay-writing in their first degree and they considered that greater input than they had received regarding writing at M level is necessary. Also, trainees were divided regarding whether the M level PGCE had improved their practice. Furthermore, trainees considered that the level 7 PGCE may lead to most teachers having masters degrees, which they considered would then make masters degrees worthless. Finally, it is also suggested that M level had not been fully integrated and embedded across this ITT programme as M level work appeared to start after trainees had completed their teaching practice. Overall, it is suggested that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT had a less positive impact on this cohort than on those in HEI 1, therefore.

Overall summary – a comparison of cohorts

Overall, those who undertook the level 7 PGCE in HEI 1 were particularly positive regarding M level work. Trainees in HEI 1 (where both awards are in operation) who undertook the level 7 PGCE were much more positive about M level work – probably as they were deemed eligible for this and had made the personal choice to opt for this award - than those who undertook the level 6 PGCE, who had either not been eligible or not opted for the level 7 PGCE. It is also interesting to note that those who had opted for level 7 in HEI 1 were generally more positive about the level 7 PGCE than those in HEI 2, who did not have the choice

but were undertaking a level 7 PGCE because this was the only level at which the award operates in their institution. The consensus also appears to be that the level 7 PGCE has created a small amount of additional work for trainees where both awards are in operation, but a different workload for trainees where the level 7 only PGCE is offered.

In addition, trainees in HEI 2 who achieved 30 level 7 credits, but did not achieve 60 level 7 credits, were awarded a Graduate Certificate – so there were no or fewer anxieties regarding just being awarded QTS. Also, ironically, more support for writing at M level was provided in HEI 1 where there are both PGCEs (and 31% undertook the level 7 PGCE) than in HEI 2 where the level 7 only PGCE is offered.

It is important to note the higher levels of satisfaction in HEI 1 where both PGCEs operate. The high levels of satisfaction in HEI 1 would also appear to mirror the staff enjoyment discussed by some tutors in HEI 1 regarding working at a higher level on both awards. It is also pertinent to acknowledge that HEI 1 is consistently rated more highly overall than HEI 2 in the *National Student Survey* (HEFCE, 2009). Although postgraduate courses are not included in this survey differences in satisfaction could be around fundamental cultural differences in organisations.

There are some similarities which emerged from all cohorts. For example, trainees in all cohorts struggled to see the benefits of M level work in relation to practice and many felt it had no benefit to practice. However, some in HEI 2 did report benefits to practice. Also, lots of trainees in each cohort considered M level study to be an important issue for teachers.

There are also some similarities which emerged from the level 6 and 7 cohorts in HEI 1. Both cohorts considered the level 7 PGCE

to present a small amount of additional work. The level 6 PGCE cohort perceived that additional work had been their prime reason at the beginning of their course for not taking the level 7 PGCE. However, by the end of the course they concluded that there had only been a small amount of extra work involved – which may have changed their decision regarding which PGCE to choose, if they had known this earlier. Also, both cohorts were aware of the question over the transferability of credits. In addition, their responses revealed the divisive nature of different awards. Some who took the level 6 PGCE considered their award to have less value, whereas some who took the level 7 PGCE considered their award to have more value. Also, some trainees in the level 7 cohort appeared to see themselves as a more ‘élite’ group. Predictably, those who undertook the level 6 PGCE felt that their choice had not had any adverse effects on their employment chances, whereas those who undertook the M level PGCE considered that working at this higher level had boosted their employability. However, at this stage – at the end of the PGCE – the vast majority had secured posts.

A similarity also emerged from those who undertook the level 7 PGCE in HEI 1 and HEI 2 - both cohorts considered that most schools were largely unaware of the changes to the PGCE. There are also some very clear differences between the trainees’ levels of satisfaction regarding the award they undertook. The majority of those who took the level 7 PGCE in HEI 2 reported that they had been satisfied with their course, whereas the majority of those who took the level 7 PGCE in HEI 1 reported that they had been very satisfied. The element of choice seems to be key to satisfaction and was popular with trainees.

The next section of the chapter addresses research question 2.

5.3 Research Question 2

The findings for research question 2a are presented and summarised in section 5.3.1. Following this, the findings for research question 2b are presented and summarised in section 5.3.2 and then the findings for research question 2c are presented and summarised in section 5.3.3.

5.3.1 Research question 2a: The rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL

The rationale for a masters level profession was set out by the former government in the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007), as: (i) to further improve teacher quality to raise standards and narrow the achievement gap, giving children better life chances, (ii) to further advance the status of the profession, (iii) to improve NQT induction, and (iv) to strengthen EPD. In the following year *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning* (DCSF, 2008) was published, outlining some details regarding the MTL, stressing that the MTL should be a new qualification (TDA, 2008a). However, although the former government's rationale for the M level profession and the MTL were imposed on HEIs, findings from this research show that HEIs also superimposed their own rationale for the M level profession – one Dean discussed the trend for postgraduate study and the other Dean recognised the complexity of teaching and the importance of sustained PD for teachers.

Summary (RQ2a)

The former government imposed its own rationale for the masters level teaching profession - to improve standards in schools, the

status of the profession, NQT induction and EPD - and for the MTL, as a new qualification. However, neither were based on consultation with the teaching profession. Also, some HEIs superimposed their own rationale for a masters level profession – highlighting the trend for postgraduate study and recognising the complexity of teaching and the importance of sustained PD.

5.3.2 Research question 2b: Perceptions of aspirations for a masters level teaching profession

(i) HEI perceptions

Both Deans were very positive about aspirations for a masters level profession and considered that this would lead to improvements in learning and teaching. The following comments were made regarding anticipated improvements:

“Overall, I’m in favour of the masters level profession ... I want the best possible teaching force. ... Masters degrees can be really professionally-focussed and have a great impact on kids – we see that all the time in PPD ... Having an award beyond their first degree can take teachers’ professional development forward and I hope it will mean kids get a better education.”
(HEI 1)

“Upping to masters level will increase teachers’ levels of understanding.”
(HEI 2)

The reference to the TDA-funded PPD programme highlights that HEI 1 (like many other HEIs) was already delivering M level programmes to teachers via PPD funding. However, this has now been cut.

Another point which emerged was the recognition of the complexity of teaching. One Dean commented positively that:

“Teaching is being recognised as an intellectual activity, as well as a practical one”. (HEI 2)

Summary (RQ2b, HEI perceptions)

Both Deans were positive about aspirations for the M level profession and considered that this should lead to improvements in learning and teaching. It was also considered that teaching was being formally recognised as a complex activity, as a result.

(ii) NQT perceptions

Many positive issues emerged regarding aspirations for a masters level profession: (i) improved professional development, (ii) improved prospects of promotion, (iii) enables teachers to stretch themselves further academically, (iv) updates teachers’ knowledge, (v) more articulate teachers, (vi) enhanced status of the profession, and (vii) provides the next step for progression. Regarding these points, NQTs made the following comments:

“I think it's [the masters level profession] a good idea in terms of professional development, being able to move to head of department and pastoral and executive roles more quickly.”

“Enables them [teachers] to stretch themselves further... It [a masters degree] pushes you more, gets you thinking more.”

“If you looked at ... refreshing the latest policies then maybe there’s benefit in the masters.”

“They're [teachers undertaking masters degrees] going to be more articulate.”

“[The masters level profession] gives more status in terms of ... professionalism. Whereas at the moment there’s not that next step.”

On the other hand, the negative points which emerged were: (i) scepticism that a masters level profession would lead to better

teaching, and (ii) the perception that some excellent teachers may not be able to cope with the academic demands.

Below are some comments highlighting these views:

“You have to write a 15,000 word dissertation. How would that turn me into a better teacher? I'm not convinced.”

“Some [teachers] couldn't actually do such a high level of work but could be really good in classroom.”

Therefore, these NQTs were questioning the nature of assessment in masters dissertations in relation to improving practice and also recognising that some very good teachers may not be able to meet the demands of M level study.

Summary (RQ2b, NQT perceptions)

These NQTs took a positive stance overall regarding a masters level profession, in principle, although there were some concerns. Similarly, trainee teachers had also questioned the benefits of M level study to practice.

5.3.3 Research question 2c (RQ2c): Perceptions of the MTL

(i) HEI perceptions

Both Deans were in favour of the MTL in principle and many potential positive aspects emerged. However, many potential negative points were also raised. The issues raised by both Deans are presented first of all, followed by the positive and then negative issues raised by individual Deans.

Issues raised by both Deans

The positive issues raised by both Deans were: (i) more critical and reflective teachers, (ii) good opportunity for HEIs to contribute to the training of teachers in the region post-qualification, and (iii) injection of new ideas into teaching.

Illustrative comments are shown below:

“It should support teachers’ criticality and reflective skills.” (HEI 2)

“It’s a real opportunity post-qualification ... Lost opportunity if we don’t go with MTL.” (HEI 1)

“MTL should bring an injection of new ideas into the classroom.” (HEI 2)

The first and third issues are clearly beneficial to schools and the second issue also reveals the benefits to HEIs. The negative issues raised by both Deans were: (i) the impact of a prescribed content, (ii) concerns regarding the future of the TDA and funding for the MTL in the poor economic climate, (iii) the additional workload for teachers, and (iv) concerns regarding the initial target cohorts of NQTs and newly-appointed HoDs in ‘challenge schools’.

Notably, both Deans stressed that the main negative aspects for them were workload and the target cohort. Illustrative comments are below:

“The MTL will be a compromise and we’ll have to live with government priorities.” (HEI 1)

“Looks likely that the TDA will go and probably MTL and PPD funding with it. If there were no credit crunch I’d be more confident of money to support MTL.” (HEI 1)

“I worry that it’ll make teachers’ lives more difficult in schools and I don’t want teachers being busier and busier.” (HEI 1)

“I hope sufficient space is created for NQTs. In one way, they’re not the best place to start. NQTs and heads of department in challenge schools are already under pressure – it could drive people out if no space is created.” (HEI 2)

Issues of significance to individual Deans

The positive issues raised by individual Deans were: (i) learning community created for NQTs, allowing for greater reflection, (ii) further development overall in schools at an institutional level, (iii) improved learning and teaching, (iv) promotes lifelong learning, (v) enhanced PD over a sustained period of time, (vi) greater opportunities for collaboration and partnership, (vii) good progression from ITT to EPD, (viii) potential for teachers to undertake more in-depth work and progress further in certain areas than was possible in the time constraints of ITT, (ix) major positive step-change for the profession, leading to formalised award-bearing training post-qualification, and (x) sharper pace.

The negative issues raised by individual Deans were: (i) the impact on current TDA PPD funding, (ii) rushed introduction, (iii) possible impact on promotion prospects (ie. would schools start to insist on MTL?), (iv) impact of a government programme (ie. government interference in HE), (v) lack of thought regarding the role of the SBC, (vi) future of the TLA, (vii) MTL is not the innovative practice-based programme the TDA is conveying, (viii) scepticism whether the MTL would be the best programme to ensure a positive impact on practice and lead to better learning and teaching, and (ix) schools/ head teachers were showing very little interest.

Finally, another issue emerged, which was not included above, as there was dissonance between the Deans regarding whether this was a positive or negative issue. This issue was regarding the potential impact on other ITT routes relating to APL. One Dean was concerned that NQTs who had undertaken the M level PGCE could transfer credits to the MTL, considering that this would have a negative impact on trainees who had not accrued M level credits from ITT. This Dean commented that:

“I have concerns regarding the B.Eds, as they see themselves as generalists, and the GTPs, who are sometimes more mature and generally have a practical rather than intellectual focus. They chose that particular route because they wanted the practical over the theory.” (HEI 2)

On the other hand, the other Dean was in favour of the NQTs who had undertaken the M level PGCE transferring some of their credits to the MTL. This Dean commented that:

“It makes sense to limit APL to 30 credits to the MTL, as teachers need to engage fully in the qualification. However, the UCET position is that up to 60 credits should be APLeD to MTL, now that most level 7 PGCE programmes carry 60 M level credits.” (HEI 1)

It was the view of this Dean - and of the former DCSF - that only 30 credits should be transferred from ITT to the MTL via APL, so that teachers could gain the maximum benefit from the MTL. However, as stated, this was not the position of UCET and, as a result, likely not to be the opinion of most HEIs, therefore, since many HEIs offer 60 credits at masters level as part of the M level PGCE and allow all 60 credits to be transferred via APCL to ‘traditional’ masters degrees.

Summary (RQ2c, HEI perceptions)

Both Deans were in favour of the MTL, in principle, and many positive aspects were raised. However, many negative aspects were also raised and both Deans stressed the main negatives of the MTL to be the additional workload for teachers and the target cohorts. Several other positive and negative issues also emerged from individual Deans. Finally, another interesting issue emerged of dissonance between the Deans relating to APL issues. One Dean was concerned that NQTs who had undertaken the M level PGCE could transfer credits to the MTL, considering that this would have a negative impact on trainees who had not accrued M level credits from other ITT routes. On the other hand, the other Dean was in

favour of NQTs who had undertaken the M level PGCE transferring 30 of their credits to the MTL, so that they would gain maximum benefit from the MTL. However, neither of the positions were related to what already happens in practice – ie. that 60 M level PGCE credits can usually be transferred to ‘traditional’ masters programmes in many HEIs.

(ii) NQT perceptions

The positive points to emerge regarding the MTL were: (i) it is fully-funded, (ii) it shows dedication to one’s career, and (iii) it is a good qualification for teachers to have.

The following comments are typical of the above responses:

“I’d be encouraged by the funding.”

“Shows dedication for the career.”

“It [the MTL] would be a good thing to have.”

On the other hand, the negative aspects of the MTL, were perceived as: (i) additional workload in an already busy NQT year, (ii) NQT year is not an appropriate time to start the MTL, (iii) it may encourage NQTs and those in the first few years to leave the profession, (iv) focussing on professional practice is more important for NQTs than gaining the MTL, (v) time allocated to NQTs to undertake the MTL will take them out of the classroom at a critical time in their learning, (vi) impact on work-life balance, (vii) NQTs are mostly young and should not have this added pressure, (viii) teaching salary is insufficient to place the additional workload of the MTL onto teachers, (ix) scepticism that schools would allow NQTs time out of the classroom, (x) impact of subject-specific elements on primary

school teachers, who are generalists, (xi) schools are not particularly interested, (xii) no pay-incentive, (xiii) preference towards a masters degree in one's own subject area, (xiv) government trends change regularly, (xv) they made the decision to become a teacher, not a student, (xvi) teachers of subject areas in which essay-writing did not form a major part of their first degree may be disadvantaged, (xvii) consequences of failing, and (xviii) waste of government money, which may be better spent elsewhere to support teaching. In particular, it is evident that half of the above concerns are around NQTs as the target cohort and workload, which were also the Deans' main two concerns.

Despite the overall positive stance towards a masters level profession shown above, NQTs were clearly very critical of the MTL in practical terms. The following comments illustrate some of the above negative points – such as target cohort and workload - raised by these NQTs:

“For the people just starting ... the work of doing a masters on top of that is a lot. ... I wouldn't be able to do it now. Where is this 25th and 26th hour of the day?”

“I'm not sure ... it's worth the extra effort especially with everything else you have to do as an NQT as well.”

“The first year is very hard ... because of that time spent in that x amount of hours some people quit in the first five years.”

“If I could find the extra time I might be willing to do a masters ... but primarily at the moment I don't think I have enough time to plan, which I think should be the centre-piece.”

“I'm probably the oldest one here. I have a kid and I don't know how much time I would have to do something extra, because I think this year was hard enough.”

“I put in about 48 hours each week and about fifty weeks of the year. How they expect you to do a masters whilst having a full time job as an NQT I have no idea.”

“As you become heads of departments or head of year perhaps they should have something there ... if you're aiming to become a head teacher. Perhaps that's what they should focus on, rather than NQTs.”

“We've just come straight from the PGCE and are at the forefront of knowledge of current teaching. Just save it for later when you need almost refreshing as to what you're doing, rather than piled up on you all at once.”

“It [the MTL] might provide an awful lot of stress. Most of us are in our early 20s and you have to take time off ... A 22, 23 year old ... shouldn't be having these problems. ... I just think that they might have to take weeks off school.”

“I think that the irony of it is would you actually become a better teacher because of the masters, or be worse off? Make yourself a better teacher and miss lessons?!”

“In primary school what they're teaching is much broader as they teach maths English and science but they don't have to specialise in their subject.”

“I agree with it [the MTL] in principle but ... I'm not sure whether it's worth the extra effort especially with everything else as well. Surely that money can be spent in different ways to help teaching other than giving everyone a masters degree.”

“It wouldn't make any difference if you didn't do it [the MTL].”

Also, it is pertinent to note some of the similarities highlighted by these NQTs and the issues raised above by trainees. Both trainees and NQTs voiced concerns that: (i) teachers of subject areas in which essay-writing did not form a major part of their first degree may be disadvantaged, (ii) preference towards a masters degree in their own subject area, and (iii) the lack of interest from schools and head teachers. Some of these concerns regarding the target cohort of NQTs and additional workload were anticipated by HEIs, as shown above. Other issues which concur with HEI perceptions were: (i) the impact of subject-specific elements on primary school teachers, who are generalists, (ii) the impact on work-life balance, and (iii) the lack of interest from schools.

Summary (RQ2c, NQT perceptions)

It is important to note that NQTs were in favour of a masters level profession, in principle. However, details regarding the MTL caused many concerns and NQTs were very critical of the

programme. In particular, concerns centred around NQTs as the target cohort and the additional workload alongside induction.

The next chapter discusses and analyses these findings.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings from chapter 5 in relation to the literature. Discussion within this chapter is presented under the research questions, which are addressed in turn.

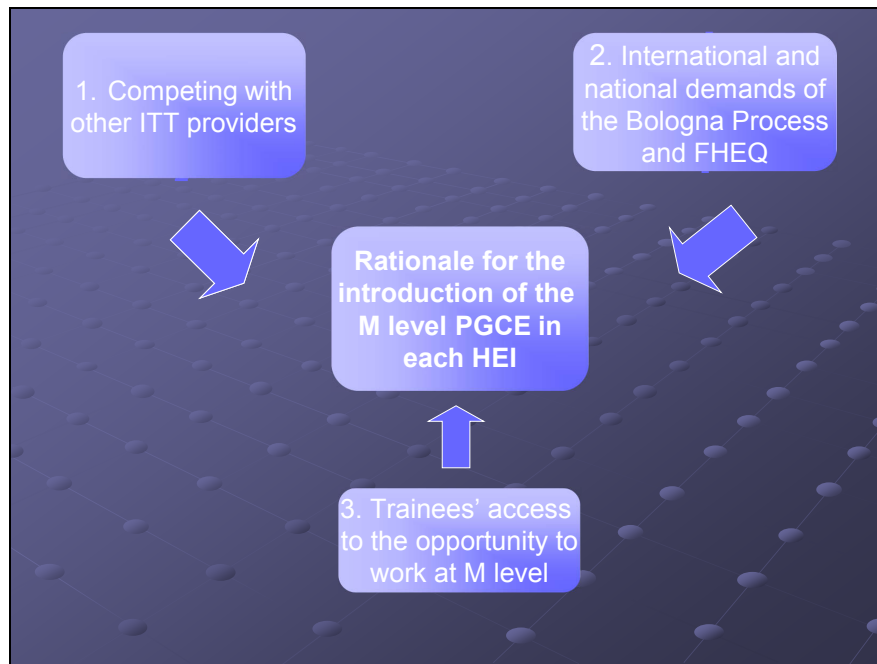
6.2 Research Question 1

This section discusses research questions 1a and 1b in turn. Section 6.2.1 below discusses the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI and section 6.2.2 discusses HEI and trainee perspectives regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT.

6.2.1 Research Question 1a: The rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI

The PGCE was a very well-established and easily-recognizable award (Sewell, 2008), so what was the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in these HEIs? The main findings are shown below in Figure 6.1 in rank order of the themes which emerged most often.

Figure 6.1: Rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI



Firstly, competing with other providers is an issue not found in the literature. To a certain extent, it is a matter of concern that these HEIs' main reason for introducing the M level PGCE was to compete with other providers. This suggests that their decision to operate at M level was partly as a recruitment tool, rather than an aspiration to raise the academic level of ITT and prepare trainees for a career in which reflective practice and lifelong learning play an important part of their PD as a teacher, which may also reflect the sense of chaos in the ITT sector. However, recruitment is an extremely important financial consideration for providers. Also, following general cuts to HE (Curtis, 2009; Vaughan, 2010), the publication of the Browne report (2010) and cuts to HE ITT providers, competition between HEIs is likely to increase further, which may add to the current chaos and could seriously damage the collaboration and partnerships forged in recent years. General competition and competitiveness between HEIs are widely-acknowledged and documented (De Fraja and Iossa, 2002; Marginson, 2006). Both HEIs considered that they would put

themselves at a disadvantage regarding recruitment if they did not offer M level credits as part of their PGCE course and were concerned not to devalue themselves to potential applicants. Clearly, providers see each other as competition, since they all need to fill their places and also bid to sustain numbers for the following year, particularly following the cuts made to secondary HE ITT providers for 2011 – 12 and 2012 - 13. There are obviously advantages and disadvantages of competition and competitiveness between HEIs. On the positive side, competition could drive up the quality of provision for trainees. However, competition could also end the recent collaborative partnerships forged between HEIs, which have wide-reaching benefits and can also drive up standards.

The second most common reason was international and national demands regarding the qualifications framework. The literature (Bologna Declaration, 1999; QAA, 2001; Sewell, 2008) and these findings support debates which had been going on for years that the term ‘postgraduate’ until recently within ITT in England related to chronology (in the vast majority of providers), as the ‘original’ PGCE was at H level. Consequently, the TDA call for all providers to declare the level(s) of their PGCE from September 2007 led to the widespread introduction of the M level PGCE (Sewell, 2008) – either as the sole award or alongside the H level PGCE.

The other most common reason given was trainees’ access to the opportunity to work at M level, which was partly raised by Jackson (2008a), who considered M level credits in ITT a landmark in the history of the teaching profession, as the introduction of the M level PGCE facilitated an entitlement to M level study in ITT in England for the first time. However, although tutors had been keen to give trainees the opportunity to work at M level, research literature in other educational contexts has shown that some teachers feel confusion where there is a

duality of identity (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003), in assuming additional work – such as M level study – alongside professional practice. Also, Sewell (2008) found that the opportunity to work at M level is a natural progression for trainees, who already have an H level qualification from their bachelor's degree. It is certainly true that these trainees will have needed the skills to bridge the gap between academic levels throughout their studies, in order to gain a bachelor's degree. However, it must be acknowledged that adults have different ability levels and that trainees have undertaken a wide range of degrees at different HEIs culminating in a range of degree classifications. Therefore, for some trainees, it is possible that achieving a bachelor's degree signals reaching their maximum potential. Nevertheless, in the first year of the M level only PGCE in HEI 2 only 1% of trainees in HEI 2 failed the M level PGCE and, overall, the M level PGCE has had good pass rates (ESCalate, 2008). So, it would appear that most trainees capitalized on the opportunity to work at M level. However, to what extent were trainees forced through a one-size-fits-all M level only PGCE and what was the cost of this? As discussed in the literature review, Crawford (2007) concludes that many decisions have an 'emotional cost'. Certainly, findings show that some trainees in HEI 2 did not enjoy M level work and felt it had been damaging. In contrast, those who undertook the M level PGCE in HEI 1 all passed and did not make the types of negative comments voiced by trainees in HEI 2, which may be because they had been given a choice in undertaking M level study and also as they had been judged eligible for it. In addition to the concept of duality of identity, choice also emerged as a key concept in the literature review in ensuring a more meaningful engagement on programmes (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Also, it must be acknowledged again that the M level cohort in HEI 1 was a much smaller cohort. Furthermore, it is pertinent to note at this stage that the two trainees who failed the M level PGCE in HEI 2 did not attend the graduation

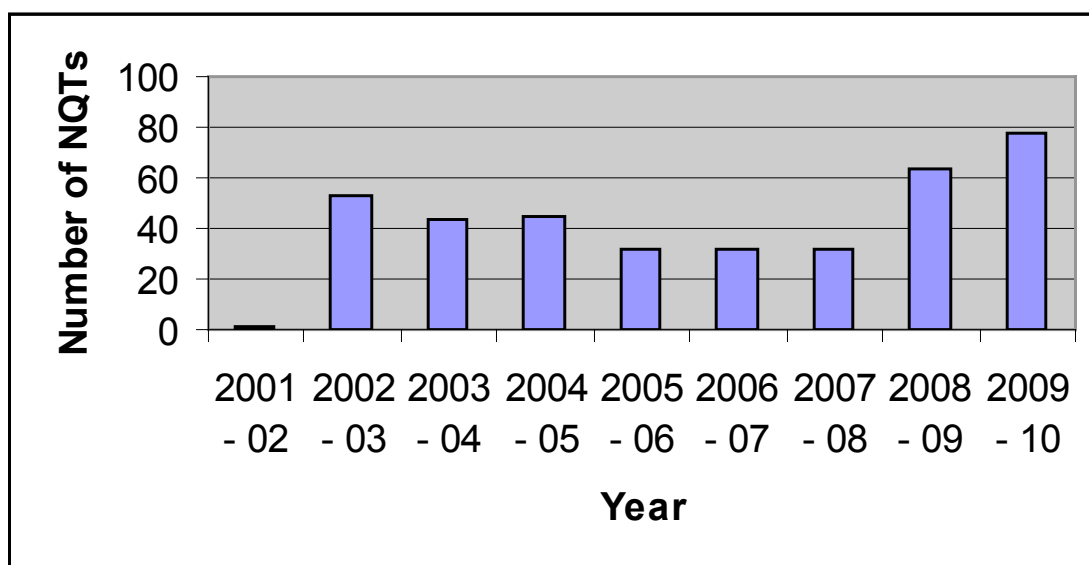
ceremony. Obviously, there are many reasons why people do not attend their graduation ceremonies, but this could be significant in terms of self-esteem for trainees, particularly at the notoriously difficult time in making the move from ITT to actual professional practice (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002).

Other reasons given by individual tutors were: (i) the decision was taken by the SMT, (ii) the influence of UCET, (iii) differentiation from EBRs, (iv) the fact that PGCE programmes were already considered to be at/ close to M level, (v) increasing the uptake of teachers taking M level programmes, (vi) the perception that it would improve aspects of the existing programme, and (vii) increasing the capacity of HEI tutors to teach at M level. Some of these issues – (i), (iii), (vi) and (vii) - were not represented in the literature and have also contributed to research in this area. This new knowledge is important and shows, for example, HEIs asserting their identity more forcibly as high quality teacher-educators (in contrast with EBRs) via the M level PGCE, as M level could be the last hook HEIs have in ITT. This is somewhat in line with Ofsted (2010), an unexpected ally of HEIs in this instance, which found that there was more outstanding ITT delivered by HE-led partnerships than by SCITT and EBITT partnerships. Therefore, it is suggested that standards in ITT may have been improved partly by the introduction of M level study and could be important for quality. It is also suggested that the M level PGCE has allowed providers to regain some of the control lost following government interventions to a largely school-based programme and that this could also be another reason for the introduction of the M level PGCE. Certainly the M level PGCE allowed providers to create a more distinct role for themselves and make the programme distinct from EBRs for example, tending more towards ITE than ITT and also aiding progression for teachers to masters degrees. However, the shifting of ITT further into schools takes control further away

from HEIs (DfE, 2011), so HEIs will need to assert their position as high quality teacher-educators and reinforce ‘M-levelness’ as key to this debate.

Some of the issues – (ii), (iv), and (v) – were found in the literature and are discussed below in turn. Firstly, the findings concerning the influence of UCET are supported by Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008), who considered that most providers had taken their guidance from UCET, as well as from other organisations. Secondly, some providers introduced the M level PGCE as they already felt their programme was at/ close to M level (Sewell, 2008). Finally, there is supporting literature confirming that the M level PGCE leads to increasing the uptake of teachers taking masters degrees, as some academics encourage their trainees to continue studying in the institution the following year as NQTs (Barker, 2007; ESCalate, 2008; Sewell, 2008; Hoare, 2010a). There also appears to be further evidence to reinforce tutors’ perceptions that the M level PGCE leads to increasing numbers of teachers taking masters degrees. Figure 6.2 below shows the number of NQTs undertaking a particular M level module – since its introduction in 2001 - in HEI 2. This module was designed specifically for NQTs to support them during induction, by engagement in reflective practice. The researcher was the module leader from 2008 – 2010 and took this module through minor modifications to ensure that it built upon ITT and aligned more directly with induction requirements.

Figure 6.2: M level module for NQTs in HEI 2



The M level PGCE was introduced in 2007 – 08 and data in figure 6.2 show that in the two years following its introduction, numbers of NQTs taking this module increased significantly. This suggests that there could be an emerging issue regarding the uptake of masters degrees by teachers, due to the fact that these trainees already had 60 M level credits from HEI 2 which could be transferred to its masters programme, giving them one-third of a masters degree, in effect. However, it is not proven that the increased uptake on this module is due to the M level PGCE. There could be other reasons for the increase in numbers, such as the HEI becoming more adroit in the retention of its trainees onto M level programmes as NQTs, a change in the module and module leadership, LAs encouraging NQTs to progress to M level and the greater importance being given to M level study for teachers (DCSF, 2007). Therefore, further work is needed to evaluate the reasons for the increase in NQTs undertaking M level programmes. This will be taken forward to the conclusion.

In addition to interviewing tutors about the introduction of the M level PGCE in their HEI, the researcher undertook a survey of ITT providers in the region and nationally, using data from the

GTTR website (www.search.gttr.ac.uk/cgi-bin/hsrun.hse/General/gttr_search/gttr_search.hjx;start=gttr_search.HsForm.run), assessing the extent to which providers had validated the PGCE at M level. Data regarding the national context can be seen in Appendix D. UCET also conducted a survey to assess the extent to which providers had validated the PGCE at M level nationally (Barker, 2007) (see Appendix H). UCET data are very similar to findings from GTTR data for the West Midlands, but different from findings from the GTTR data nationally. Although findings from the GTTR data at a national level differ from UCET data, it can still be concluded that a small minority of providers are now only operating their PGCE at H level and that the M level PGCE has become firmly established and widespread within ITT, either as the sole award or alongside the H level PGCE.

6.2.2 Research Question 1b: HEI and trainee perspectives of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT

Table 6.1 below summarises the overall perspectives of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT from findings.

Table 6.1: Perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT

Positive aspects	Negative aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of tutors in working at a higher level (HEI). • Improvements in the overall programme and in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional work for tutors, where both awards operate (HEI). • Concerns regarding the ability of some trainees to

<p>trainees' skills (HEI).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good levels of trainee satisfaction (Trainee). • M level study considered beneficial and important for teachers (Trainee). • Many HEIs accept M level PGCE credits towards masters degrees (Trainee). 	<p>operate at M level (HEI).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisive culture can emerge, when both PGCEs operate alongside each other (HEI, Trainee). • Overall, trainees struggled to see the benefits of M level study to practice (Trainee). • Small amount of additional work for trainees, where both awards operate (Trainee). • The Professional Standards for QTS are of prime importance to trainees, above the academic qualification of the PGCE (Trainee). • The two PGCE awards created some confusion for trainees and schools (Trainee).
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Although the research did not aim to consider the differences between the two PGCE awards, recurrent themes have demonstrated that many issues regarding the perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT are closely linked to the PGCE model offered. Consequently, table 6.2 below has also been produced from these findings, capturing the perceptions of tutors and trainees regarding each model and to highlight the perceived

advantages and disadvantages of operating the M level only PGCE and operating both PGCE awards.

Table 6.2: The operation of the M level only PGCE and both PGCE awards.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
M level only PGCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers can more easily ensure that M level study permeates throughout the whole programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that not all trainees are able to operate at M level, so this is a one-size-fits-all model through which trainees are forced.
Both PGCE awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher levels of trainee satisfaction. • Personal choice highly valued by trainees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional workload for tutors. • Divisive culture can emerge. • Small amount of additional work for trainees undertaking the M level PGCE.

Overall, it is suggested that by only operating the M level PGCE some providers may be forcing all trainees to meet M level criteria, although some may not be able to or may struggle with this for a variety of reasons shown in the findings (such as academic ability) and literature (such as ‘emotional cost’ – see Crawford, 2007). In HEI 2 the vast majority of trainees did achieve the M level PGCE in the first year of its operation, but two trainees did not. Although this was a very high pass rate

(99%), it is suggested that it may be better to set trainees up for success in what is a professionally and academically demanding programme, by allowing them to choose the level at which they would like to take the PGCE. In turn, this could allow for greater differentiated support by providers and schools, rather than a one-size-fits-all model. Therefore, it is suggested that operating both awards may offer trainees a better learning experience and that the advantages can outweigh the disadvantages by careful management and integration by providers. In contrast, from these findings it is considered that the one-size-fits-all model of the M level PGCE may not outweigh its advantages. However, providers will clearly still need to base their decision around the model most suited to their student intake.

These findings are now discussed below from an HEI and trainee teacher perspective.

(i) HEI perspectives of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT

Findings show the most common issue to emerge as improvements in the overall programme and improvements in trainees' skills. Despite the most common reason given for introducing the M level PGCE being competition with other providers, it is heartening to find that the most common issue for HEIs regarding perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT was improvements in the programme and improvements in trainees' skills, which are clearly key learning and teaching issues, and may support student retention and motivation, for example. In addition to these tutors' perceptions, ESCalate (2008) found that the M level PGCE had led to improved programmes and improvements in trainees' skills, reporting that the M level PGCE had been a success overall, with good pass rates despite the increased academic demands. In

addition, Graham-Matheson (2010) found that the M level PGCE had been a positive change. Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) also stress that M level work requires trainees to link theory, research and practice, to undertake more sophisticated work and to reflect more significantly on pupils' learning and their teaching skills – which should lead to improvements in pupils' attainment and classroom practice. However, M level study is not necessarily a direct solution to good professional practice. The picture emerging here is that the M level PGCE has been successful for those who have undertaken it, although it must be acknowledged that it is not known how many trainees have undertaken this, so the wider and overall impact of M level work in ITT cannot be known and once again depicts the incoherence and chaos in the sector.

Other findings to emerge, in rank order, were: (i) different qualifications can create divisiveness, (ii) an additional workload for tutors and trainees, (iii) concerns regarding the ability of some trainees to operate at M level, (iv) staff enjoyed working at a higher level, (v) the need for staff development to ensure that tutors were able to operate and assess at M level, and (vi) a different workload for tutors and trainees.

Firstly, the issue of divisiveness had been an emotive matter for some tutors in HEI 1, as for Barker (2007) who also considered that the different awards could lead to a two-tier profession, with the H level PGCE being demoted in favour of the 'gold standard' M level PGCE. However, research also revealed literature which took a different viewpoint. Whereas the findings and Barker (2007) appear to see the H level PGCE as a 'deficit' model, Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) consider the H level PGCE as the 'norm'. On the other hand, Barker (2007) considers the M level PGCE to now be the 'gold standard', whereas Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) see it as a 'surplus' model.

However, these viewpoints regarding which PGCE is the norm are not based on evidence, since – as discussed above - it is not possible to conclude which PGCE is the norm, as providers are only required to declare at which level(s) their PGCE is offered and not how many trainees are undertaking each award. However, only 31% of trainees undertook the M level PGCE in the first year of its introduction in HEI 1, although 42% of the cohort was eligible, although ratios may have changed over time since the findings were collected. The close examination of the two awards and different PGCE models has added to the knowledge base in ITT and M level work in ITT, as existing literature largely focuses on the M level PGCE *per se* or as the sole award. However, this research focuses on different PGCE models and on the M level PGCE in its context alongside the H level PGCE, which is important as many providers offer both awards, but research to-date has not fully considered the operation of both awards alongside each other.

Also, there is some dissonance regarding the issue of workload for trainees and tutors, shown in the second and final points above. Those who considered the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT to be additional work were tutors in HEI 1 (where both awards operate) whereas those who perceived the workload to be different were tutors in HEI 2 (where there is the M level only PGCE). The issue of trainees' workload is discussed in literature (Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008; Domaille, 2008, in Sewell, 2008), but these viewpoints are contradictory and this research adds to knowledge regarding the workload of trainee teachers in this area. Whilst Sewell and Lakin (2008, in Sewell, 2008) recognize that there are additional elements to the M level PGCE, they consider that the M level PGCE primarily entails a different workload, rather than additional work. However, this is perhaps a natural conclusion for some academics, if the culture of their organisation considers the M

level PGCE as a means of encouraging more trainees onto their masters degrees. On the contrary, Domaille (2008, in Sewell, 2008) argues that writing in a formal way to gain masters credits as part of an M level PGCE is an element of additional work that cannot be underestimated. Taking full account of these findings and literature (Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008; Domaille, 2008, in Sewell, 2008), it is suggested that where both awards are offered there does appear to be a small amount of additional work for trainees in undertaking the M level PGCE, whereas undertaking the M level PGCE where this is the only award offered appears to create a different workload. Therefore, it would appear that trainees are working slightly harder if they undertake the M level PGCE in an institution where both awards are offered, which could be damaging for retention. However, due to the element of choice regarding the level at which to take the award, trainees were very satisfied overall and considered the additional workload worthwhile. Equally, it may also be the case that trainees are being forced through a one-size-fits-all model if they undertake the M level PGCE in an institution where only this is offered but, on the other hand, this creates different rather than additional work. Furthermore, the issue of additional workload created by the M level PGCE for tutors was found in the literature (ESCalate, 2008; Graham-Matheson, 2010). However, in the same way as for trainees' workload, the findings showed that tutors experienced an additional workload where both PGCEs were offered, but a different workload where only the M level PGCE was offered. Therefore, it would appear that tutors are working harder where both awards are offered.

Thirdly, concerns regarding the ability of some trainees to operate at M level seem to conflict with the third most common reason given regarding the rationale to introduce the M level PGCE – trainees' access to the opportunity to work at M level. Therefore, there was obviously some tension for tutors around

wanting to provide trainees with the additional opportunity of working at M level, yet also being concerned regarding the ability of some of their trainees to operate at this level, which could be negative for retention. Graham-Matheson (2010) also found that there were concerns for trainees who might struggle with M level work or feel they had ‘failed’ if they did not achieve M level credits. These concerns conflict with Sewell’s (2008) views that trainees should be able to work at M level with support and guidance from their tutors, as they already have an H level qualification from their bachelor’s degree. Sewell (2008) argues that trainees have already been successful in bridging the gap between academic levels and that they should be able to bridge the gap between H and M level study, therefore. However, as discussed above, adults have different ability levels and so some trainees may not be able to operate at M level, justifying these findings and research by Graham-Matheson (2010). Also, the literature search showed that tutors acknowledged that there have always been trainees more able to connect with M level study (Jackson, 2009), which appears to suggest that M level study may not be appropriate for all trainees, reinforcing these findings and the important concept of choice.

Also, it is perhaps surprising that the issue of staff enjoyment of working at a higher level emerged from tutors in HEI 1, as they felt it had created extra work for them. Nevertheless, this would suggest that tutors enjoyed the variety of working at different levels and at a higher level. The issue concerning staff enjoyment was not found in existing literature, which may mean that this research adds a potential new dimension to research in this area.

Finally, the issue of staff development was found in the literature. Almost half of HEIs surveyed for ESCalate (2008) declared that they had already provided training regarding the M level PGCE for tutors.

The next section of this chapter focuses on the same issues, but from the perspectives of trainee teachers.

(ii) Trainee teacher perspectives of the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT.

This section has been structured to discuss findings for each of the three cohorts researched.

H level cohort (HEI 1)

For these trainees, the two most common reasons given for deciding not to take the M level PGCE were: (i) a perceived additional workload at the beginning of the course, and (ii) the professional demands of the school-based experience. The workload issue was also raised by tutors and is fully discussed and conclusions suggested above, supporting this cohort's perceptions. Also, in addition to the tutors' findings regarding workload, trainees considered by the end of the course that the M level PGCE had involved additional work, but this had only been minimal. Furthermore, concerns regarding the demands of the school-based experience show the priority being given to meeting the Professional Standards for QTS, over the M level PGCE. This is also reinforced by Ofsted (2009), which only inspects how well providers prepare their trainees to meet the Standards for QTS, although there are perhaps good pedagogical and professional reasons for its inclusion in the inspection process, such as the fact that QTS is only the most basic of requirements to become a teacher and that the 'best' trainees work beyond these Standards. So, it is suggested that it is QTS in ITT which is most important to the government, rather than academic awards. Consequently, this could be an issue because this view may have filtered down through providers to trainees and be a factor in some trainees

deciding not to opt for the M level PGCE/ the PGCE at all, perhaps feeling some confusion about duality of identity (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003) concerning whether they want to identify themselves as students (if undertaking additional M level work) or as teachers, focussing on professional practice. Therefore, there is perhaps further work to be undertaken here, which will be discussed in the conclusion. For example, are some providers inadvertently or deliberately reinforcing the government's stance of the importance of the Standards for QTS over the PGCE? This could be the case for recruitment purposes, especially for those providers which do not have masters programmes onto which to encourage trainees to progress further. Also, the existence of ITT courses, such as some SCITT or EBITT programmes which only result in QTS could be reinforcing the Professional Standards for QTS as the essential requirement for becoming a teacher and thereby lessening the importance of the academic PGCE qualification. Gove's shift to more school-led ITT certainly reinforces this position, with proposals to expand programmes which only lead to QTS (DfE, 2011). In addition, Graham-Matheson's research (2010) shows that many trainees' priority is gaining QTS.

Other key issues which emerged were: (i) levels of satisfaction, (ii) choice, (iii) the importance of M level, (iv) undertaking a masters in their own subject, (v) M level study is most appropriate after NQT induction, (vi) scepticism regarding the benefits of theory to practice, (vii) the transferability of credits, (viii) inadequate assessment criteria, (ix) the two PGCEs may be divisive, and (x) employability. These are discussed below.

The vast majority of these trainees (96%) had been overwhelmingly positive about the H level PGCE and judged that they had been satisfied or very satisfied with the course, which is consistent with reports that the original PGCE was very

successful (Sewell, 2008). This has also been supported by some academics, who feel that the H level PGCE had already been pitched at the right level and that M level study is contradictory to the nature of ITT (Barker, 2007). However, some academics also see the M level PGCE as being appropriate to meeting the challenging demands of teaching nowadays (Sewell, 2008).

In line with Browne-Ferrigno's research (2003) that choice is important for students and leads to a more meaningful engagement on programmes, this cohort appreciated the element of choice between the two awards. These findings are also supported by Graham-Matheson's research (2010) that the M level PGCE was not appropriate for many trainees in her university.

Also, although this cohort had completed their PGCE without gaining any M level credits, M level was perceived as an important issue, which matches Jackson's findings (2009) that M level is important for trainees, which may support HEIs in articulating the need for M level ITT as possibly a last hook HEIs have in the sector. In general, this is also consistent with the national trend for growth in postgraduate student numbers (Wakeling, 2005; Gilbert, 2008; Tobin, 2010).

These trainees also showed a greater interest in studying their own subject at M level, rather than studying towards a masters in education, which is interesting as they had just completed an ITT course – ie a course in education, rather than a course in their subject area as they had done for their degree. However, this may be typical of many secondary teachers who have strong subject allegiances (Smethem, 2007), but it is acknowledged that primary trainees/ teachers may feel differently. These findings are also in line with Conservative leanings towards the importance of subject knowledge (as discussed in Chapter 2) and with Gove's comments that teachers should be encouraged to deepen their subject

knowledge (DfE, 2010). Nevertheless, this may also mean that these trainees were not yet professionally integrated within the context of education, as they still showed a bias towards their subject area.

It is also pertinent to note that some considered further study should be undertaken after induction, in line with much research (Hilborne, 2007; Jackson, 2009; *The Teacher*, 2009a; Bangs, 2010; Roberts, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) and the traditional view that M level work is undertaken later for career progression reasons. However, there is also contradictory research, which considers that M level study is appropriate for NQTs (Sewell, 2008; TDA, 2008a, c; Hoare, 2010b; Holley, 2010; Maddern, 2010d, e; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170).

Also, many trainees questioned the benefit of theory and M level study to classroom practice. The failure of trainees to see the benefit of theory is consistent with literature (Grove-White, 2004) and may mean a failing in ITT which needs to be addressed or maybe identity transformation inevitably depends on socialisation with the work culture. Similarly, Jackson (2009) also found that although trainees who had undertaken the M level PGCE considered the linking of theory and practice to be beneficial in principle, they thought the reality had not lived up to their expectations in practice. Also, mentors perceived no change in the practice of trainees who had undertaken M level study and if any change had been made that this tended towards the negative (Jackson, 2009), although this could have been due to reasons other than M level study, such as a 'weaker' cohort that year, for example. Therefore, the bigger picture emerging here is that although M level study is seen as a positive move, there is still an inherent failure to see the benefit of theory to practice and could point to the linkage of theory and practice continuing to be problematic. However, if there is real synthesis

of theory and practice, this is extremely powerful for improving learning and teaching. As advocated by Simkins (2009), blended learning can effectively facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice, as theory and reflection via collaborative learning are being used to develop practice in the context. As yet it would appear that there is limited embedding of M level work in ITT by some providers and that further work is still to be done to ensure the synthesis of theory and practice and making these links explicit to trainees.

Also, trainees had been unsure about the transferability of M level credits, which had been one reason against opting for the M level PGCE. Although many institutions do accept M level ITT credits onto their masters programmes, some institutions do not – considering that this would be ‘double-counting’ (Sewell, 2008), as regulations regarding APL state that credits can only be used towards one award.

The issue of inadequate assessment criteria to judge eligibility for the M level PGCE also emerged. Supporting literature suggests that basing eligibility on assignment grades is typical of how providers are managing the situation, but that wider criteria could be applied (Sewell, 2008), such as trainees’ progress on placements. On the one hand, this seems a sensible solution, as trainees will probably need to feel satisfied that they are making good progress in all aspects of the programme before taking on higher level commitments. This is in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) – in this context, trainees would need to have confidence that their overall progress is good (relating to self-esteem) before being able to move to the next level of fulfilling their maximum potential (self-actualization). However, it must be acknowledged that admissions criteria for other M level programmes are not based on practice, so it may be unfair to include other criteria. Nevertheless, this is a different case to

some extent, as the PGCE is an academic award within a professional ITT programme and has a dual function. Again, this is an important issue for HEIs to review and resolve now that the M level PGCE has become more embedded. Evidently, trainees were preoccupied with the M level PGCE relating only to assignments. These findings are consistent with Sewell (2008), who suggests that there is a common misconception amongst trainees that the M level PGCE is confined to assignments, rather than permeating throughout the programme. Also, it is suggested that it is more difficult to ensure M level study permeates throughout a programme when offering both PGCE awards.

Again, the divisive nature of different qualifications was an emotive issue for some in this cohort, as it had been for some tutors (and is discussed fully in the section above). In particular, many of those who undertook the H level PGCE felt that their qualification was of a lesser value than the M level PGCE. This was reinforced by Barker (2007) and Graham-Matheson (2010).

Despite feeling that their H level PGCE was of a lesser value, trainees did not feel that taking the H level PGCE had harmed their employability and it must be reiterated that data were collected in the final week of the programme – when most had secured employment. This concurs with Jackson's research (2009) that only 30% of trainees interviewed who had undertaken the M level PGCE thought it was beneficial for employability by the end of their programme. However, in contrast with these findings, Sewell (2008) considers that those who undertake the M level PGCE are well-placed at interviews to demonstrate their knowledge of the theory and research which underpin practice.

M level cohort (HEI 1)

The following issues were also raised by this cohort and have been fully discussed above in this section: (i) choice, (ii) undertaking a masters in their own subject, (iii) scepticism regarding the benefits of theory to practice, (iv) the transferability of credits, and (v) the perceived importance of M level. The following issues were also raised by this cohort, but from a different perspective, and are discussed below: (i) levels of satisfaction, (ii) additional workload, (iii) employability, and (iv) the potential divisiveness of the two PGCEs.

Firstly, all trainees who undertook the M level PGCE reported that they had been very satisfied or satisfied with it, which is consistent with literature that the M level PGCE is the most appropriate route for the current demands on teachers, although the original PGCE was also successful and popular with trainees (Sewell, 2008).

Secondly, although the vast majority of trainees had been very satisfied with their course, they acknowledged that it had involved a small amount of additional work, which confirms the H level cohort perceptions above. Workload was also raised by tutors and the H level cohort and was fully discussed in the section regarding HEI perspectives and in the previous section.

Thirdly, some also considered that undertaking additional work at M level had boosted their employability, but literature is contradictory regarding this (Sewell, 2008; Jackson, 2009) and findings from the H level cohort suggest that undertaking the H level PGCE had not harmed their employability. However, these trainees' perceptions that the M level PGCE had boosted their employability could be due to a range of factors, such as an enhanced confidence at succeeding at a higher academic level.

Finally, the divisive nature of different qualifications also emerged from this cohort, as it had for the H level cohort and tutors (and is discussed in the section above and in the section regarding HEI perspectives). However, it appeared that these trainees had placed a higher value on the M level PGCE over the H level PGCE, in the same way as the H level cohort had done.

M level cohort (HEI 2)

Scepticism regarding the benefits of theory to practice was also raised by many in this cohort, as it had been by the previous two cohorts, and was discussed fully under the H level cohort above in this section. However, some in this cohort reported that M level work in ITT had improved their practice. M level was also perceived as important by this cohort, as it had been by the other cohorts, and is discussed under the H level cohort above. In addition, the issue of schools' lack of awareness of the M level PGCE was raised by this cohort, as it had been by the M level cohort in HEI 1, and is discussed under the HEI 1 M level cohort above in this section.

The majority of this cohort also reported being satisfied with the programme, in comparison with those who opted for the M level PGCE in HEI 1 reporting that they had been very satisfied with their programme. Levels of satisfaction in HEI 2 were lower than for the M level cohort in HEI 1, therefore. Also, these trainees were generally less positive about M level study and expressed concerns that there are many teachers who do not have masters degrees, but have substantial experience and are excellent practitioners, in line with research by Hoyle and Wallace (2005).

Two different issues also emerged from this cohort: (i) some were unaware that the PGCE could be at any other level than at M level, and (ii) M level was perceived as particularly difficult for those with little experience of essay-writing in their bachelor's degree. Regarding the first issue, Barker (2007) supports these findings to some extent, reporting that the re-labelling of the PGCE and the two awards had caused confusion for trainees. Regarding the second issue, Graham-Matheson (2010) also found M level study to be especially difficult for those with little experience of essay-writing in their bachelor's degree, but this is in contrast with Jackson (2009) who found that subject specialisms had not caused any problems in the M level PGCE.

The next section of this chapter focuses on the wider aspirations for a masters level profession for qualified teachers.

6.3 Research Question 2

This section discusses research questions 2a, 2b and 2c in turn. Section 6.3.1 below discusses the rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL, section 6.3.2 discusses HEI and NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level profession and section 6.3.3 discusses HEI and perspectives regarding the move towards the MTL.

6.3.1 Research Question 2a: The rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL

The Children's Plan (DCSF, 2007) shows the former government's imposed rationale for a masters level profession: to improve standards, the status of the profession, NQT induction and EPD. *Being the best for our children: Releasing talent for*

teaching and learning (DCSF, 2008) outlined the rationale for the MTL, as a new qualification through which these improvements were to be made. These publications emerged largely due to the McKinsey report (2007), commissioned by the former government to consider high-performing education systems across the world, prior to starting to develop the MTL, but teachers were not consulted regarding whether they wanted a masters level profession and a new qualification designed for them.

The rationale for aspirations for a masters level profession appears to show the former government's concerns regarding pupils' attainment. One particular concern highlighted by Ofsted is literacy and numeracy (Clark, 2008), which concurred with former government plans to prioritise newly-appointed HoDs in 'challenge schools' (which had not reached the goal of 5+ good GCSEs, including English and maths) for the MTL initially. However, these newly-appointed HoDs were likely to be working in particularly demanding environments, so it would appear that this target cohort also needed to be questioned and examined further. Also, a masters level profession will not be the answer to improving standards *per se* – there are many interventions which are being implemented successfully across schools to improve pupils' attainment.

The poor status of the teaching profession is acknowledged (Revell, 2005) and, therefore, the McKinsey report (2007), which disseminated information that masters level study in Finland had been very successful in advancing the status of the profession, was presumably very attractive to the former government. However, section 3.2.2 in Chapter 3 demonstrates that Finland and the UK are very different types of societies, so caution is urged in transferring policies between countries.

The McKinsey report (2007) concurs with Ofsted's (2003) criticisms of the induction year and a survey commissioned by the GTCE and ATL (2006) regarding EPD provision. Also, NQTs have usually experienced a very good quality of ITT and expect a similar experience in EPD, but a coherent and effective EPD programme is still not in place (Jones and Stammers, 1997; Totterdell *et al*, 2002; Kyriacou and O'Connor, 2003; TTA, 2005a; Carrington, 2010). It is suggested that a masters level programme could provide some NQTs and early career teachers with coherent and effective EPD, but as there is no longer large-scale funding there will probably still be enormous variability and many will decide not to pursue M level study, especially as the increase in undergraduate fees may mean that many English students will be too indebted for a postgraduate education.

However, in addition to the rationale above imposed by the former government, it is suggested from the findings and literature that there were also wider factors which may have influenced aspirations for the M level profession. These appear to be: (i) the national trend for postgraduate study (Wakeling, 2005; Gilbert, 2008; Tobin, 2010), and (ii) recognition of the benefits of sustained CPD for teachers (Boyle *et al*, 2005; Kennedy, 2005). The first issue may have emerged, due to large numbers of people now having bachelor's degrees – perhaps partly as a result of the widening participation agenda in the UK. Presumably, the current economic downturn has also contributed to the increased demand for postgraduate study, as people are becoming more aware of the need to compete more fiercely than before for employment (Tobin, 2011), despite the financial cost and 'emotional cost' (Crawford, 2007). The second issue emerged as the momentum for more sustained PD has been gathering for many years (Ofsted, 2002; Boyle *et al*, 2005; Kennedy, 2005) and its benefits are largely seen as favourable. The move away from one-day courses to in-depth sustained PD shows a recognition of the

importance of reflection, criticality and analysis – features of M level study. Therefore, it is maybe not surprising that teachers were being offered more opportunities to gain M level credits in line with the trend for postgraduate study via the former BPRS, the former TDA PPD programme, APEL from in-depth PD programmes and also in conjunction with M level ITT credits. Obviously some teachers have undertaken masters degrees over the years independently and at their own expense, but due to the initiatives described above in this paragraph, increasing numbers of teachers may have now embarked on M level study. Therefore, it seems logical that the former government announced the move to make teaching a masters level profession (McKinsey, 2007).

Therefore, aspirations for the M level profession and the MTL seemed an appropriate way forward especially to those policymakers impressed by the successes of the Finnish education system linked to the M level profession (McKinsey, 2007; Tryggvason, 2009). These successes highlighted the high levels of attainment of youngsters in Finland and the high status of its teachers, so it is perhaps no surprise that policymakers in England considered that these successes could be replicated in England as an effect of a masters level profession. However, no correlation has been found between higher degrees and teachers' performance in the USA (Robertson, 2010), which is a more similar society to the UK. Also, there are many existing masters programmes in England which are suitable for teachers and tailored to match teachers' needs (Gaunt, 1997). So, what will this mean in the bigger picture for the status of existing masters programmes? Will existing masters programmes, such as the MA Education, be viewed as a superior qualification to the MTL? Or will the MTL be viewed as a superior qualification for practitioners in the same way as the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) has been viewed for those in the world of business? Has the MTL created a new generation of researchers

and could this mean greater research-informed practice? Or will Gove's withdrawal of funding from the MTL mean the programme collapses and undermines M level study overall?

There is much research claiming that M level study is beneficial in improving standards in schools (TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b), if research is focused on classroom practice and learning and teaching. However, there is also research which suggests that current masters degrees do not appear to make teachers any better practitioners (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). This may be because many teachers who undertake higher degrees choose to research issues other than learning and teaching, when more experienced and in middle management/ leadership roles, so it is not surprising that many teachers focus on issues such as leadership and management, rather than learning and teaching.

Also, it was set out at MTL consultation events (TDA, 2008a) that the TDA wanted a new qualification, rather than revised existing masters degrees, to specifically focus on teachers' needs and improving classroom practice. Although many masters degrees are beneficial to teachers (TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b), there is evidence showing that they have not had the desired impact in the classroom (Wylie, 2008; Robertson, 2010).

Therefore, the withdrawal of funding from the MTL has taken away from many teachers, who would not be able to afford to study for a masters degree, a programme which could have a real impact on learning and teaching. This is not to say that other masters degrees do not have an impact on learning and teaching (when they are designed with this aim), but that the funding for the MTL would have encouraged many to undertake M level study, as shown by the findings from NQTs. Also, it can be said at a superficial level that the MTL is a new qualification, as this

is a new award which required HEIs (which became MTL providers) to validate the new award of MTL.

The focus on learning and teaching is essential in raising standards and improving classroom practice. Therefore, the focus on learning and teaching within the MTL is welcome and important. However, many HEIs currently offer masters degrees which focus on learning and teaching, either through specialist modules or routes, so if the MTL does collapse due to the withdrawal of funding there are obviously many other programmes through which teachers can focus on learning and teaching at this level. Also, teachers undertaking these modules/routes can often choose from a range of modules covering a wide spectrum of aspects regarding learning and teaching, rather than following the prescribed content of the MTL.

Aspirations for the M level profession could have increased teachers' knowledge and professional confidence, if the MTL had been successful in recruiting large numbers of teachers, thereby supporting their practice. However, it is unlikely that large numbers will now be recruited due to the withdrawal of funding. Also, M level study was considered by the former government as a tool to enhance the professionalism of teachers and raise the status and attractiveness of teaching. However, where does the withdrawal of funding from the MTL now leave these aspirations? If the new government wants to enhance the professionalism of teachers and raise the status and attractiveness of the profession, it is now unlikely that this will be fulfilled via M level study. These aspirations are still key though, so other appropriate interventions will be needed.

The next section of this chapter focuses on HEI perspectives regarding a masters level profession.

6.3.2 Research Question 2b: HEI and NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level profession

Table 6.3 below has been produced from the findings to summarise HEI and NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level profession.

Table 6.3: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of a masters level teaching profession

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to improvements in learning and teaching (HEI). • Teaching being formally recognized as a complex activity (HEI). • May enhance the status of the profession (NQT). • May improve teachers' professional development and promotion prospects (NQT). • May mean more articulate and reflective teachers (NQT). • May provide the next step for progression (NQT). • Will enable teachers to stretch themselves further academically (NQT). • Will update teachers' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May make no difference to improving teaching (NQT). • Some excellent teachers may not be able to cope with the academic demands, if it were to become a requirement (NQT).

knowledge (NQT).	
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These findings are now discussed below from an HEI and NQT perspective.

(i) HEI perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level profession

The above findings regarding improved learning and teaching echo research claiming that M level study is beneficial in improving learning and teaching (TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b). However, there is also literature which disputes this (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170), although there may be benefits in other aspects, such as collaborative learning in professional learning communities. Therefore, would a masters level profession bring about these desired improvements? Improvement requires change, but change is perhaps more complicated than a masters level qualification can deliver. However, the fact that aspirations for a masters level profession was established specifically to improve standards could mean that this could bring about many desired improvements in learning and teaching. Nevertheless, this will only happen if there is real change and a sustained focus on learning and teaching, including addressing problematic issues such as the synthesis of theory with practice. Also, it must be acknowledged that school improvement is not only dependent on the quality of learning and teaching, but factors such as the socio-economic context, school culture and school leadership and management.

Findings that teaching is a complex activity have been reinforced by many key stakeholders. Hagger reinforced the complexity of

teaching at an MTL focus group event (TDA, 2008b), in which she embraced aspirations for the M level profession, due to the complex nature of teaching and nurturing children. In addition, Blower emphasised the complexity of teaching and the need for time for reflection and the capacity to undertake in-depth theoretical study (*The Teacher*, 2009b). These comments arose in opposition to the former government plans that would enable people to qualify as a teacher in as little as one term. Therefore, on the one hand, by moving to a masters level profession the former government appeared to be endorsing the complexity of teaching, but, on the other hand, planned to ‘dumb down’ ITT to increasingly shorter courses (Maddern, 2009a), which seemed in contradiction with its philosophy regarding the M level profession. Furthermore, there are those who do not consider teaching a complex activity at all. Neo-conservatives consider teaching to be a practical skill (Furlong *et al*, 2000) – see Chapter 2 - and Gove’s shift to school-led ITT (DfE, 2010) will also ‘dumb down’ the training of teachers, instead of recognising the complexity of learning and teaching. Consequently, there are many inconsistencies in the way training is approached from ITT to EPD to CPD, which it is suggested has led to a fragmented system which does not maximise teachers’ development. This will be examined further in the conclusion.

The next section of the chapter discusses findings from an NQT perspective, as the main target cohort.

(ii) NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession: Advantages

Findings regarding improved PD echoes research in general by Boyle *et al* (2005), who found that improved professional development arises as a result of sustained CPD. Findings also

show that some academics support NQT perceptions that M level study should lead to improved prospects of promotion, in line with Sewell (2008) who suggested that having a masters degree would probably support teachers' career aspirations. Therefore, it would appear that masters degrees may be perceived as supporting career progression, but this may be a false hope. Also, some academics support NQT perspectives that a masters level profession will enable teachers to stretch themselves further academically, which is reinforced in general terms by Gaunt (1997) who insisted that many HEIs provide flexible opportunities for teachers to work at a higher academic level and to embark on masters degrees, by encouraging them to research and evaluate their own practice. Findings that the M level profession should update teachers' knowledge was reinforced by Revell (2005), who concluded that masters degrees would create a more knowledgeable teaching force and wipe out the current feelings of insecurity and inferiority that are unfortunately prevalent in the profession. NQT findings that the M level profession should ensure more articulate and reflective teachers are supported by some academics, who consider that teachers should then be able to demonstrate their masterly performance in the classroom (Hilborne, 2007). Higher level study and the reading required to complete a masters degree should support teachers in articulating their knowledge, but should also give them access to a more professional type of language and an enhanced professional confidence, as a result. Reed *et al* (2002) also reported that it is generally considered that teachers who engage in reflection are better teachers. Findings that a masters level profession would lead to an enhanced status of teaching concurs with the former government's plans to make a step-change in the status and capacity of the profession by bringing in a new masters qualification (DCSF, 2008). UCET (2008b) also agreed that a masters level profession could represent one of the greatest step-changes in teacher status and professionalism since

teaching became an all-graduate profession and would substantially enhance the collective and individual status of teachers. Finally, NQT perspectives that an M level profession would provide the next step for progression were consistent with the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007), which stated that it was necessary to implement a structured M level EPD programme as an intervention strategy, in order to create world-class teachers. However, can England aspire to a world-class teaching profession when there is increasingly much social deprivation and can a masters level programme really overcome the underachievement of some pupils when there is inequality in society? Nevertheless, there are measures which can be undertaken to address inequalities in society and some of these are linked to education, but there are obviously other measures which need to be undertaken which fall beyond the remit of education.

(iii) NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession: Disadvantages

Firstly, NQTs were not a lone voice regarding this scepticism and this is a recurrent theme throughout this research. Although there is research which suggests that M level study is linked to individual teachers' improvement (TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b), this scepticism is also supported by literature asserting that there is no correlation between masters degrees and teachers' performance in the classroom (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010). This was also a key issue for trainee teachers regarding the M level PGCE and is discussed and referenced against supporting and contrasting literature regarding research question 1b. However, this is in contrast with the Deans' views above that the M level profession should lead to improvements in learning and teaching. Overall, it will be important that the MTL/ other masters degrees do focus on improving learning and

teaching and that appropriate support is in place for teachers. Secondly, NQT findings that some excellent teachers may not be able to cope with the academic demands are consistent with NUT concerns to a certain extent. Although the NUT did not explicitly state this, it set out concerns that some NQTs would find it difficult to balance their work on a masters degree with induction requirements (*The Teacher*, 2009a). The success of trainees undertaking the M level PGCE suggests that some are able to cope with the demands of M level study, but it must be acknowledged that currently many trainees may not be undertaking the M level PGCE, but are undertaking the H level PGCE or programmes just leading to QTS. Also, Sewell (2008) argues that teachers should be able to bridge the gap from a bachelor's degree to a masters degree, with support and guidance. However, as discussed in research question 1b, adults have different ability levels and there comes a point at which everyone must reach their maximum potential academically. Therefore, it is likely that for some teachers this will be the completion of their H level bachelor's degree/ H level PGCE. However, Knowles' andragogic model (1990), demonstrating the issues which need to be considered and addressed, is useful in supporting adult learners to progress to the next level. In summary, it must be acknowledged that M level study is not the only way for teachers to advance their skills, but if NQTs/ teachers are to undertake masters level study they need to have a sense of preparedness, if they are to maintain the motivation to pursue a higher degree alongside professional commitments. Therefore, much work needs to be done by HEIs, schools and LAs (or their future replacement) to ensure that teachers are well-prepared for M level study, motivated and that they maintain high levels of job satisfaction if they are to undertake additional work. If not, the additional workload could be problematic for retention and the job satisfaction of NQTs and RQTs especially and high workload has

already been shown to be a deeply dissatisfying aspect for teachers by Rhodes *et al* (2004b).

The final section of this chapter focuses on the MTL – the vehicle through which a masters level profession was to be achieved.

6.3.3 Research Question 2c: HEI and NQT perspectives regarding the move towards the MTL

(i) HEI perspectives regarding the move towards the MTL

Prior to the launch of the MTL, both Deans were in favour of the programme, in principle. This is to be expected, as they are proponents of university education departments with large ITT programmes and M level programmes for which they seek to engage teachers in postgraduate study. They considered the positive aspects as: (i) it should lead to more critical and reflective teachers, (ii) a good opportunity for HEIs to contribute to the training of teachers in the region post-qualification, and (iii) an injection of new ideas into teaching. However, these findings could also relate to many masters degrees in education.

The first point was also an issue discussed by NQTs above regarding their perceptions of a masters level profession. The work by McAteer *et al* (2010), who are some of the main authors to-date to write specifically about the MTL, reinforce findings that the MTL should ensure teachers are more critical, analytical and reflective. More generally, Hilborne (2007) and Boyle *et al* (2008) reported that sustained, in-depth PD programmes support teachers to become more critical and reflective.

The second point that the MTL is a good opportunity for HEIs to contribute to the training of teachers in the region post-

qualification was not specifically found in the literature. However, in general, these findings are supported in that Britain is currently the second most popular country in the world for students and has the best HE system in the world, after the USA (Vaughan, 2010). Also, the TDA (2008a) – under the former administration - declared ITT to be ‘world-class’. Therefore, it would appear logical for HEIs to contribute to the training of teachers post-qualification through the MTL/ masters degrees/ other PD. This point shows that the MTL brought HEIs and schools closer together at the EPD stage and could be interpreted as a vote of confidence in HEIs by the former government. However, lines were drawn at consultation events (TDA, 2008a), clearly informing HEIs that the MTL was an initiative for schools, not for HEIs. Again, it is suggested that there is inconsistency in the former government’s policy. On the one hand, it would appear that the former government was bringing HEIs and schools closer together via the MTL, but, on the other hand, HEIs were moved away from schools to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Also, where does this leave PD partnerships between HEIs and schools now that funding has been withdrawn? It seems unlikely that these large-scale partnerships will continue in this vein due to the lack of funding.

Finally, the findings that the MTL should bring an injection of new ideas into teaching reinforce what the Deans had discussed above regarding the move to the M level profession leading to improvements in learning and teaching. Findings also concur with research by Hilborne (2007), who reported that HEIs should develop a qualification which does not depend entirely on academic assignments, but which demonstrates innovative skills such as designing a new curriculum, for example. Therefore, a less traditional approach to M level study was being encouraged by the TDA (2008a) which does not follow a route of research methods, other modules of choice and a dissertation typical of

many masters degrees. However, would this necessarily bring more innovative ideas into teaching? Also, how will this new injection of ideas into teaching be gained now that funding has been withdrawn from the MTL? Obviously other means of professional development are needed to bring about an injection of new ideas into teaching, now that the MTL is unlikely to be the vehicle to do this. Can these benefits be brought about by the new Teaching Schools, for example? This could happen to a certain extent, as Teaching Schools have a remit for CPD, but the fact that there were only just over 200 Teaching Schools designated from 2012 - 13 suggests that their current impact is likely to be minimal. Also, funding is very modest for Teaching Schools in the first years, and thereafter Teaching Schools will be expected to generate their own income, so their impact may be limited. Also, the fact that Teaching Schools will need to generate their own income may mean that they will be competing with HEIs regarding the PD market, which will put further pressure on university education departments.

On the other hand, both Deans viewed the negative aspects of the MTL as: (i) the additional workload for teachers, (ii) concerns regarding the target cohorts of NQTs and newly-appointed HoDs in 'challenge schools', (iii) the impact of the prescribed content, and (iv) concerns regarding the future of the TDA and funding for the MTL in the current economic climate. Both Deans also stressed that the main negatives of the MTL for them were the additional workload for teachers and the target cohort.

Firstly, Rhodes *et al* (2004b) found that poor work-life balance is already deeply dissatisfying for many teachers and Howgego (2012) has shown that teachers – and lecturers – are the most likely to undertake unpaid overtime. Also, general concerns about the additional workload for teachers in undertaking masters degrees had been recognised by Revell (2005), who concluded

this was one reason why only a minority of teachers undertake them. More specifically relating to the MTL, the Deans' views were supported by a lack of interest from head teachers in the MTL, due to concerns regarding workload (Maddern, 2009c). Additional workload involved in M level study alongside teaching is a recurrent theme throughout this research and was also raised by trainees regarding the M level PGCE, showing general concerns around M level study and its compatibility with professional practice in the early stages of a teacher's career. However, the TDA insisted that measures had been taken to guard against extra work (Holley, 2010) and that MTL participants would be given time out of the classroom to undertake some of this work (TDA, 2008a), although they would still need to do work in their own time, as they would if completing any masters degree (TDA, 2008a; Maddern, 2010e).

Secondly, concerns regarding the target cohort of NQTs were fully supported by some teaching unions, due to the demands of the induction period and the fact that NQTs who fail induction are not able to continue teaching in maintained schools (*The Teacher* 2009a; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Concerns regarding NQTs as the target cohort was also expressed by delegates from schools and ITT providers (TDA, 2008a) and more generally it is widely acknowledged that NQTs find induction an especially difficult time (McNally, 2002; Ofsted, 2003; Wylie, 2008; Roberts, 2010). The NUT told the former government that, whilst generally being in favour of a masters level profession and the MTL, the means to achieve this should have been developed in partnership with teachers and that all teachers should have had access to the new qualification, if they wished (*The Teacher*, 2009a). Their advice for all teachers to have access to the MTL clearly meant that the NUT considered that NQTs should not have been prioritized as the target cohort. Stephens of the GTCE also questioned the equity of NQTs as the target cohort

(www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Many other key stakeholders also consider masters degrees are more suitable for experienced teachers than NQTs and that it is mid-career teachers who benefit most from M level work, as they are often more likely to be fully able to synthesize theory with practice and produce high quality reflective work after a greater amount of experience and often substantial leadership and management experience (Hilborne, 2007; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). Also, as module leader for the module discussed in figure 6.2 (in Chapter 6) and for another module for middle and senior leaders in a previous role as MA Education award leader, the researcher's own professional experience has been that NQTs typically do not have sufficient experience and understanding of education and learning and teaching to gain the maximum benefit from M level study and that it is more experienced teachers who benefit most and produce research of a quality which could be disseminated to other practitioners. It is also the researcher's professional experience that, overall, the work of NQTs at M level can be rather professionally naïve, in comparison with the work of experienced teachers. However, in contrast with the findings from both Deans and the above supporting literature, there are those who consider that NQTs are the correct target cohort. Carr justified NQTs as the target cohort, pointing out that around half of teachers who undertake masters level study via TDA PPD funding are in their early career (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) – however, this does not necessarily mean NQTs. In fact, Carr's argument is flawed as only 7% of those who accessed PPD funding were NQTs (www.ternesrcseminars.net/michaeldaybio.htm), which means that these early career teachers accessing PPD funding were RQTs who had successfully completed induction, rather than NQTs. Also, Wylie (2008) provided an example showing that some NQTs are keen to continue with their studies. Some academics also support the idea of NQTs undertaking M level study immediately after ITT (Sewell, 2008; Hoare, 2010b). However, academics

obviously have a vested interest in NQTs continuing with M level study. Also, in contrast with the NUT, the NASUWT welcomed the MTL as a development geared to NQTs, who are least able to afford the time or money to undertake further qualifications (Hoare, 2010b). Keates stated that the NASUWT felt it best to launch the MTL for NQTs who could enhance the credits they had built up (Hoare, 2010b). However, this position was also flawed, as many NQTs do not gain any M level credits, due to the ITT programme/ route they undertook. In addition, the findings from the Deans regarding the other target cohort of newly-appointed HoDs in ‘challenge schools’ are in contrast with the stance adopted by the former government, which set out its vision that the MTL should be adopted in schools where the greatest challenges are to be found (DCSF, 2008). However, these schools have a wide range of other pressing concerns to address. Therefore, the MTL would not have been a real priority for these head teachers, if they did not see the programme as having a direct positive impact on their immediate needs. It is for these reasons that both Deans questioned the logic of including newly-appointed HoDs from ‘challenge schools’ in the MTL target cohort. Also, from the researcher’s professional experience as a secondary school teacher for fifteen years of which eight of these was spent in a school facing challenging circumstances (SfCC,) it is suggested that newly-appointed HoDs in ‘challenge schools’ are likely to be fairly inexperienced teachers and may not gain maximum benefit from M level study, therefore. The Deans’ views were supported by the lack of interest from head teachers in the MTL (Maddern, 2009c), whose support was essential (McAteer *et al*, 2010). In addition, the school contexts vary, so surely approaches must vary. The MTL was not necessarily going to be an effective strategy for all teachers and all schools, therefore. The lack of interest in M level study by schools is another recurrent theme which emerges throughout this research. Also, due to low levels of interest in the MTL/ M level PD and

the withdrawal of funding from the MTL are aspirations for a masters level profession still realistic? There will still be some teachers who can access funding for M level study, but these numbers are greatly reduced than under plans for the MTL. Finally, the issue of newly-appointed HoDs in ‘challenge schools’ as part of the target cohort for the MTL did not emerge further in the literature, probably as the NQT cohort was by far the biggest of the two eligible cohorts and the cohort which was due to start first.

Thirdly, concerns regarding the impact of prescribed content are consistent with literature. Jones (2008) considered that HEIs – as professional educators - should have played a much more forceful role concerning the content and format of the MTL, telling the TDA what to do – rather than accepting a prescribed content. This is a predictable view of some academics, who typically promote intellectual freedom and are likely to feel restricted and compromised by programmes with a government-prescribed content, therefore. Also, UCET criticised the prescribed content, believing it would mean a lack of depth and academic rigour and have little credibility (Milne, 2008). In addition, Bangs (2010) described the MTL as a one-size-fits-all model which needed radical rethinking and advised that teachers should be able to choose PD activities for themselves.

Finally, the future of the TDA and funding for the MTL in the current economic climate were concerns expressed by both Deans. Sherman *et al* (2009) also reported on the former government’s plans and the Conservative Party proposals for a ‘bonfire of the quangos’ as part of public sector cuts. Events have confirmed concerns, as the TDA functions will largely revert to the DfE as the TDA becomes the ‘Teaching Agency’ and an executive agency in 2012 and funding for the MTL has been withdrawn. In addition, UCET (2008b) advised the government to ensure that

the costs of delivering the MTL were properly assessed and funded in full. So, funding for the MTL now appears to have been insufficiently considered and unsustainable in these difficult economic times. Funding was obviously a key issue for HEIs, as the MTL was a welcome financial boost to many HEIs which successfully bid to become MTL providers – especially at a time of widespread cuts to HE (Curtis, 2009; Vaughan, 2010).

Differing perspectives of the Deans

An issue of dissonance between the Deans was the impact on ITT routes other than the M level PGCE, regarding APCL to the MTL. NQTs who undertook M level PGCEs could transfer 30 credits to the MTL. This TDA decision (2008a) was supported by one Dean who agreed that this was necessary to ensure NQTs fully engaged with the MTL. The other Dean was opposed to the above cohort of NQTs claiming APCL at all, considering that this would have a potentially negative impact on trainees from other ITT routes, which do not award M level credits. The views of the latter Dean were also raised by UCET (2008b), which advised the former government to put in place measures to ensure NQTs without M level credits were not disadvantaged in the MTL. At first glance, this seems to be a compromise, as the NQTs who undertook the M level PGCE (and gained 60 M level credits on average) could transfer 30 credits to the MTL – but this would typically only be half of their M level credits. This means that those who undertook ITT routes other than the M level PGCE were only disadvantaged by having to undertake one additional assignment, whereas those who undertook the M level PGCE were exempt from this first assignment. However, this compromise could be seen as disadvantaging those NQTs who undertook the M level PGCE, as they engaged in additional work and work at a higher level during ITT. UCET (2008b) reinforced this view, considering that only

allowing NQTs who undertook the M level PGCE to transfer 30 of their credits may undermine the programme. However, this is contradictory to UCET's position (2008b) not to disadvantage certain ITT routes. Nevertheless, neither of the two Deans' positions were related to what already happens in practice – ie. that 60 M level PGCE credits can be transferred to 'traditional' masters programmes in many HEIs. In conclusion, a bigger issue regarding regulations around APL may need to be addressed. It should also be reiterated from the discussion in research question 1b that national regulations around APL state that students cannot transfer credits which have counted towards another award. Therefore, as these credits have counted towards the award of PGCE, should any credits be allowed to be transferred to the MTL/ other masters degrees? As Sewell (2008) stated, this is seen by some HEIs as 'double-counting'. However, from the researcher's own experience as a former MA Education award leader, with responsibility for APL, during preparations for the MTL, this issue was ignored by HEIs and the TDA in its haste to enrol participants on the MTL, in order to attract large numbers onto the programme as a measure of success. Furthermore, instances of this kind may become more widespread as HEIs are put into a more competitive market (Browne, 2010).

The perspectives of individual Deans

In the remainder of this section other aspects are discussed, which were the responses of either the Dean in HEI 1 or the Dean in HEI 2 – rather than their collective responses. Firstly, the perceived positive aspects are discussed, followed by the perceived negative aspects of the MTL.

The perceived positive aspects of the MTL were: (i) the learning community created for NQTs, (ii) further development overall in

schools at an institutional level, (iii) improved learning and teaching, (iv) lifelong learning, (v) enhanced PD over a sustained period of time, (vi) greater opportunities for collaboration and partnership, (vii) good progression from ITT to EPD, (viii) potential for teachers to undertake more in-depth work and progress further in certain areas than was possible in the time constraints of ITT, (ix) major positive step-change for the profession, leading to formalised award-bearing training post-qualification, and (x) sharper pace.

Key authors of PD (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Simkins, 2009) have advocated the first point in general terms, that learning communities allow for greater reflection, although their research did not specifically focus on NQTs. Ofsted (2002) concluded that schools, overall, fail to ensure that acquired knowledge and skills are consolidated, implemented and shared with other teachers. Boyle *et al* (2005) commented that teachers who engage in collaborative PD activities become more reflective, critical, and analytical. Also, the McKinsey report (2007) found that promoting a collaborative profession was a key principle for high quality teacher professional development. However, creating and sustaining these communities requires sources of income and such communities may decline as different sectors come into competition with each other and as funding streams cease/ shift.

The second point was that the MTL would lead to further development in schools at an institutional level. The general issue of PD meeting the needs of schools was recommended by the ACSTT, which was established in 1974 (Gaunt, 1997). However, typically, PD is often seen as meeting individuals' needs before those of the institution (Simkins, 2009). Also, UCET research (2008b) cited one reason for the number of teachers undertaking masters level study decreasing in the previous decade as M level credits being perceived as linking to individual teachers' improvement, rather than to school improvement.

Therefore, many head teachers may be reluctant to fund professional development which they do not consider will have a positive impact on the school.

The third point made was improved learning and teaching as a positive consequence of the MTL. This was supported by some teachers (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) and by UCET (2008b), but also disputed by some literature (Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010).

The fourth perceived positive aspect of the MTL was the promotion of lifelong learning. Hoare (2010b) reinforced this view, believing that the MTL would prompt schools to adopt a learning mindset and a culture of lifelong learning. Hagger also emphasised lifelong learning as a major benefit of the MTL. Similarly, Rowe also stressed that if the MTL had done its job, it would be that those who complete the programme would want to learn more (TDA, 2008a).

The fifth point regarding enhanced PD over a sustained period was also highlighted by NQTs in the section above and supported by literature (Boyle *et al*, 2005; McKinsey, 2007). Also, the former government reinforced that the MTL signified a strong commitment to improving teachers' PD (DCSF, 2008). Therefore, it appears that M level study is perceived as an enhanced form of professional development. However, M level PD for teachers will now only be available via restricted routes, so will not have the widespread impact that the MTL could have had.

The sixth point that the MTL would mean greater collaboration and partnerships across the sector was consistent with reports that the MTL signalled a new era for HEIs to work together and that this would further improve standards (Carrington, 2010). Holley (2009) also highlighted the opportunities for partnership

between HEIs and schools. Obviously there are advantages for each organisation in working together in partnership on a common aim. Husbands also stressed that a new partnership needed to be created between HEIs and schools on equal terms (TDA, 2008b). However, collaboration can have its disadvantages as it is often difficult to ensure equal terms, due to issues of territoriality and the need for one institution to take the lead for practical reasons, for example. Also, if partnerships are not effective or fail, this would then leave programmes at risk. Nevertheless, the MTL would have meant much greater involvement for HEIs in teachers' PD, which could have had a much more significant impact on the training of teachers post-qualification than the current HEI-school ITT partnerships. However, the shifting of ITT out of HEIs and the withdrawal of funding for the MTL could mean an erosion of these partnerships and greater competition between sectors. The fact that the former government brought HEIs and schools closer together through the MTL was a positive move which could be interpreted as a vote of confidence in HEIs and what they can contribute to developing the teaching profession. However, there were inconsistencies regarding policy. On the one hand, schools and HEIs were being encouraged to work together and on equal terms, but, on the other hand, the former government split schools and HEIs by moving HEIs to the new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The seventh point regarding progression from ITT to EPD was also considered as another positive aspect of the MTL. This was consistent with the TDA message that ITT was considered to be world-class and the aim was for this level of high quality training to continue (TDA, 2008a).

The eighth point that the MTL should enable teachers to undertake more in-depth work and progress further in certain areas than was possible in the time constraints of ITT are

supported by literature to a certain extent. For example, Wiliam describes ITT as the “survival” period and predicted the MTL to be the “apprenticeship” period (www.teacherstv/videos/38170). In general terms, Gaunt (1997) reported that many masters degrees provide flexible opportunities for teachers to work at a higher academic level and encourage teachers to research and evaluate their own practice.

The ninth point that the MTL was a major, positive step-change for the profession, leading to formalised award-bearing training post-qualification, seemed to be bringing teaching in line with some other professions and raising the status and attractiveness of teaching. This is consistent with the former government’s aims to improve the status and capacity of the teaching profession by bringing in a new masters qualification for all (DCSF, 2008). However, the MTL was not a qualification for all, but an entitlement and would not have the impact predicted if it was not undertaken by enough teachers to have the desired effect in raising standards. Nevertheless, much work needs to be done to enhance the status and attractiveness of teaching and other vehicles need to be found to achieve this goal now that the MTL/ M level study is no longer this vehicle.

Finally, the sharper pace of the MTL was also reinforced at a consultation event, highlighting that participants would be expected to complete the programme in three years (TDA, 2008a), rather than the four years often taken by teachers on masters programmes. Specifically, the MTL was considered a more natural route in a way that the TDA PPD programme was not, as the PPD programme operated module-by-module and was a relatively slow way to achieve a masters degree. However, the PPD programme was very successful (TDA, 2008d; TDA, 2010) and, in order that the MTL brought about the desired improvements, UCET (2008b)

recommended that the development of the MTL be built on the success of the PPD programme.

The perceived negative aspects of the MTL, as discussed by one of the Deans, were: (i) the possible negative impact on current PPD funding, (ii) rushed introduction, (iii) possible divisiveness regarding promotion prospects, (iv) impact of a government programme, (v) lack of thought regarding the role of the SBC, (vi) future of the TLA, (vii) MTL was not the innovative practice-based programme being conveyed, (viii) scepticism whether the MTL would be the best programme to ensure a positive impact on practice and lead to better learning and teaching, and (ix) schools/head teachers showing very little interest.

The first point about the impact the MTL would have on existing PPD funding was made by the Dean whose HEI had benefitted from PPD funding and his fears were proved accurate as this was also cut (TDA, 2010). This Dean was obviously hoping to maintain the PPD funding stream, in addition to gaining funding via the MTL, although he considered that the MTL would have a sharper pace.

The second criticism focussed on the rushed introduction of the MTL, feeling that there had been little time for validation, planning and preparation. Two teaching unions also held this view (Maddern, 2009b). However, it must be acknowledged that HEIs did agree to the TDA timescales when tendering for the contract to deliver the MTL.

Whereas the NQTs had been positive about improved prospects for promotion, one Dean expressed concern about the possible impact on promotion prospects for teachers, fearing that schools may start to insist on completion of the MTL and this would be divisive. These findings are consistent with Baker (2009), who reported the risk that masters qualifications would be seen as essential for

teachers wanting to gain promotion. However, Revell (2005) considers that teachers should have masters degrees and that only those with them should be eligible for promotion, which would exclude some excellent teachers from career advancement who were not interested in or capable of M level study. Also, as reported above in the section concerning trainee teacher perspectives regarding M level work in ITT, Sewell (2008) believes that M level work should support teachers' career aspirations. Overall, there was the potential for the MTL to create divisions in the profession regarding promotion prospects and status, in similar ways to those discussed regarding the H level and M level PGCE. The potential divisiveness of different qualifications is a recurrent theme which emerges throughout this research. Also, will the MTL lead to teachers up-skilling, as happened from the Certificate in Education (CertEd) to B.Ed? Or, will the withdrawal of funding and the relatively few teachers involved lead to the demise of the MTL and a lack of credibility in the qualification?

The fourth concern regarding the impact of a government programme was expressed by one Dean, believing the MTL would lead to further government interference in HE. This was a view expressed by other academics (Jones, 2008; Milne, 2008). However, some HEIs were in favour of the MTL and some HEIs were aware that they needed to comply with the former government plans in order to access much-needed funding. Nevertheless, professional teacher-educators alongside the teaching profession maybe could have made a more forceful argument against a government programme and questioned the content of the MTL more vigorously regarding if this was the best way to improve learning and teaching. However, from the researcher's own experience of attending consultation and focus group events (TDA, 2008a, b), teachers and HEIs (with the support of UCET) did argue their case fairly robustly overall, but the former government

largely forged ahead regardless. This issue closely relates to the negative impact of the prescribed content of the MTL, which emerged from both Deans and is discussed above.

The fifth point expressed concern regarding the perceived lack of thought for the role of the SBC. In particular, the training of the SBC was criticized by HEIs (TDA, 2008a), the ATL and some teachers (www.teachers.tv/videos/38170). The specific roles of the coach would also appear to have some important omissions. For example, the TDA allocated a role to the HEI tutor to support the participant to engage with theory to further develop practice (TDA, 2009b), but ignored the coach – the expert practitioner – in this important but problematic area of linking theory with practice (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999). The specific role of the coach is an area not fully discussed in the literature, as the focus has been upon the MTL as a vehicle to foster aspirations for a masters level profession – rather than partnerships, specific roles and responsibilities of key partners and the format in which it is delivered. However, the use of SBMs/ SBCs is commonplace in the UK education system and the benefits of coaching and mentoring as ITT/ PD for trainees/ teachers are fully acknowledged (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002; Rhodes *et al*, 2004b; Forde and O'Brien, 2011). Also, the efficacy of learning linked to the school context coupled with the involvement of experienced SBMs/ SBCs is widely accepted (Walker and Dimmock, 2006). In addition, it was agreed that school-based coaching for NQTs would have a positive impact and that the coach would also benefit from the process (Carrington, 2010). The role of a SBC would be a valid issue for future research, especially regarding the contribution the coach could make to linking theory and practice effectively, as part of any ITT or PD programme.

The sixth aspect concerned the future of the TLA. Due to the GTCE being a casualty of government cuts, the future of the TLA

was in question, although it seems that its future has now been secured due to be being bought by an HE consortium – the Cathedrals Group of universities and university colleges – which re-launched the TLA on 29/11/11 (www.gtce.org.uk/tla/tla_update). The future of the TLA due to introduction of the MTL is an issue not discussed in the literature, but it is certainly a fact that the MTL adopted some similar principles to the TLA – notably, the role of a coach as a predominant aspect – and could have encouraged some teachers away from the TLA towards the MTL.

The seventh point highlighted that the MTL was not the innovative practice-based programme the TDA was conveying. This is not discussed in the literature, but references to bringing in a new masters qualification emphasised that the MTL would be different from other masters degrees (DCSF, 2008) and McAteer *et al* (2010) set out these differences. However, it is suggested that the MTL is not the innovative practice-based programme the TDA was conveying, as many HEIs have already developed innovative, practice-based M level programmes for teachers.

In the section above regarding the positive aspects of the MTL, one Dean considered that the MTL would lead to improved learning and teaching. However, one Dean also expressed scepticism that the MTL would be the best programme to ensure a positive impact on practice and lead to better learning and teaching. Overall, this research highlights that literature is contradictory regarding the benefits of M level study in relation to learning and teaching (TDA, 2008d; UCET, 2008b; Wylie, 2008; Baker, 2009; Robertson, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) and this is a recurrent theme, which will be examined further in the conclusion.

Finally, one Dean was particularly concerned that schools/ head teachers were showing very little interest in the MTL. However,

this was not surprising as there was minimal consultation with head teachers regarding what they wanted, which should be a lesson learnt for any future initiative. These findings are supported by the researcher's own experience that recruitment of participants and SBCs was poor in the West Midlands, just weeks prior to the start date to deliver the MTL. These findings were also supported by other HEIs across England (Maddern, 2009b). Some head teachers had also barred their teachers from undertaking the MTL (Maddern, 2010d, e), although it had been insisted that those wishing to study for the MTL would be entitled to do so (TDA, 2008a). On the contrary, Holley (2009; 2010) believed that head teachers and teachers were very interested in the MTL and considered it would have a powerful impact on individuals and the school, but this was not based on research or widespread consultation. The NASUWT also declared that teachers were interested in the programme (Hoare, 2010b), but this also appeared to have no foundation. Nevertheless, 2,182 NQTs started the MTL (Maddern, 2010e), which shows some interest but is not a ringing endorsement of the programme. This Dean's comments were influenced by a preliminary meeting set up by some HEIs in the West Midlands to give information regarding the MTL and to engage with schools as partners. The event was very poorly-attended by schools, which was a real indicator that there was a lack of interest in the MTL by schools, despite the views of the TDA and NASUWT above. The poor attendance was extremely disappointing and concerning for the HEIs, as the MTL clearly needed the full support of schools and head teachers if it was to establish itself and especially more so, now that funding has been withdrawn. The importance of head teachers was acknowledged by this Dean, which was an issue also highlighted by McAteer *et al* (2010), who stressed the essential role of the head teacher in the process as the person who oversees the school budget. The lack of interest shown in M level study by schools/ head teachers is also a recurrent theme in this research. However, the TDA took steps to

address this by an extensive marketing campaign to raise awareness and by encouraging former Training Schools to become involved in the MTL, which was potentially an effective strategy given their remit for accredited professional development and in terms of their ‘cultural support’ (Kwakman 2003, in Simkins, 2009). Training Schools were funded by the TDA under the former administration and had a broad remit for ITT and CPD. However, they ceased to exist in favour of Teaching Schools from September 2011 which have a wider remit and are funded by the NCSL under the new government (DfE, 2010).

The next section of this chapter now moves from HEI perspectives to consider NQT perspectives, as the main target cohort of participants.

(ii) NQT perspectives regarding the move towards the MTL

NQTs who participated in the focus group took a positive stance regarding aspirations for a masters level profession, in principle. However, details regarding the MTL caused concern and NQTs were extremely critical of the programme. Firstly, the perceived positive aspects are discussed, followed by the perceived negative aspects. Also, it must be reiterated that the focus group took place in the year prior to the launch of the MTL, when plans were still being developed. Also, it must be acknowledged that these NQTs were employed in a Training School and had the advantage of working in a school with a good ethos of and support for professional development. Therefore, it is suggested that their criticisms of the MTL may be all the more pertinent.

The positive perspectives which emerged regarding the MTL were: (i) it is fully-funded, (ii) it shows dedication to one’s career, and (iii) it is a good qualification for teachers to have. The issue of

funding was also greeted favourably by UCET (2008b) and the NASUWT (Hoare, 2010b). Funding was one of only three positive aspects for these NQTs and this may mean that the lack of funding will now dissuade many teachers from undertaking M level study and, coupled with large increases in undergraduate fees, this may mean that many English students are too indebted to afford a postgraduate education. It is also interesting to find that these NQTs saw the MTL as demonstrating dedication to one's career, although dedication to one's career is not something new brought about by the MTL. These findings are consistent with McAteer *et al* (2010) who assert that undertaking the MTL shows the motivation to improve the learning of children and young people. Finally, these NQTs obviously considered the MTL to be a credible and valuable qualification, which is important as credibility of the MTL was an original concern by UCET (Milne, 2008), which urged the former government to ensure the MTL was truly at masters level. Also, it is suggested that the withdrawal of funding will now diminish the credibility of the MTL substantially.

The negative aspects of the MTL, as perceived by the NQTs, were: (i) additional workload in an already busy induction period, (ii) NQT year is not an appropriate time to start the MTL, (iii) it may encourage NQTs and RQTs to leave the profession, (iv) focussing on planning and teaching is more important for NQTs than gaining the MTL, (v) time allocated to NQTs to undertake the MTL will take them out of the classroom at a critical time in their learning, (vi) impact on work-life balance, (vii) NQTs are mostly young and should not have this added pressure, (viii) teaching salary is insufficient to place the additional workload of the MTL onto teachers, (ix) scepticism that schools would allow NQTs time out of the classroom, (x) impact of subject-specific elements on primary school teachers, who are generalists, (xi) schools are not particularly interested, (xii) no pay-incentive, (xiii) preference towards a masters degree in their own subject area, (xiv)

government trends change regularly, (xv) they made the decision to become a teacher, not a student, (xvi) teachers of subject areas in which essay-writing did not form a major part of their bachelor's degree may be disadvantaged, (xvii) consequences of failing, and (xviii) waste of government money, which may be better spent elsewhere to support teaching.

Overall, it must be acknowledged that half of the above concerns about the MTL were particularly around NQTs as the target cohort and workload. There is conflicting literature regarding NQTs as the target cohort (Hilborne, 2007; Sewell, 2008; TDA, 2008a, b, c; *The Teacher*, 2009a; Bangs, 2010; Hoare, 2010b; Maddern, 2010d, e; McAteer *et al*, 2010; Roberts, 2010; www.teachers.tv/videos/38170) and also conflicting literature regarding workload (TDA, 2008a; UCET, 2008b; Holley, 2010; Maddern, 2010d, e; Roberts, 2010). However, these findings reinforce the position that NQTs are not the best target cohort for M level PD and reinforce concerns regarding the additional workload for NQTs and RQTs.

A typical barrier cited for not engaging in activities is time. For example, these NQTs were concerned about the work-life balance and the potential disruption to family and friendships. These findings support Maslow's research (1943) that before people can operate at a higher level they must have their more basic needs met. These concerns also relate to the NQTs' perceived 'emotional cost' (see Crawford, 2007) and it would appear that they would have decided against undertaking the MTL due to this. The findings concur with Crawford (2007), who found that decision-making is often 'emotion-weighted' and emerges as a result of self-awareness. In this case, these NQTs' responses revealed that they were fully aware of the professional demands of the induction period – especially as the focus group was undertaken at the end of the academic year and at the end of induction - and the 'emotional

cost' involved in assuming additional academic work. Again, as demonstrated by the H level PGCE cohort, professional practice and meeting statutory core professional requirements of induction were more important for NQTs than academic study.

Concerns around the target cohort of NQTs and workload were also raised by the Deans as their prime concerns and have been discussed above. The impact of subject-specific elements on primary school teachers, who are generalists, and the lack of interest shown by schools and head teachers were also raised by the Deans and have also been discussed.

Concerns expressed by NQTs that there would be no pay-incentive for those completing the MTL compares to a certain extent with Revell (2005), who generally advocated pay incentives for those with masters degrees, but as a requirement to move onto the upper pay scale. In addition, these secondary school NQTs expressed a preference towards a masters degree in their own subject area, rather than a Masters in Teaching and Learning. These findings match research that many secondary school teachers have strong subject allegiances (Smethem, 2007). However, it is acknowledged that primary school NQTs – as generalists - may have responded differently. Another negative aspect for NQTs was that they perceived government trends changed regularly and were sceptical of starting a programme, which may not exist or may not be *de rigueur* in a few years. Their perceptions concur with research by Chapman and Gunter (2009), who outlined the whirlwind of interventions, strategies, ideological shifts and policies launched since New Labour came to power in 1997 and have been proved true to a certain extent again by the new government's changes to education within its first two years in office and the withdrawal of funding from the MTL. Also, the reason that they had decided to become a teacher and not a student may be linked to Browne-Ferrigno's (2003)

research that there is often confusion when there is a duality of identity. Finally, findings that teachers of subject areas in which essay-writing did not form a major part of their bachelor's degree may be disadvantaged in writing at M level are supported by Graham-Matheson's research (2010), but disputed by Jackson's research (2009). Although these studies relate to M level ITT, it is considered that this equally applies to M level PD, particularly regarding NQTs. It is also suggested that these findings add to the knowledge base that teachers of subject areas in which essay-writing did not form a major part of their bachelor's degrees are disadvantaged in M level PD for teachers, since the subject of education may not align well with the content and assessment methods of their bachelor's degrees.

The remaining aspects – points 17 and 18 - were not represented in the literature. However, it is not surprising to find that NQTs were concerned about failing the MTL, as this is a particularly important stage in their careers when they must meet statutory induction requirements in order to continue teaching in maintained schools (*The Teacher*, 2009b). Also, it is not surprising to find that NQTs were concerned about the waste of public money, as the focus group was interviewed in July 2009 - during the peak of the recession. It is especially interesting to note the NQT perspectives regarding government change and the spending of public money, as most of these NQTs were young teachers and had first-hand experience of the many changes and initiatives in education as pupils, students, trainee teachers and now NQTs. Jones (2010) set out the climate for professional development in difficult economic times as having three elements (as outlined in Chapter 3): (i) the *political* element, (ii) the *professional* element, and (iii) the *pragmatic* alternative. Jones (2010) concluded that it is the 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980, in Jones, 2010) – ie. teachers – who will actually determine what will happen in PD in pragmatic terms. Therefore, it is

suggested that teachers will determine the move to the M level profession and the fate of the MTL ultimately overall, as they do with many other initiatives. This generation of NQTs had obviously seen enormous change and shifts in education under ‘New Labour’ and a coalition government.

Overall, these remaining issues appear to contradict the NQT perceptions outlined above regarding aspirations for the M level profession. NQTs had been in favour of a masters level profession, in principle. However, when these matters were applied more directly to the MTL and to NQTs as the target cohort, their perceptions altered significantly. Also, it is important to stress that these were the perceptions of NQTs in one secondary school, which were collected several months before the MTL was launched.

(iii) The MTL and other masters degrees: Advantages and disadvantages

Following on from the discussion, table 6.4 has been produced to compare the MTL with other masters degrees.

Table 6.4: The MTL and other masters degrees: Advantages and disadvantages

	Advantages	Disadvantages
MTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to be a personalised programme for teachers, building on ITT, based on the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interim awards. • Prescribed content. • Target cohort of NQTs and newly-appointed HoDs in

	<p>Professional Standards and with a school-based coach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully-funded (for the first cohort only, now that funding has been withdrawn). • Partnerships: HEI-school and HEI-HEI. 	<p>‘challenge schools’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with the M level PGCE could only transfer 30 M level credits.
<p>Other masters degrees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim awards. • Students can choose their own content regarding which modules to study and whether to study for a generic or specialist route eg MA Education, MA Education (Learning and Teaching), MA Education (Leadership and Management), MA Education (SEN). • Students can choose to study a subject-specific masters degree. • Those with the M level PGCE can usually transfer 60 M level credits towards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often designed to meet the professional development needs of a more generic body of educational practitioners.

	a masters degree.	
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Table 6.4 shows the range of advantages and disadvantages of the MTL and other masters degrees. However, the fully-funded nature of the MTL was seen as the biggest advantage by NQTs and now that funding has been withdrawn this may have serious consequences for future uptake of the MTL considering the disadvantages, which could also have implications for other masters provision.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings in relation to the literature and shown that many findings are supported by literature, but also that much new knowledge has emerged. Appropriate aspects of this discussion chapter will be taken forward to the conclusion, in order to make recommendations and to frame the contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The main purposes of this chapter are to make recommendations, suggest further research within the context of this study and to frame the contribution to knowledge. Section two summarises the findings for research question 1, makes recommendations and suggests further research needed. Section three summarises the findings for research question 2, makes recommendations and suggests further research to be done. Section four highlights the contribution to knowledge.

7.2 Research Question 1

Research Question 1a: What was the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE in each HEI?

The international and national demands of the Bologna Process (1999) and FHEQ were ‘givens’ imposed on HEIs and the second most common reason for introducing the M level PGCE. However, this research indicates that ITT providers also superimposed their own rationale for introducing the M level PGCE. In particular, competing with other providers and providing trainees with access to the opportunity to study at M level were the first and third most common reasons given respectively for introducing the M level PGCE. Competing with other providers reflects the high levels of competition between providers and may also reflect the sense of chaos in the ITT sector. The desire to offer trainees further opportunities through academic progression may also provide trainees with greater choice, a key concept to emerge from the literature review and findings, which may lead to a more

meaningful engagement on programmes (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). However, with choice it is also suggested that trainees may feel a sense of confusion regarding a duality of identity (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003), if they assume additional M level work (within a student identity) whilst undertaking professional practice (within a teacher identity).

Research Question 1b: How were the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT perceived by (i) HEIs, and (ii) trainee teachers?

Several positive and negative perspectives emerged and are summarised in table 6.1 (in Chapter 6) to show the overall perspectives regarding the M level PGCE and M level work within ITT. This summary could be used by providers, regardless of which PGCE model they are using (ie. operating the PGCE at H or M level or operating within a ‘mixed economy’), to re-consider the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT and reflect further on the PGCE model chosen. This could then further enhance programmes, student satisfaction and the student experience, by attempting to address and/ or minimise the negative aspects, but also exploiting the positive aspects. For example, student satisfaction could be enhanced, by considering the important element of choice and ensuring trainees do not feel confusion regarding their identity when undertaking programmes which are both academic and professional. Furthermore, the summary in table 6.1 (in Chapter 6) could also be used by providers to support retention and the synthesis of theory with practice.

A comparison has also been produced regarding the operation of the M level PGCE and both awards (see table 6.2 in Chapter 6), since existing literature has not considered different PGCE models and not fully considered the M level PGCE when offered

alongside its H level equivalent, although this is a popular model adopted by many providers. This is an important issue which has not been researched to-date and could be used by providers to reconsider their PGCE model and again further improve student satisfaction, the student experience and retention, by attempting to address and minimise the disadvantages inherent in different models and also to exploit the advantages of different models.

7.2.1 Recommendations

General recommendations

From the findings and literature it is recommended that: (i) senior leaders in HEIs need to consider the additional work for trainees when both PGCE awards are offered and the additional workload for tutors teaching across different academic levels, (ii) the PGCE should be retained as the predominant ITT route and the benefits of M level work highlighted, and (iii) policymakers need to provide a new direction for NQT induction, taking into account the differing routes into the profession. These recommendations are discussed below.

Firstly, this research has found that in HEIs operating both PGCE awards trainees felt they had a small amount of additional work and tutors also felt they had an additional workload, contributing to the research agenda in these areas. Literature is contradictory regarding trainees' workload and largely considers the M level PGCE *per se* (Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008; Domaille, 2008, in Sewell, 2008), but these findings indicate that the M level PGCE brings a small amount of additional work for trainees where both awards operate. Workload is an important issue for trainees, as PGCE programmes are notoriously busy (Lawes, 2003). Therefore, senior leaders should consider validation

proposals very carefully with students' workload in mind and take measures to ensure that trainees are not working harder, in addition to working at a higher level, as this may have adverse implications for progress and retention, for example. However, literature supports the findings regarding the additional workload created for tutors by the M level PGCE (Graham-Matheson, 2010). This is important, as workload is often a contentious issue for academics, especially if they are to meet their contractual duties for teaching and research outcomes, and have an appropriate work-life balance. Some senior leaders actively encourage tutors to work across the range of academic levels to create flexibility and to broaden the expertise and experience of staff. However, they also need to consider the additional workload experienced by staff working at different levels and the type of workload allocation which should be applied to counter-balance this. Also, senior leaders need to consider the additional workload which ITT tutors experience in particular, due to having a professional role and an academic role – ie. ITT tutors undertake school-based observations and assess against the Professional Standards for QTS, in addition to assessing at the academic levels of 6 and/ or 7 as part of a PGCE. This research shows that the additional workload of teaching at different academic levels in addition to the ITT tutors' professional role has exacerbated this situation. Furthermore, senior leaders should consider the benefits to their institution of tutors working at a range of levels (and obviously reward them for this in their workload allocation), such as a new tranche of HE tutors being able to broaden their experience and expertise and thereby increasing the flexibility and capacity of university education departments and strengthening these departments, due to HE ITT tutors now working at M level. Nevertheless, these findings also indicate staff enjoyment regarding teaching at different academic levels – a new dimension which may be positive for staff motivation, retention and career progression, and should also be

considered by senior leaders. This may also be applicable in other sectors, such as schools and further education (FE) colleges.

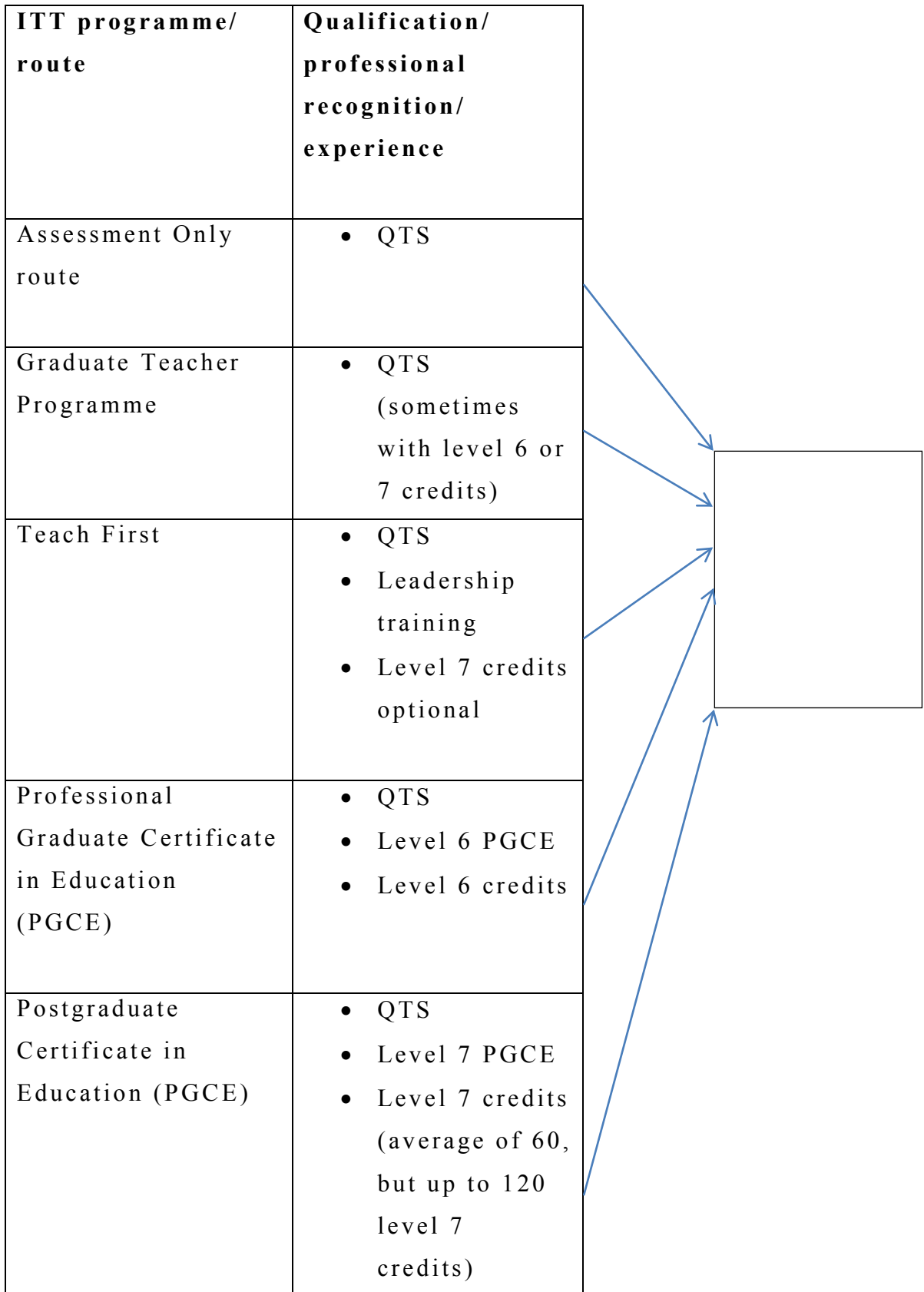
Rhodes *et al* (2007) found ‘intellectual challenge’ to be a significant facet in HE lecturers’ job satisfaction, but this research suggests that intellectual challenge may also be broken down into different elements, such as the enjoyment of teaching across a range of academic levels.

Secondly, the findings and literature highlight that the PGCE – at both levels - is very successful with high levels of student satisfaction and particularly successful when led by HEIs (Ofsted, 2010). Therefore, it is recommended that the PGCE should be retained as the predominant ITT route, rather than moving to QTS only routes, due to issues regarding student satisfaction, quality and also transferability. Retaining the PGCE would ensure HE involvement in ITT and maintain robust quality assurance and enhancement, as the PGCE is an academic award which must be validated by an HEI. However, the new government’s policy to shift ITT from HEIs into schools will make this increasingly difficult, so it is suggested that HEIs also highlight the benefits of M level ITT, as this could potentially be the last hook HEIs have in the sector. HEIs could also use the M level PGCE as a unique selling point, reinforcing the case for HE-led ITT, maintaining aspirations for a masters level teaching profession by emphasising lifelong learning and encouraging the progression from the M level PGCE to a full masters qualification.

Finally, policymakers need to provide a new direction for NQT induction, taking into account the differing routes into the profession. Figure 7.1 below has been adapted from table 2.3 (in Chapter 2), which shows the range of routes/ ITT programmes now being undertaken in England, to highlight that although there are now several different routes/ ITT programmes, NQT induction

has largely remained the same in schools and is a one-size-fits-all model which does not take into account the huge variances in NQTs' prior experience and qualifications. However, the MTL was designed to build on ITT and take account of the NQT's route into teaching (McAteer *et al*, 2010). Therefore, those undertaking the MTL did have some experience of personalised and differentiated learning alongside induction, but this is no longer the case now that funding has been withdrawn. Consequently, the implications of the different ITT programmes and routes mean that policymakers need to review the induction period in light of these different ITT programmes/ routes now operating and provide schools and LAs (or their replacement with overall responsibility for the statutory induction period) with a new direction, ensuring that induction is differentiated to support and extend all NQTs appropriately. Differentiation and personalised learning have long been implemented in schools to support and extend pupils' learning, but there is very little evidence of this for teachers as part of induction or subsequent PD. This is now long overdue and the induction period, in particular, needs to be reviewed and amendments made to ensure that there is now real progression from ITT to induction so that all NQTs get off to the best start, in order to maximise children's learning. This would obviously also model and put into practice the differentiation and personalised learning strategies which the teaching profession implements as being key to supporting and extending pupils' learning and would be an effective strategy to support and extend NQTs' professional learning.

Figure 7.1: The ‘progression’ from ITT programmes/ routes to NQT induction



Further recommended information required

Findings and literature recommend that further information is required regarding both PGCE awards for prospective trainee teachers, trainee teachers and schools. These recommendations are discussed below.

Firstly, this research demonstrates that further clarification and guidance is needed for prospective trainees and trainees regarding the level(s) at which the PGCE is offered and what this means in practice. However, there may be limitations here regarding a consistent message across ITT providers and a bias towards the award(s) the provider has decided to offer and where the provider's bias lies when both awards are offered. For example, it is to be expected that HE ITT providers will lean towards the M level PGCE as HEIs will benefit from recruiting their trainees to their masters degrees thereafter, whereas school-led providers do not have this self-interest in M level study. Nevertheless, this may be interpreted not just as self-interest on the part of HEIs, but could demonstrate their on-going commitment to supporting former trainees to improve as teachers, to foster lifelong learning and to support overall school improvement via teachers' PD.

Secondly, findings and literature show that schools need to be better informed about both PGCE awards and about the M level PGCE especially, as there is still much to be done to fully embed M level work across the programme in schools, in particular. Furthermore, these findings suggest that the changing ITT landscape needs to be explained to schools, as there is already confusion, and schools have become accustomed to a predominantly PGCE-centred form of ITT in recent decades. However, there are limitations here as there is no natural route by which this information could be conveyed. The TA only has a remit for QTS and not for academic awards. Therefore, the best

organisations to convey this would be ITT providers, but as shown in the recommendation above, there are limitations with this as providers may show bias towards the award(s) they offer.

Recommended actions for ITT providers

Findings and literature recommend that providers: (i) take steps to raise the profile of and protect the PGCE, in the current climate of change, and seek to manage integration accordingly, (ii) seek to manage integration carefully for trainees, especially where there are both PGCE awards, (iii) may wish to reflect on the element of informed, personal choice and offer both PGCE awards, (iv) review criteria for eligibility to the M level PGCE, when both awards are offered, (v) give further guidance for trainees to support them in bridging the gap from H level to M level study and understanding how to use theory to benefit practice, and (vi) offer non-arts graduates additional support in writing at M level. These recommendations are discussed below.

Firstly, this research and literature demonstrate that trainees are more focused on the professional award of QTS than the academic qualification of the PGCE. Therefore, it would be helpful to providers to take steps to raise the profile of and protect the PGCE in the current climate of change. However, there are limitations here, as it is the professional award of QTS which is essential to enter teaching rather than the academic qualification of the PGCE. This is also reinforced by Ofsted which only inspects how well providers prepare trainees to meet the Standards for QTS. Raising the profile of the PGCE will be difficult at a time when the government is moving ITT funding to schools in order to encourage prospective trainees to undertake QTS only routes. Nevertheless, it is suggested that ITT providers highlight the benefits of the PGCE to prospective trainees and

emphasise that those with the M level PGCE also usually have one-third of a masters degree, in effect, and that the PGCE is a transferable qualification. Also, as trainees are more focused on the professional award of QTS than the academic qualification of the PGCE, it is recommended that providers focus on a new sphere of professional integration to support retention, which adds to the research agenda and is discussed in the contribution to knowledge section.

Secondly, research and literature showed feelings of divisiveness regarding the two PGCEs, demonstrating that the H level PGCE and M level PGCE may not have been well-integrated when operating alongside each other. Therefore, it is suggested that providers offering both awards particularly need to seek to manage integration carefully, by employing strategies to minimize potential feelings of divisiveness and reducing the additional workload for trainees, while capitalising on the opportunities of the two awards, such as differentiated support for trainees. This is a challenge, as providers need to recruit and retain trainees, but they also want them to have a positive experience and be fully integrated within the programme. In addition, more than ever before an excellent student experience will become crucial due to higher PGCE fees.

Thirdly, it is recommended from these findings of trainees' satisfaction levels that providers may wish to reflect on offering both PGCE awards so that trainees have some choice, especially as the PGCE is an academic award and a notoriously demanding professional programme and as choice was deemed a very positive aspect by trainees in HEI 1. The PGCE would then be offered in the most favourable way to support trainees to achieve the high academic and professional demands. Also, it is obviously unknown if potential applicants have been deterred from ITT due to the M level only PGCE operating in many providers, but, if so,

offering both PGCE awards may have benefits to ITT recruitment and subsequent retention. However, providers will need to base their decision on the model most suited to their student intake, but student satisfaction is closely linked to choice in these findings and an important issue, which will become increasingly important as PGCE fees rise and needs thorough consideration. Also, literature shows choice to be key to engagement in programmes (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Although prospective trainees can choose which ITT programme to undertake, there is little choice in the content of ITT programmes due to the prescriptive nature of the Professional Standards for QTS and due to Ofsted only inspecting how well providers prepare trainees to meet these Standards. Therefore, it is recommended that providers should seek to inject choice where possible to enhance trainees' experience, which could be by allowing them the choice regarding the level at which to take the PGCE. However, many providers have already decided to offer the M level only PGCE or just one mode of ITT, giving trainees no choice. Although prospective trainees can obviously choose which provider to apply to and which programme to undertake, literature has shown that they are often confused about the different PGCE awards and the different ITT programmes available. Also, applicants may just choose a provider which is geographically convenient, for example, rather than a particular PGCE award/ ITT programme. However, under current ITT reforms, trainees may increasingly opt for QTS only routes rather than the PGCE, which may subsequently disappear and further hinder aspirations for an M level teaching profession. Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that QTS only is often not transferable to other countries. The message regarding choice is also obviously important for the research agenda within ITT and at a more general level for HEIs overall and for all concerned with ITT and teachers' PD.

It is also recommended from the research that providers offering both awards need to review criteria for eligibility to the M level PGCE. It is suggested that trainees' overall progress is considered but without ignoring the important fact that admissions criteria for other M level programmes are not based on professional competency, so HE ITT providers may be excluding some very academically able trainees from M level study if their professional practice is not yet deemed satisfactory. However, proficiency in the classroom and academic ability are not inextricable.

In addition, findings and literature indicate that providers need to give further support and guidance to enable trainees to bridge the gap from H level to M level study (for those undertaking M level work in ITT) and to understand how they can more explicitly use theory to benefit practice. Links need to be made more explicit to trainees and also to their SBMs for trainees to gain maximum benefit from the M level PGCE, so that M level work is embedded in ITT and permeates throughout the programme. From these findings it is recommended that providers review the timing of M level assignments and take steps to embed and integrate M level work across the programme, so that it has maximum benefits to practice. If this could be achieved M level work would not only be fully integrated, but also have the potential to be truly transformative, by ensuring research-informed practice. However, most teachers do not have masters degrees themselves (Revell, 2005; UCET, 2008b) and some ITT tutors, including those in HEIs, do not have masters degrees either which may mean that the links between H and M level are not being fully exploited and/ or the progression to M level not being sufficiently promoted/ valued. Therefore, it might be helpful to encourage and support ITT tutors (and teachers, particularly those who are SBMs) without M level qualifications to complete masters degrees and to work across different academic levels, in order to

best support and extend the progress of all trainees. Or perhaps a different student experience is needed, such as a truly andragogic approach, to improve support for these adult learners.

Alternatively, perhaps a truly blended learning approach needs to be adopted in ITT, as blended learning can effectively facilitate the synthesis of theory with practice, in order to develop practice within the context (Simkins, 2009). This issue adds to the research agenda and is discussed further in the contribution to knowledge section.

Finally, this research indicates that writing at M level is difficult for some trainees with little experience of essay-writing in their bachelor's degrees, although literature is divided regarding this (Jackson, 2009; Graham-Matheson, 2010). Therefore, it is suggested that these findings have contributed to knowledge regarding this issue and it is recommended that providers may find it beneficial to target non-arts graduates for additional support in M level work, so that they are not at a disadvantage due to the very different nature of assessment from their bachelor's degrees and due to the ITT subject of education and the associated forms of assessment aligning less well with non-arts subjects. However, providers should also be sensitive to this issue by not excluding other trainees who might also benefit from this support and by personalising support appropriately, as some trainees from non-arts subjects will obviously not need this support anyway.

Further recommended research

Firstly, it is suggested that further research to establish numbers of trainees who have undertaken and are undertaking the M level PGCE would be beneficial, so that an overall picture can emerge regarding which PGCE award has become the norm. This would

be useful to schools, HEIs, policymakers and ITT providers to ascertain the extent to which NQTs are entering the profession with M level credits and the subsequent implications for induction and EPD arrangements. It would also indicate the extent to which initial aspirations have moved closer towards a masters level teaching profession and indicate the value providers and trainees are placing on M level study.

Findings and literature also suggest that further research is needed to establish the impact of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT concerning: (i) teachers post-qualification, (ii) ITT providers, (iii) the uptake of NQTs taking masters degrees, and (iv) the primary phase. Firstly, further investigation would be helpful among teachers who undertook the M level PGCE to establish its impact. Findings and literature show that trainees often question the benefits of theory to practice, so it would be helpful to establish from teachers who undertook the M level PGCE their perceptions post-qualification. For example, was it transformative? Did it have a deep and lasting impact on learning and teaching? Were there any correlations with subsequent career progression? This research would be beneficial to HEI recruitment strategies for M level ITT and PD and would add to the research agenda regarding the impact of M level study, as existing literature is contradictory. This may also add to the research agenda regarding talent recruitment within the field of leadership and management. Secondly, further investigation would be helpful across ITT providers offering the M level PGCE to establish its impact. Findings and literature show that the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT have improved programmes and trainees' skills, for example. Further research could investigate other areas of impact, such as whether the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT enabled providers to deal better with Ofsted and the inspection process. Thirdly, further research would be useful to establish if the M level PGCE has had a wider

impact on the uptake of NQTs taking masters degrees. If so, this would be beneficial to HEI recruitment strategies to M level programmes but may also have positive messages regarding what teachers consider to be the benefits of M level PD. Findings and further data collected from HEI 2 (see figure 6.2 in Chapter 6) suggest that the M level PGCE may have had a positive impact on the uptake of NQTs taking masters degrees. This research could then be used by HEIs to show a demonstrable advantage of continued HE involvement in teachers' professional development. Finally, it is suggested that further research regarding the same issues from the perspectives of ITT tutors and trainees in the primary phase would be beneficial, in order to make comparisons with perspectives from the secondary phase. This links with literature considering the M level PGCE to be "particularly important for primary trainees, who need the confidence and skills to question policies and initiatives" (Graham-Matheson 2010, p. 7). Therefore, there may be some differences between the primary and secondary phases and potentially different advantages and disadvantages of M level study.

Finally, further research is needed around the issue of 'M-levelness' in ITT. In particular, research could focus on the different QAA (2008) articulations of level 7 qualifications, the role of HEIs regarding the level 7 PGCE and how schools understand it (see section 2.4.1 in Chapter 2).

7.3 Research Question 2

Research Question 2a: What was the rationale for aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL?

The former government imposed the rationale for aspirations towards a masters level profession - in order to improve

standards, the status of the profession, NQT induction and EPD (DCSF, 2007) and made it clear that it considered that there was a need for a new qualification – the MTL - to specifically focus on teachers’ needs and improving learning and teaching in the classroom (DCSF, 2008). Therefore, the MTL became the vehicle through which to achieve a masters level teaching profession. The rationale for a masters level profession was highly commendable, as it is aspirational and could be a much-needed key driver to make these improvements, but it was not based on consultation with teachers. However, now that the new government has withdrawn funding for the MTL, a new direction needs to be provided regarding how these improvements will now be realised. Although the former government’s rationale for the M level profession and the MTL were imposed on schools and HEIs, findings from this research and literature also show a further superimposed rationale for the M level profession. It is suggested from the findings and literature that there were also wider factors which influenced aspirations for a masters level profession: (i) the national trend for postgraduate study, and (ii) recognition of the complex nature of teaching and the importance of sustained professional development for teachers.

Research Question 2b: How were aspirations for a masters level teaching profession perceived by (i) HEIs, and (ii) NQTs?

In principle, both HEIs and NQTs were in favour of a masters level teaching profession. Table 6.3 (in Chapter 6) was produced to contribute to and advance current knowledge by summarising HEI and NQT perspectives regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession. HEIs could use these findings to reconsider their masters programmes and masters ‘offer’ to teachers and thereby improve recruitment and retention, student satisfaction and the student experience, by attempting to address

and minimise the perceived disadvantages, but also to exploit the advantages a masters level teaching profession could bring.

Research Question 2c: How was the move to the MTL perceived by (i) HEIs, and (ii) NQTs?

HEIs were in favour of the MTL in principle, although many negative aspects emerged. HEIs stressed the additional workload for teachers and the target cohort of NQTs and HoDs from ‘challenge schools’ as the most important negative aspects. However, although NQTs had been in favour of a masters level teaching profession in principle, they were very critical of the MTL, mainly due to NQTs as the target cohort and the additional workload alongside induction. Furthermore, although the aim of this research was not to compare the MTL with other masters degrees, this comparison was considered helpful to advance the research agenda, particularly as the former government was advocating the MTL so forcefully, and to draw out messages for future interventions regarding M level study and PD for teachers. Consequently, table 6.4 was produced to compare the MTL with other masters degrees from the findings and literature, which could be used by HEIs to re-consider their masters programmes and M level portfolio. As a result, further improvements may be made regarding recruitment and retention, student satisfaction and the student experience, by attempting to address and minimise the perceived disadvantages of different programmes, but also to exploit further the advantages different programmes bring.

7.3.1 Recommendations

Findings and literature recommend that: (i) HEIs need to reflect on integrating the Professional Standards into M level programmes designed for teachers and, overall, other PD activities need to ensure professional integration, (ii) national initiatives need to be fully considered and key stakeholders fully consulted, (iii) teachers should choose PD activities for themselves, with guidance from others, (iv) HEIs need to consider alternative recruitment strategies for masters degrees in education, and (v) the role of the SBC needs to be considered further. These recommendations are discussed below.

Firstly, NQTs were more focused on professional practice and meeting induction requirements than on M level study and one of the main differences of the MTL is the integration of Professional Standards. Therefore, it is suggested that HEIs need to reflect on the important aspect of professional practice to teachers and consider the merits of integrating the Standards into M level programmes to support teachers in meeting their professional requirements. It is also suggested that professional integration may be more important to NQTs than academic study, so a different type of PD may be more beneficial for some. This is discussed further in the contribution to knowledge section.

Secondly, findings and literature highlight that national initiatives need to be fully considered to ensure their financial sustainability and success. Full consultation with key stakeholders is necessary before launching initiatives, so that key stakeholders can take some ownership and help to shape them into an initiative/ programme which will be valuable to and undertaken by its intended participants.

Thirdly, findings and literature indicate that teachers should have ownership of their PD and the locus of control, which could be achieved by allowing them greater choice in their professional learning. It is recommended that teachers choose PD activities with guidance from more experienced colleagues who have responsibility for PD and a good understanding of school priorities.

Also, this research and literature demonstrated that the fully-funded nature of the MTL was considered to be positive, but now that there is limited access to funding for M level study by teachers HEIs need to consider alternative ways of recruiting to masters degrees in education. In particular, HEIs will need to look for strategies to combat the impact of the recent withdrawal of funding from the MTL (and the PPD programme) whilst still promoting aspirations for and the benefits of a masters level profession.

Finally, the findings and literature show that the role of the SBC needs to be considered further. Although this is no longer a priority with the potential demise of the MTL, this has general messages for the role of any SBM/ SBC for ITT/ PD programmes. It is recommended that a specific remit and role is needed for SBCs/ SBMs, encouraging them to engage with theory to further develop their mentees' practice. In particular, the SBC/ SBM could have a remit for coaching the mentee to connect theory with practice within the particular context of the school to ensure it is more meaningful and in order to move towards greater evidence-based and research-informed teaching as a strategy for individual and school improvement – see Figure 7.3 in the contribution to knowledge section. This could be helpful to the national priority of behaviour management, for example, as SBCs/ SBMs could be key to supporting mentees to engage with research regarding behaviour management/ developing positive

relationships/ the inextricable link between learning and teaching and behaviour management, whilst also having an in-depth understanding of the school context and ensure the link between theory and practice. In addition, SBCs/ SBMs need to have the right disposition, experience and ability and also to be fully trained, but, if chosen correctly, they could be key to unlocking difficulties in linking theory and practice and making a real contribution to improving learning and teaching.

Further recommended research

Findings indicate that further research would be beneficial in several areas regarding the legacy of calls for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL. Firstly, there could be an evaluation against the original, imposed rationale to review whether the former government's aspirations for the M level teaching profession and MTL have addressed these aims and had the desired impact, once the programme has been completed by the first and last fully-funded cohort. This would then indicate the legacy of the former government's aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the legacy of the MTL. In addition, this may provide lessons for future initiatives regarding PD for teachers and may provide the new government with a direction regarding high quality PD (and also ITT), to take forward school improvement. However, there are limitations here as the impact on learning and teaching, for example, is notoriously difficult to evaluate, hence the conflicting literature shown in this research regarding the benefits of M level study to practice. Also, masters level study will not in itself be the answer to raising pupils' attainment, as there are many interventions being successfully implemented across schools to improve standards and which may be more appropriate in different contexts. Context is extremely important and the ethos and leadership of the school, for

example, will also have an impact on learning and teaching. Secondly, the impact of the MTL on participants could be investigated once the first cohort has completed the qualification. For example, further investigation could be undertaken such as ascertaining if the MTL has improved learning and teaching, created any divisions within the profession or provided any links to career progression. In addition to investigating the impact of the MTL on participants, research could also be undertaken in a wider sense regarding the status of the programme alongside other masters degrees and numbers participating in the programme, in order to consider the legacy of the MTL and its wider impact on the teaching profession and on HEIs. Thirdly, further research could investigate which masters degrees are perceived as the most appropriate form of M level study for teachers (who have aspirations for study at this level), once the first cohort has completed the MTL, so that the MTL and other masters degrees can be compared and their value to teachers' PD and practice fully evaluated. Finally, further research could be undertaken to collect data from MTL providers, participants and SBCs from both primary and secondary phases, at the end of the programme, to gain an understanding of the perceptions of key stakeholders and to learn what has been successful and messages for further development of M level study. The former TDA committed to a review of the MTL, but it would be beneficial for HEIs to reflect on issues and implications for themselves, which should be helpful for all masters programmes regarding recruitment strategies, programme delivery and the learning experience for student-practitioners.

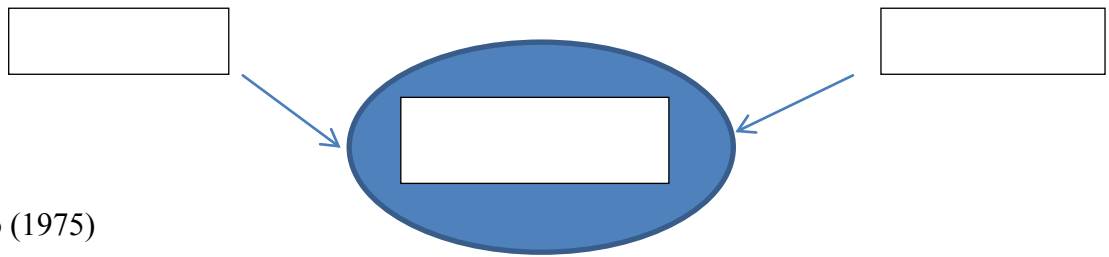
7.4 Contribution to knowledge

This section frames the contribution made to knowledge, which it is intended will be disseminated via future publications. Overall, recurrent themes across the study are discussed first, followed by other additional areas which have contributed to knowledge for each research question.

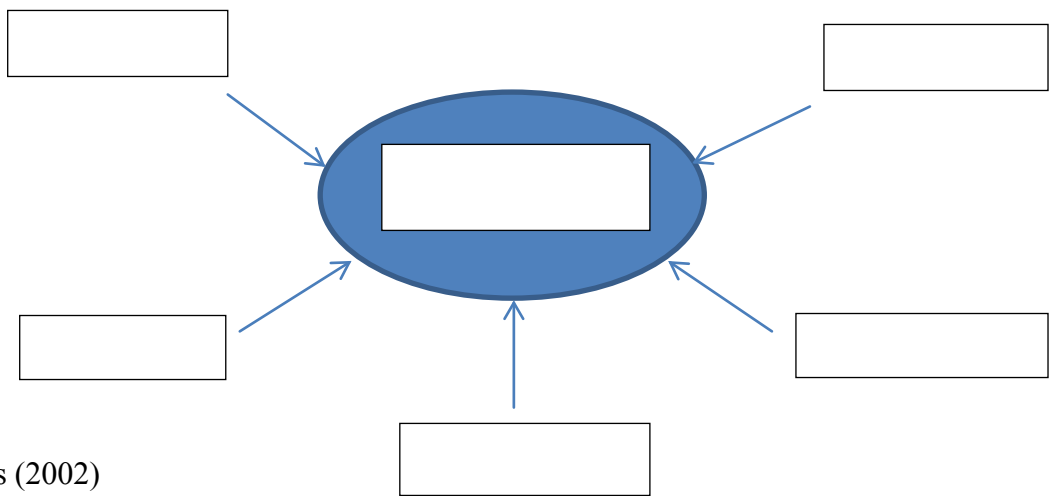
7.4.1 Overall, recurrent themes

Firstly, findings from both trainees and NQTs indicated that meeting the Professional Standards and statutory requirements of ITT and induction were more important to them than the academic awards of the M level PGCE and MTL. Therefore, it is suggested that existing models of student retention (Tinto, 1975; Thomas, 2002) focusing on spheres of integration may need to be re-considered to support retention for postgraduate early career teachers – ie. trainees, NQTs and RQTs. Figure 7.2 below shows these existing models of integration, which it is suggested best fit ‘typical’ undergraduate students, followed by a proposed re-contextualised model of integration for postgraduate early career teachers to advance understanding regarding integration within the context of ITT and induction/ EPD.

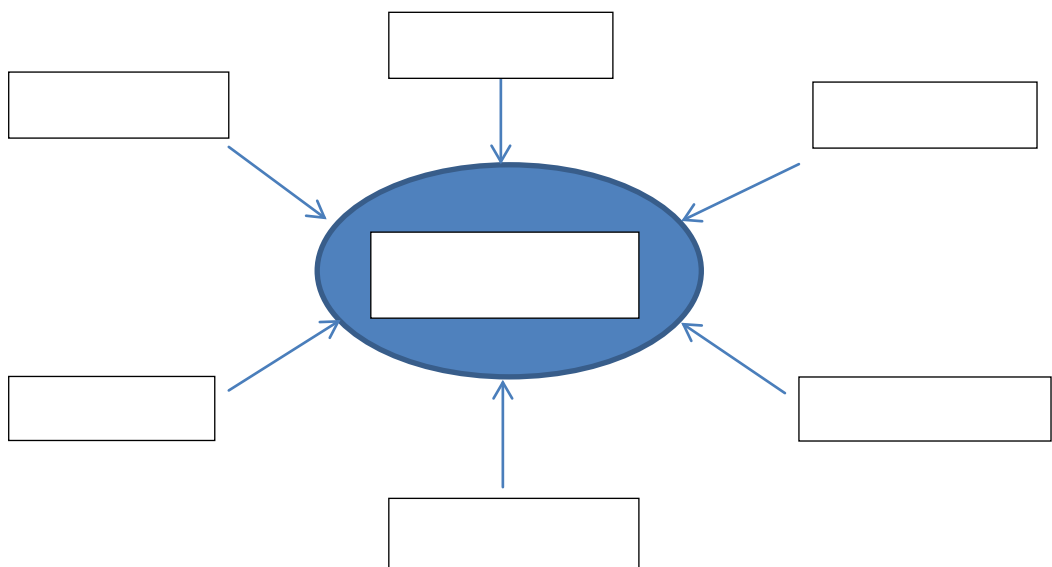
Figure 7.2: Spheres of integration



Tinto (1975)



Thomas (2002)



Spheres of integration within a postgraduate ITT context/ postgraduate PD context for early career teachers

The third model proposed supports the existing models of integration, but suggests that there should be a further sphere of professional integration for postgraduate early career teachers, as these findings demonstrated that many trainees and NQTs place the Professional Standards for QTS and statutory ITT and induction requirements above academic awards. Therefore, the professional sphere may be of prime importance regarding the retention of early career teachers, as they strive to achieve a professional identity (rather than a student identity) during ITT and induction and the general transition process in becoming a teacher. Therefore, identity transformation may inevitably depend on socialisation with the professional culture alongside or even above the other spheres of integration (Tinto, 1975; Thomas, 2002). Professional integration could be defined as the stage when teachers accept that they are succeeding within the professional context. This may be acquired via the support given to trainees and teachers to aid the transition process from student or career changer to qualified teacher, so that they can understand the type of teacher and professional they want to become and develop their own professional identity. This has implications for practice, such as more effective integrated roles between trainees/ teachers, their SBMs/ any SBC and the ITT provider/ HEI delivering M level programmes – this is discussed further below regarding links between theory and practice. Professional integration also has other implications for practice, such as supporting levels of student satisfaction on ITT courses and supporting levels of job satisfaction and retention for qualified teachers. Professional integration also has implications for the research agenda, indicating that M level study may need to be pushed back to more experienced teachers as some early career teachers find M level study somewhat premature and incompatible with practice, due to the professional demands of teaching particularly in the early years. This is in contrast with what seems to have become an almost accepted wisdom that

trainees and NQTs are ideal cohorts for M level study, as the majority have recently completed their bachelor's degrees and are in the habit of studying. However, this research shows that many trainees and NQTs felt strongly that it was more important to them to focus on professional practice than on academic awards in the ITT and induction stages, although they were positive about the benefits of M level study later once established in teaching. Professional integration may also have other implications for the research agenda, especially for those researching identity transformation, talent management and succession planning in the field of leadership and management, for example. As professional identity is based on self-efficacy, professional integration in ITT and EPD may be particularly important and link to future talent recruitment, management and retention. If early career teachers do not feel integrated professionally, this may have adverse implications for recruiting and retaining leadership talent in the future, which would exacerbate further the current leadership crisis in schools and hinder school improvement overall. This links to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and, in this context, it is suggested that early career teachers may not have the professional confidence or self-belief in terms of self-efficacy and self-esteem to reach their full potential of moving to a leadership position (self-actualization) if professional integration and a positive sense of professional identity are not fully developed (esteem). Consequently, some early career teachers may need more time and space to consolidate their professional practice in order to feel integrated professionally and grow into leadership roles, rather than the current tendency to 'fast-track' potential leaders into leadership roles as quickly as possible, when some may not be ready for this. Once again, this could lead to poor retention and also 'burnout', which ultimately hinder the profession. This may align with M level study – ie. early career teachers may need more time and space to consolidate their professional practice

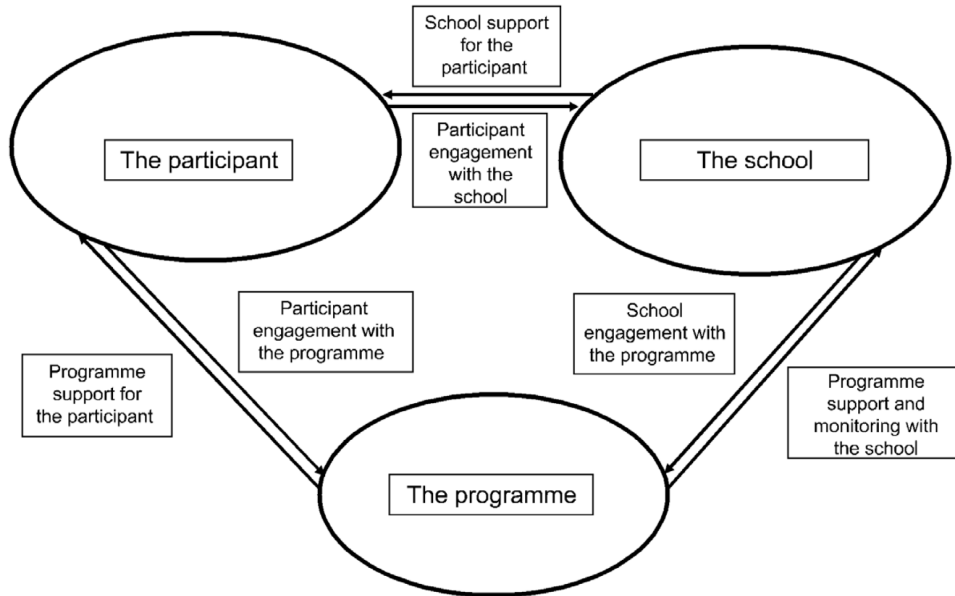
and grow into their professional roles, before assuming the additional academic challenge of M level study and also leadership positions – which could also lead to poor retention and burnout, adversely affecting the profession. Clearly, NQT induction and EPD still need to be improved, but M level study may not be the answer at this stage for many teachers, but rather an in-depth PD programme which is more professionally-focused around learning and teaching may better suit some early career teachers' needs, in a similar format to NCSL programmes (regarding leadership and management). Consequently, it is suggested that M level study may be more appropriate for more experienced teachers who feel integrated professionally and are ready to assume leadership and management roles, in order to support them with the demands in the next stage of their development. Furthermore, it is suggested that this also has implications for HEIs offering other professional programmes, such as nursing, and may also have implications for modes of PD in other professions.

Secondly, this research suggests that links between theory and practice are still problematic and it is suggested that effective blended learning is sometimes lacking. In ITT, the SBM is ideally placed to translate theory to practical application, but much work still needs to be done between ITT providers and SBMs to move forward in this way. This is also true of the SBC in some PD programmes. Also, due to the important role of the SBM/ SBC in linking theory with practice, it is suggested from this research that SBMs/ SBCs need to be selected carefully to ensure they possess the necessary values and qualities for the role.

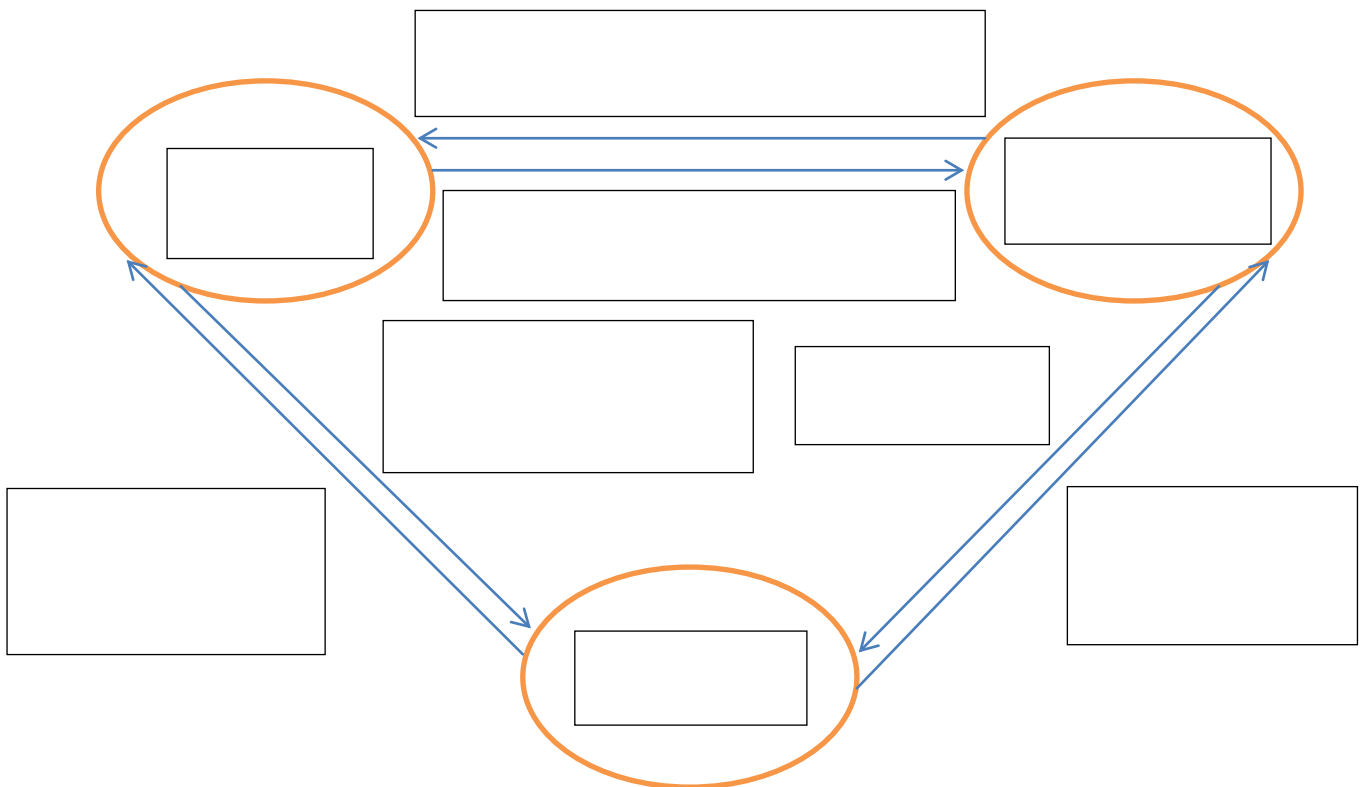
Appropriately selected SBMs/ SBCs with a remit for translating theory to PA could be key in unlocking the difficulties trainees and teachers face in this area and thereby start to make the next steps in improving learning and teaching in schools. Figure 7.3 below shows firstly Simkins' model (2009) of facets in NCSL

blended learning programmes and secondly an adaptation of this as a tentative re-contextualisation of this model to advance blended learning for ITT and PD purposes, in an attempt to break down the difficulties inherent in linking theory with practice.

Figure 7.3: Factors in NCSL blended learning programmes (Simkins, 2009) and an adaptation



Simkins (2009)

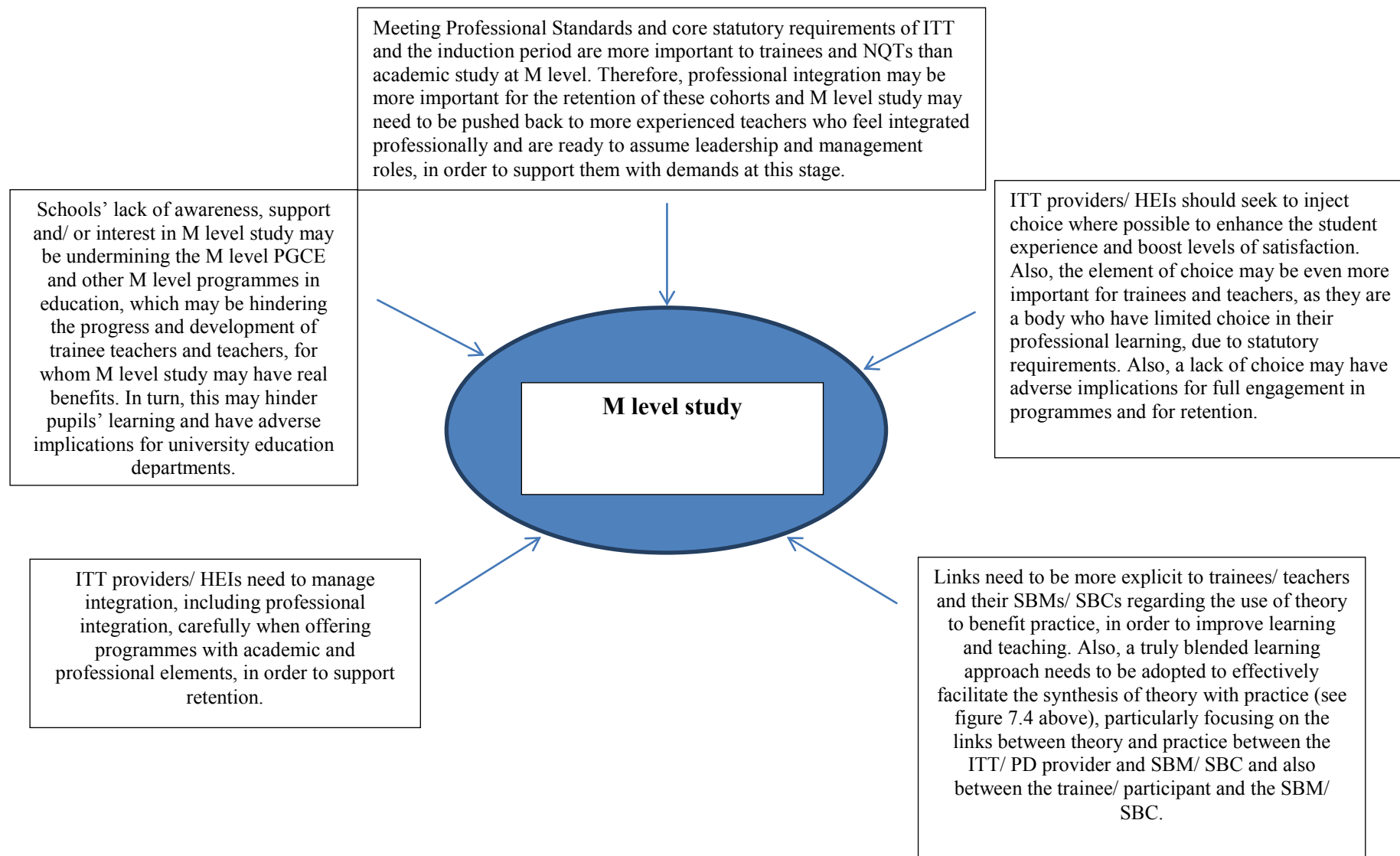


Factors for effective blended learning and the synthesis of theory with practice in ITT and PD

In particular, it is suggested that it is the links between the ITT/ PD provider and SBM/ SBC and the links between the trainee/ teacher and SBM/ SBC which are not working or not working effectively regarding theory and practice. Often professional practice appears to be divorced from theory, as SBMs/ SBCs have little if any knowledge of the theory being taught to their mentees and consequently do not discuss theory with them in relation to their practice and context. However, if these links can be improved it is suggested that further real benefits may be seen in learning and teaching to maximise pupils' learning and significantly develop trainees' and teachers' practice.

This research has provided an overview of M level study across the teaching profession – from ITT to EPD to CPD. This furthers understanding by providing a different and holistic perspective regarding M level study for trainee teachers and teachers across the pre-service and post-qualification spectrum, which is lacking to-date and which could be used to establish a more coherent framework of progression from ITT to EPD to CPD. Figure 7.4 below has also been produced to re-conceptualise M level study which has emerged from new knowledge contributed.

Figure 7.4: Re-conceptualisation of M level study



7.4.2 Research Question 1

Table 7.1 below shows a summary of other knowledge contributed regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT, in the context of this research. Figure 7.5 then shows a re-conceptualisation of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT emerging from this.

Table 7.1: Summary of other knowledge contributed regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT, in the context of research question 1

What was already known about this issue?	What more is now known about this issue?
<p>The imposed rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE – ie. the ‘givens’ of the international and national requirements of the Bologna Process and FHEQ. Further superimposed reasons for introducing the M level PGCE were: (i) the influence of UCET and other organisations, (ii) PGCE programmes were already considered to be at/ close to M level, and (iii) increasing the uptake of teachers taking M level programmes (Sewell, 2008).</p> <p>⇒</p>	<p>This research highlights that HEIs also superimposed further reasons for introducing the M level PGCE – the most common of which were: (i) competing with other providers, and (ii) giving trainees access to the opportunity to study at M level. Competing with other providers was the most common reason given in both HEIs, above responding to the imposed rationale. This shows the high levels of competition and competitiveness within the ITT sector and also has serious implications for HE-led ITT providers which have suffered cuts, due to the new government favouring school-led ITT. Other new knowledge also emerged from the findings: (i) the decision was taken by the SMT, (ii) differentiation from EBRs, (iii) the perception that it would improve aspects of the existing programme, and (iv) increasing the ability and capacity of HE tutors to teach at M level. Two of</p>

Most ITT providers are offering the M level PGCE, either as a sole award or alongside the H level PGCE (Barker, 2007; www.search.gttr.ac.uk/cgi-bin/hsrun.hse/General/gttr_search/gttr_search.hjx;start=gttr_search.HsForm.run). ⇒

these points may show HEIs trying to assert their identity more forcibly as high quality teacher-educators, in contrast with other ITT providers, which links back to competing with other providers. Therefore, this research has been valuable in providing a wider context regarding the rationale for the introduction of the M level PGCE to further inform understanding and advance research in this area.

This research highlights a gap in existing knowledge - that it is not known whether the M level PGCE or H level PGCE is now the norm, as there are no data to show how many trainees have undertaken and are undertaking each award. This is suggested as a recommendation above for further research and is important for providers due to high levels of competition and also as it may have implications for NQT induction/ EPD, from which to provide appropriate support and progression. Consequently, this gap in existing literature needs to be filled so that policymakers can then provide a new direction to LAs (or their replacement with responsibility

Potential divisiveness of two PGCEs at different levels and the implications regarding status and pay (Barker, 2007; Jackson, 2008a; Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008). ⇒

Existing literature has largely focused on the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT *per se* (Barker, 2007; Sewell, 2008; Jackson, 2008a, b, 2009). ⇒

for NQT induction) regarding a differentiated/ personalised induction programme to support and extend the progress of all NQTs, improve pupils' learning and thereby contribute to overall school improvement.

This research moves existing literature forward, showing that some tutors and trainees feel the system of two PGCEs is divisive and that this was an emotive issue, which may have wider and further implications for teachers' self-esteem and professional identity, for example, than existing literature suggests. Therefore, this needs to be managed carefully by providers to ensure that trainees on different PGCE awards in the same institution all have a positive student experience.

This research focuses more closely than existing literature on the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT in the wider context operating alongside the H level PGCE, which is important as the H level PGCE may still be popular. This is also valuable, as the M level PGCE can be seen differently within its wider context and further informs understanding and the research agenda in

Conflicting positions regarding trainees' workload (Domaille, 2008, in Sewell, 2008; Sewell and Lakin, 2008, in Sewell, 2008). ⇒

The M level PGCE has added to ITT tutors' workload (Graham-Matheson, 2010). ⇒

this area.

This research has moved knowledge forward, showing that there is a perceived small amount of additional workload for trainees, where both PGCEs are offered, but a different workload, where there is the M level only PGCE. This is important as providers could use this information, to inform prospective trainees/ trainees of what previous cohorts have felt about the M level PGCE, to enable them to make a more informed choice regarding the level at which to undertake the programme.

This research has contributed to knowledge, showing that there are differences regarding ITT tutors' workload, depending on the PGCE model operated – ie. there is a perceived additional workload for tutors, where both awards are offered, but a different workload, where there is the M level only PGCE. Existing literature has not considered workload in relation to the different models of operating the PGCE. Again, this research is valuable as it has contributed to knowledge regarding ITT tutors'

workload by showing it in the wider context of different PGCE models. However, this research also showed ITT tutors' enjoyment of working with students at a higher level where both awards were offered, which may be positive for job satisfaction, motivation, retention and career progression. Nevertheless, the implications regarding workload and work-life balance should still be considered by senior managers, as suggested in the recommendations above, as there is undoubtedly a higher workload experienced by tutors teaching across different academic levels.

This research concurs with existing literature, but also shows that trainees' levels of satisfaction were particularly high regarding M level when they had the choice between the two PGCE awards. Therefore, these findings urge caution regarding the one-size-fits-all model of the M level PGCE, although providers must clearly base their decision on the nature of their student intake. This research also has general messages highlighting the importance of choice in relation to

M level generally perceived as positive by trainees (Jackson, 2009).



satisfaction levels and engagement, which could support ITT providers/ HEIs to improve their provision. Also, increased school-led ITT is likely to lead to a less flexible ITT system and a one-size-fits-all model, which will not meet the needs of all trainees and which will not prepare all trainees sufficiently for a demanding career in teaching. Consequently, this may ‘enculture’ teachers who have qualified via school-led routes and hinder their development, which could also have a negative impact on the retention and career progression of new teachers. These issues may in turn also be counter-productive in the long-term regarding pupils’ learning and the management and retention of talent.

This research shows that re-labelling the PGCE has not had the desired effect, as some trainees and teachers are still confused by the re-labelling and unaware that there are now two PGCE awards. This confusion/ lack of awareness may have implications for the M level PGCE in lessening the value of the programme and also M level work, in general. Therefore, ITT providers and university

The aim of re-labelling the PGCE (ie Professional Graduate Certificate of Education and Postgraduate Certificate of Education) was to reduce confusion (Barker, 2007; Sewell, 2008).

⇒

education departments may need to review recruitment and retention strategies regarding the M level PGCE and other M level programmes in education to address this confusion/ lack of awareness and fully promote and perhaps re-launch the benefits of the M level PGCE and M level PD.

This research moves knowledge forward, contributing to the position that different subject specialisms in bachelor's degrees do have an impact on essay-writing within M level ITT and it is suggested that non-arts graduates may be at a disadvantage. Therefore, further support should be offered to trainees to meet the demands of essay-writing at M level and this support should be particularly targeted at graduates from non-arts backgrounds.

Contradictory literature (Jackson, 2009; Graham-Matheson, 2010) regarding the impact of different subject specialisms in bachelor's degrees on essay-writing within M level ITT.

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This research shows that the M level PGCE is being used by some HE ITT providers to differentiate themselves from EBRs and to assert their identity more forcibly as high quality teacher-educators. However, HE attempts to regain some of the control lost to a largely school-based

system will probably be negated by yet further moves towards school-led ITT. Nevertheless, it is still important for HE ITT providers to reinforce messages regarding the high quality of HE-led ITT (Ofsted, 2010) and the successes of the PGCE and M level PGCE in order to recruit applicants and emphasise the benefits for the development and status of the profession.

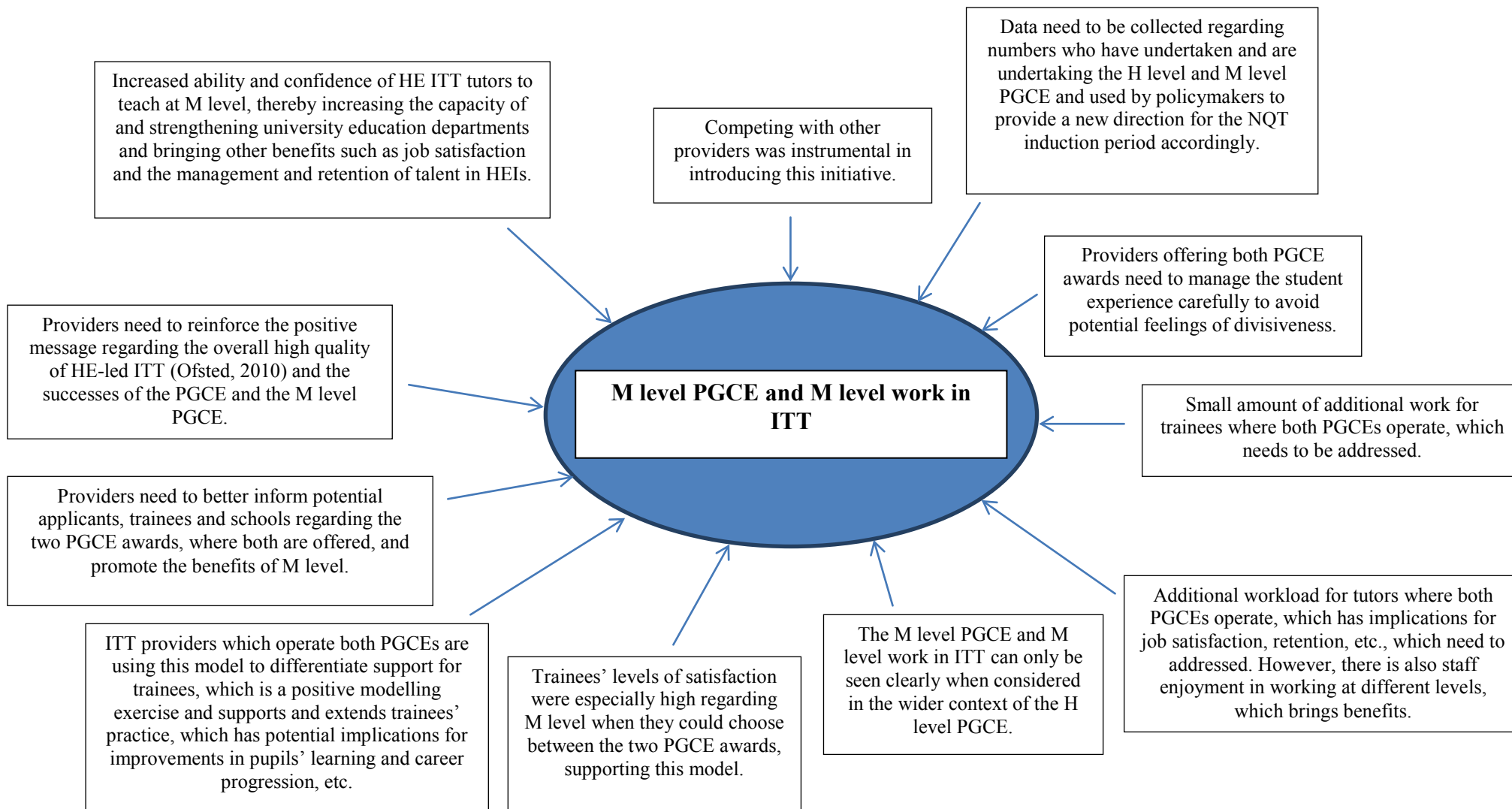
This research found that the M level PGCE has increased the ability and confidence of HE ITT tutors to teach at M level, which should increase the capacity of and strengthen university education departments. This may also have positive messages for job satisfaction, motivation, self-esteem, career progression and the management and retention of talent in HEIs.

This research shows that some HEIs are operating the 'mixed economy' of offering both PGCEs to differentiate support for trainees. This is valuable as it is modelling the very important pedagogical aspect of differentiation and also enabling HEIs to support trainees' progress via

the H level PGCE and extend trainees' progress via the M level PGCE, which could subsequently manifest itself in trainees' practice and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and career progression.

This research has taken a holistic look at the PGCE and brought together a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of operating both awards and the M level only PGCE and also a summary of the perceptions of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT. This is valuable as it has added a wider context regarding the PGCE and enables the awards to be seen differently to further inform understanding, which should be beneficial for the research agenda and to policymakers and providers, particularly regarding recruitment, delivery and subsequent NQT induction and PD in schools.

Figure 7.5: Re-conceptualisation of the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT



Although this research may not be generalizable, it is a new narrative and could be useful to support providers as they reflect on current practices and review and/ or develop the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT. It could also enable the teaching profession and other major stakeholders in ITT, such as policymakers, UCET, schools, teaching unions, prospective trainees and trainees, to gain a greater understanding of the two PGCEs, M level work in ITT, and the potential advantages and disadvantages, therefore. Furthermore, there are also other benefits for the research agenda, as discussed above.

7.4.3 Research Question 2

Table 7.2 below shows other knowledge contributed regarding perceptions of aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL. Figure 7.6 then re-conceptualises the M level teaching profession and MTL emerging from the contribution to knowledge.

Table 7.2: Summary of other knowledge contributed regarding a masters level teaching profession and the MTL, in the context of research question 2

What was already known about this issue?	What more is now known about this issue?
<p>Information largely focuses on the MTL <i>per se</i> (DCSF, 2008; McAteer <i>et al</i>, 2010; UCET, 2008b; TDA, 2008a, b, c; Holley, 2009, 2010; Carrington, 2010; Hoare, 2010b; Maddern, 2010d, e, f; www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/mtl/teachers/whatsinvolved).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">⇒</p>	<p>This research compares the MTL with other masters degrees and contributes to knowledge by highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each, giving a fuller and different level of understanding of the MTL in its wider context alongside other masters degrees and thereby establishing lessons to be learnt for overall improvement in M level provision and for the student experience.</p>
<p>Information regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and the MTL (DCSF, 2007, 2008; Frean and Bennett, 2007; McAteer <i>et al</i>, 2010; Hoare, 2010a).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">⇒</p>	<p>This research has contributed to knowledge regarding perceptions of aspirations for a masters level profession and the MTL, particularly from NQTs' perspectives, as the main target cohort. These findings indicate that NQTs supported a masters level profession in principle, but were very critical of the MTL especially concerning NQTs as the target cohort and the additional workload during induction, which again challenges the accepted wisdom of</p>

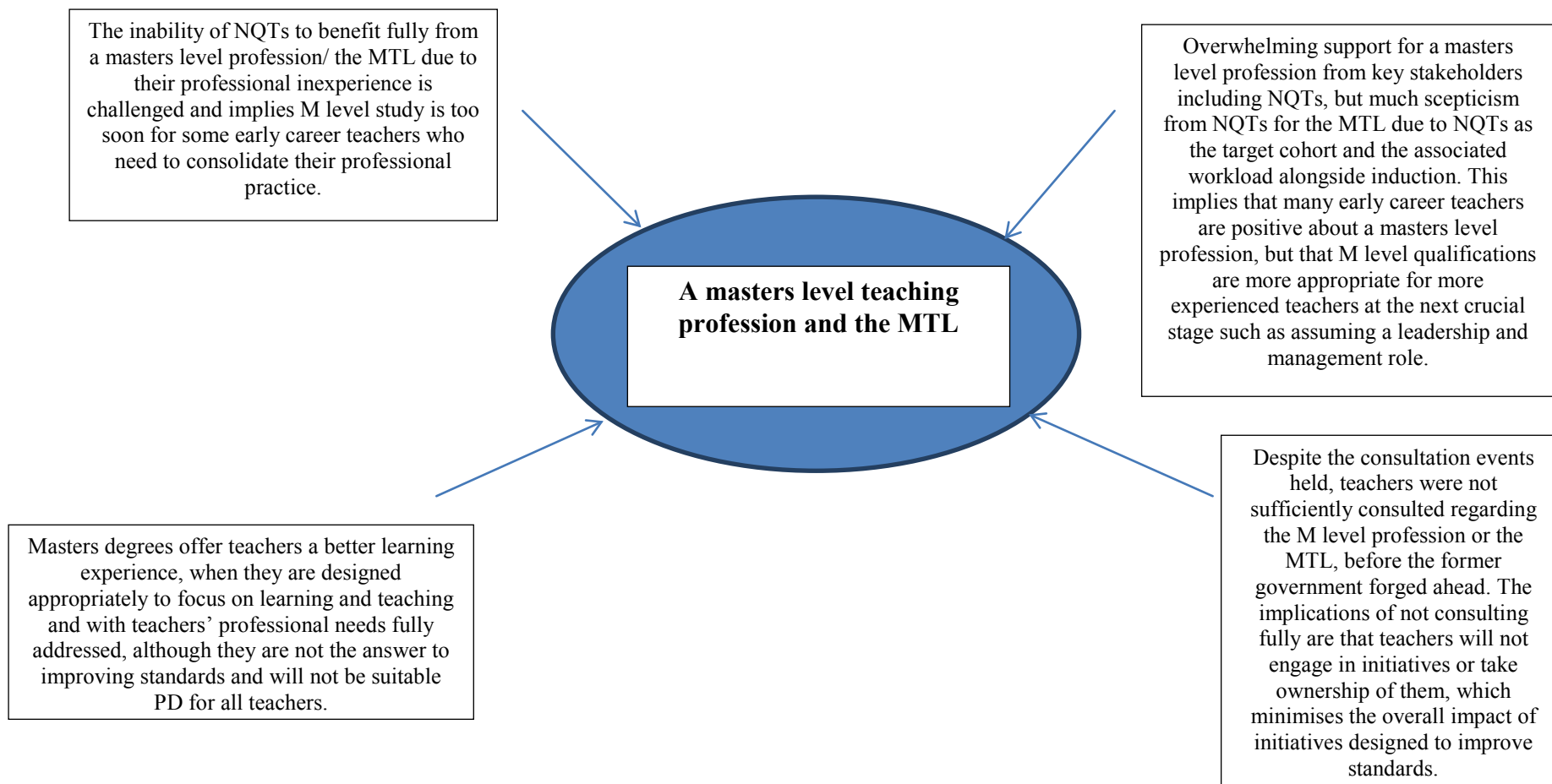
NQTs as ideal candidates for M level study.

Teachers were consulted regarding the MTL (TDA, 2008a, b, c).

⇒

This research shows that although teachers were consulted about the MTL, they were not consulted regarding plans for a masters level profession. Also, consultation regarding the MTL was minimal and for NQTs to have shown commitment to and ownership of the MTL they should have been consulted much earlier and more extensively to ensure this was what they and the wider profession wanted and that they clearly saw the benefits in advance. As the above point shows, these findings indicate that NQTs were not in favour of the MTL and it is suggested that this consensus would have been evident if the former government had consulted more widely, which may have led to a re-thinking of the MTL, NQTs as the intended main target cohort and teachers' PD in general.

Figure 7.6: Re-conceptualisation of a masters level teaching profession and the MTL



This research is potentially helpful to HEIs delivering the MTL and/ or other masters degrees, in considering the former government's rationale and other findings regarding aspirations for a masters level profession, so that M level programmes meet these aims. Also, this research could be useful to policymakers who will now need to decide what interventions are to be implemented to improve standards in schools now that the MTL is no longer seen as the key driver for improvements.

This research could be beneficial to policymakers and HEIs, enabling them to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of HEIs and NQTs/ teachers regarding M level study and how to best undertake consultation and how to launch, market and deliver programmes more effectively to prospective participants, since the consultative process was found to be lacking and may have contributed to the general lack of interest from schools in a masters level profession and the MTL. This research could also be useful to prospective students of masters degrees in making decisions regarding M level study. Some HEIs have indicated that they will keep the MTL within their postgraduate portfolio now that it has been validated. However, many HEIs already have other masters degrees validated which have a learning and teaching focus, so the MTL may become obsolete in some of these HEIs. This research could also support senior managers in schools – and colleges - in determining if they consider M level research to be valuable to colleagues and their institution and, if so, enable them to put in place appropriate support and, if not, to advance thinking regarding which means of PD would be more beneficial. This research may also be useful to other stakeholders concerned with teachers' PD, such as policymakers, UCET and the teaching unions, in order to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of NQTs/ teachers regarding aspirations for a masters level profession and open up the debate regarding different types of PD activities and the advantages and

disadvantages of each, when considering any future national PD initiatives. There are also other benefits to practice and the research agenda, as discussed above.

Summary

In summary, this research is a narrative account of M level study in ITT and M level PD for teachers, which have taken place in England in recent years. In addition, this case study provides a new narrative of different models of PGCE programmes operating and depicts a scene of much incoherence and chaos across the ITT and PD sectors. It also provides a narrative of change and uncertainty and of tensions around policy, practice and theory, which is a significant outcome of the study and important, as this is a story which has not emerged to-date. In particular, some concepts have emerged around choice, the duality of identity, retention, and the synthesis of theory with practice, which have been key to this research and advanced the research agenda in M level ITT and PD for teachers.

Overall, this research has shown choice to be key to levels of student satisfaction, reinforcing that one-size-fits-all models in which trainees/ teachers have limited choice and limited ownership of their learning are contrary to the andragogic model for effective adult learning and do not meet the needs of individuals. It is also considered that choice may be especially important for trainees and teachers regarding M level study, as cohorts who have limited choice in their professional learning, due to statutory requirements, and choice is known to be positive for a more meaningful engagement on programmes (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). M level ITT and M level PD for teachers are positive, highly aspirational and bring many benefits, but M level study is not appropriate for everyone. For example, some people

feel confusion around a duality of identity (another key concept in this research), if undertaking academic study alongside professional practice (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Therefore, a personalised and differentiated approach to ITT and PD is suggested as the best way forward to support and extend trainees' and teachers' skills. Although M level study is beneficial for some trainees and teachers, the M level PGCE – when operated as the sole award – and the MTL are both essentially one-size-fits-all models, which may not be appropriate for everyone. It must also be recognised that M level study is not the answer to becoming a good teacher, but that there are many other highly effective forms of ITT/ PD. However, the shift to school-led ITT with more QTS only routes and the withdrawal of funding from the MTL may be a retrograde step as M level study may be excellent ITT/ PD for some trainees/ teachers in improving learning and teaching.

Student retention has also emerged as a key concept in this research, showing that retention strategies need to be managed carefully and indicating that professional integration is especially important for postgraduate trainee teachers and early career teachers. In this chapter, existing models of integration (Tinto, 1975; Thomas, 2002) have been adapted to include a further sphere of integration (see figure 7.2 above). A professional sphere has been added in the context of postgraduate ITT and PD for teachers, since trainees and NQTs placed meeting the Professional Standards for QTS above the academic award of the PGCE and MTL. Also, it is suggested that identity transformation may inevitably depend on socialisation with the professional culture alongside or even above the other existing spheres of integration for early career teachers. Overall, this research challenges the almost accepted wisdom of trainees and NQTs as ideal candidates for M level study and it is suggested that M level study and the associated additional work may be

incompatible alongside professional practice for some trainees, NQTs and RQTs especially and that it may be better to postpone M level study to give these early career teachers time to consolidate their professional practice and become integrated professionally via an in-depth PD programme focused on learning and teaching, since a preoccupation with professional practice (above academic awards) runs throughout the findings. Consequently, it is suggested that professional integration is particularly important for early career teachers and that M level study may be best suited to develop experienced teachers in preparation for future leadership roles, at a time when a more critical approach and outward-facing position is most necessary. In fact, M level study could be key in supporting the management and retention of talent and leadership and management in general, which has implications for the research agenda.

This research has also indicated that the former government's plans for a masters level teaching profession have been hindered by the new government's policy for school-led ITT and the withdrawal of funding for the MTL, which may damage uptake to M level study by teachers overall at a time of huge cuts to HE and thereby un-do much of the important practitioner-based research being undertaken by teachers on M level programmes. The new government plans may lead to QTS only routes which will bring a less flexible system and potentially a one-size-fits-all model, which could hinder learning and teaching and hinder teachers professionally by 'enculturating' them and providing them with a qualification which is not transferable and which may ultimately hinder further the leadership and management crisis in schools. Also, university education departments will need to reinvent themselves and their partnership arrangements with schools regarding ITT and M level study, in order to strengthen their position and adapt to the new situation. With government support and a change of policy in the target cohort from NQTs

and newly-appointed HoDs in ‘challenge schools’ to experienced teachers, masters level study could spread widely across the profession and have a big impact. In particular, if links to theory and practice are effectively managed there could be real improvements in learning and teaching, thereby raising standards in schools. Findings from this research demonstrate that links between theory and practice are still problematic and it is suggested that effective blended learning especially via the SBM/ SBC working closely with trainees/ teachers and providers could improve trainees’/ teachers’ development and ultimately pupils’ learning – see figure 7.3. Aspirations for an M level profession has the potential to improve standards in schools and improve the status of the profession, but only if M level study is designed with this aim and undertaken by large numbers of teachers with sufficient experience upon which to base their research and produce work of a high quality which can be disseminated to have a positive impact on the profession.

This research also has key messages regarding workload created for trainees and ITT tutors due to the introduction of the M level PGCE and also key messages regarding workload created for teachers undertaking M level study, which needs to be fully considered by senior leaders in HEIs, ITT providers and schools to address this. There are also key messages regarding workload which policymakers need to consider before launching future initiatives. This would then ensure that the demands of M level study can be made more compatible for trainees, teachers and ITT tutors alongside their professional demands.

Findings and literature show that aspirations for a masters level profession received overwhelming support from the teaching profession and key stakeholders and was heralded by many as one of the most major reforms to affect teachers, since the introduction of the all-graduate profession in the early 1980s.

However, findings also show that the vehicle through which this was to be achieved - the MTL - was heavily criticised in practical terms, especially regarding NQTs as the first cohort and concerns regarding the additional workload. Also, literature is divided regarding the MTL. Therefore, there may still be an appetite for a masters level profession, but it is suggested that the vehicle through which to achieve this and the target cohort need rethinking. Standards in schools still need to improve, so the current government now needs to provide a new direction and identify a new key driver to improve standards, now that it has dismissed the MTL as the vehicle for improvements in learning and teaching. However, these findings indicate that M level study will not be the answer to school improvement for all teachers.

This research has also provided an overview of M level study from ITT to EPD to CPD, which is lacking in existing literature. This is important as it provides a different and holistic picture across the spectrum from pre-service to post-qualification and will be of interest to policymakers and those concerned with ITT, NQT induction, EPD and CPD, in order to drive improvements in these key areas and in turn improve learning and teaching in schools in a coherent manner. Furthermore, from the discussion chapter it is suggested that a fragmented system of ITT, EPD and CPD is being proposed by the government. Therefore, a tentative model for the coherent training and professional development of teachers is shown in table 7.3, which takes into account the findings and literature, such as the element of choice in ITT and PD being very positive and empowering for participants.

Table 7.3: Suggested model for the training and professional development of teachers.

Stage	Programme	Duration
ITT	<p>ITT programmes which currently exist, which offer a range of alternatives to suit individuals' needs, with the PGCE being retained as the predominant route.</p> <p>However, it is suggested that trainees who undertake the PGCE should be able to choose between the H level and M level PGCE, rather than providers imposing a one-size-fits-all model.</p>	Minimum of one academic year
NQT induction period	<p>LAs/ future institutions which assume responsibility for induction could take further responsibility for the quality, coherence and structure of the statutory induction period. In partnership with HEIs and schools, LAs, etc could offer a differentiated and personalised induction programme, based on NQTs' prior qualifications/ professional recognition/ experience, focusing on learning and teaching as part of an in-depth and professionally-focused PD programme.</p> <p>Also, those wishing to study at M level could be offered this, as part of a personalised induction period to advance learning and teaching.</p>	One year
EPD	<p>Currently, EPD is a stage in which there is little opportunity for PD activities, so it is suggested that teachers choose from a</p>	Years 2 – 4

	<p>range of sustained PD activities for themselves, to suit their individual needs, but with guidance of senior colleagues who ensure the school priorities are also being met. These activities should be professionally-focused and part of an in-depth PD programme focusing on learning and teaching. M level study should be supported for those teachers who wish to pursue masters degrees.</p>	
CPD	<p>Teachers choose sustained PD activities for themselves, but with the guidance of senior colleagues who ensure the school priorities are also being met. At this stage, M level study should be particularly encouraged and supported via sabbaticals for those wishing to study at this level, as findings and literature show that this is the group of teachers who will benefit most of all from M level study and produce research worthy of dissemination. Also, it is at this stage that teachers will start to consider leadership and management roles and M level study could be used as a key driver to facilitate succession planning and the management and retention of talent.</p>	Lifelong learning

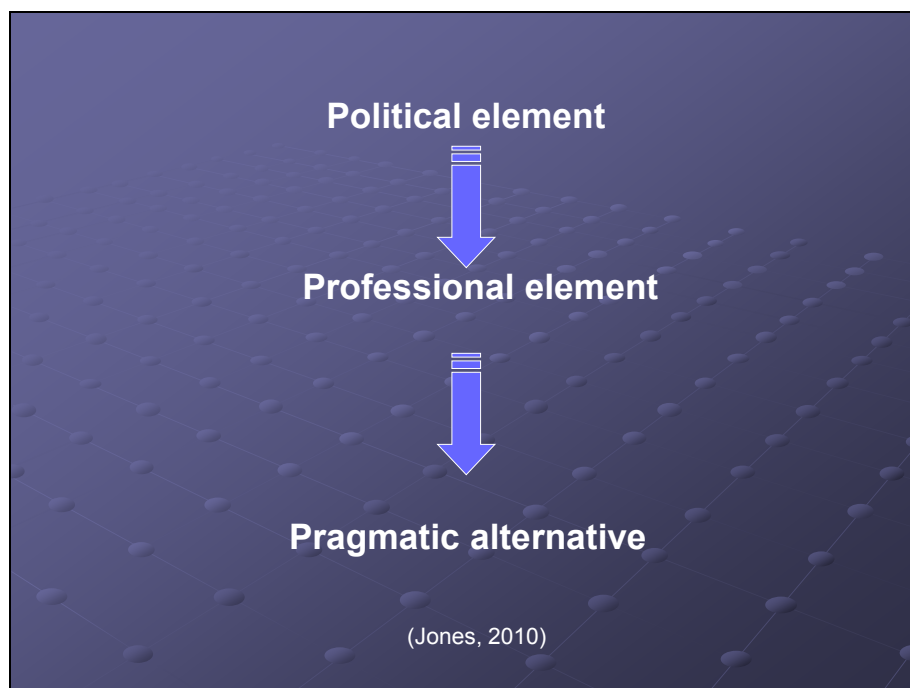
Overall, the M level PGCE is an initiative which appears to have encouraged uptake to M level study by trainees and the MTL has encouraged some qualified teachers to undertake M level study, bringing the recent national trend for postgraduate study more systematically to the teaching profession for the first time in

England. The funded MTL was a new initiative, which offered teachers the opportunity and entitlement to study at a higher level and to use this to inform and improve their practice. Aspirations for the M level profession challenged the technicist view of teaching being a competence-based activity/ a 'craft'. However, the government's shift of ITT funding from HEIs to schools could mean the end for the PGCE/ M level PGCE and M level work in ITT. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider what the legacy of the M level PGCE, aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and MTL might be. The M level PGCE and the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) may have brought about real aspirations for a masters level profession, but with the shift to school-led ITT the PGCE/ M level PGCE may be difficult to recruit to with the necessary higher fees which will have to be charged. However, it is suggested that M level study could be the last hook HEIs have in ITT and that HEIs could assert their position as high quality teacher-educators with a focus on the nature and success of M level work in ITT as key to this debate. Also, it is unlikely that the MTL will continue as part of the M level portfolio in HEIs in England, as the withdrawal of funding may lead to the collapse of the MTL and aspirations for a masters level profession and could mean a lack of credibility in the qualification. Overall, it is suggested that this withdrawal of funding for the MTL, higher fees and general cuts to HE will have a negative impact on postgraduate study, if teachers consider the government's withdrawal of funding for the MTL to represent a lesser interest in a masters level profession. Therefore, the situation could revert to a small minority of teachers undertaking masters degrees.

Furthermore, this research has shown the imposed rationale for M level developments in ITT and PD for teachers, but has also shown the rationale superimposed by HEIs. It has also

demonstrated the perspectives of key stakeholders – HEIs – regarding the professional element and the perspectives of other key stakeholders – trainees/ NQTs – from the pragmatic alternative (Jones, 2010), regarding M level developments in ITT and PD for teachers. This study has also shown academic awards researched – the M level PGCE and the MTL – in their wider context, in operation alongside other awards/ programmes, providing the bigger picture which is largely missing in existing literature. In addition, the elements of PD as perceived by Jones (2010) are shown below in figure 7.7 and have been used and adapted to show an overall picture in the context of this research for ITT and PD.

Figure 7.7: The three elements of professional development

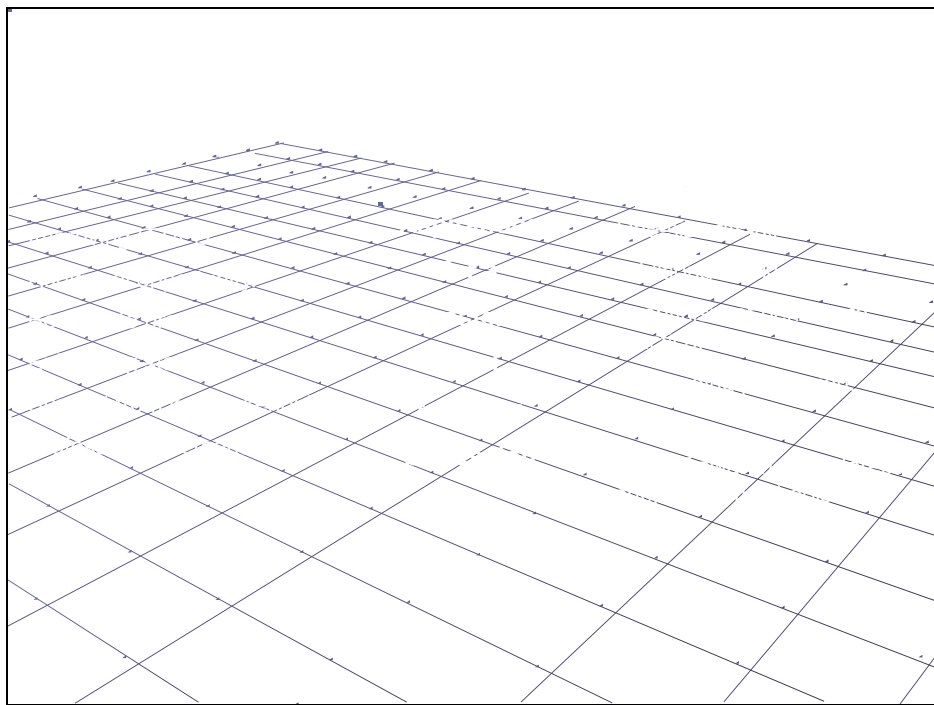


In the context of this research, the political element states how ITT and PD *must* be run. For example, international and national requirements of the Bologna Process (1999) and FHEQ stated that programmes with postgraduate in the title *must* be truly at M level. Also, the former government stated how EPD *must* be run via the MTL. The professional element states how ITT and PD

should be run. For example, HE ITT providers – as professional teacher-educators - state how ITT *should* be run by deciding the level(s) at which to validate their PGCE programmes and which programmes/ routes to run. Also, HEIs stated at consultation and focus group events (TDA, 2008a, b, c) how EPD *should* be run. The pragmatic alternative states how ITT and PD *will* be run. For example, trainees largely state how ITT *will* be run, by choosing whichever programme/ route they feel is most appropriate for them personally. Also, teachers state how PD *will* be run, by choosing the best form of PD for them. This research shows the political element of the imposed rationale for the M level PGCE, M level teaching profession and MTL and also highlights knowledge at a professional and pragmatic level regarding the superimposed rationale for the M level PGCE and HEI and trainee teacher perspectives regarding the M level PGCE and M level work in ITT and also regarding HEI and NQT perspectives regarding the M level teaching profession and the MTL. For Lipsky (1971, in Jones, 2010), it is the ‘street level bureaucrats’ at the pragmatic level who define implementation of policy, however, and for Jones (2010) there is a particular need for pragmatic PD in difficult economic times, no matter what the political and professional bodies advocate. Therefore, in the context of this research, it is suggested that it is the pragmatic alternative which will win over and that it will be trainees/ teachers themselves who will decide which form of ITT/ PD they will undertake – rather than the government and HEIs imposing a one-size-fits-all model. In line with this approach, these findings have also brought to the fore the perspectives of trainees and NQTs, as key participants in ITT and PD, and also has lessons which could be learnt at a political level regarding how best to undertake consultation and launch programmes and at a professional level regarding how to market and deliver programmes effectively. However, funding will also be a key

factor in decision-making too and cannot be ignored and, coupled with rising HE fees this is even more significant. Therefore, figure 7.8 below has been produced to highlight the key driving forces and the key restraining forces towards aspirations for a masters level teaching profession, which could be used particularly by HEIs to re-launch interest in M level study.

Figure 7.8: Summary of the key driving forces and key restraining forces regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession



Furthermore, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis has been produced (see Appendix L) to provide an overview regarding the current position regarding aspirations for a masters level teaching profession and how this is helpful or harmful to achieving this goal now. Finally, the introduction of the M level PGCE by most providers – whether this was as a sole award or alongside the H level PGCE – from September 2007 and the publication of the *Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007) in December

2007 seemed to herald a new era for the teaching profession, in which it would move in time from an all-graduate profession to a postgraduate profession. However, the change in government in May 2010 and the difficult economic climate have severely hindered these aspirations, due to moving ITT increasingly into schools – which could lead to the demise of the successful PGCE and M level work in ITT, which appears to have encouraged many trainees to continue with M level study – and due to funding being withdrawn from the MTL and only allocated to some teachers via the PGCert for SENCOs and National PD Scholarships. However, although funding has largely ceased for M level study, the MTL has brought the educational communities together within a joint initiative. Also, the huge increase in undergraduate fees may leave many English students too indebted to afford a postgraduate education. Therefore, if the current government also has real aspirations for a masters level teaching profession, then it needs to fully rethink policy from ITT onwards and make it palatable, coherent, suitable and affordable for interested parties, without resorting to a one-size-fits-all approach to ITT and professional development for teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview questions for ITT providers operating dual model

1. What were the main reasons for deciding to introduce the level 7 PGCE?
2. How is the PGCE programme organised? (Dual option of level 6 and level 7 PGCE? Reasons? No. of M level credits? Reasons? Compulsory or optional? Criteria for trainees to do M level? Reasons? Primary and secondary phases?)
3. Why did you choose to operate the dual model of both the level 6 and level 7 PGCE?
4. How many trainees are doing the level 7 PGCE?
5. What are the differences between the Professional and Postgraduate PGCE programmes?
6. How have tutors found the Postgraduate PGCE?
7. How have trainees found the Postgraduate PGCE?
8. How successful do you feel the Postgraduate PGCE has been? Are there any improvements you would make?
9. What are the advantages/ positive points of Postgraduate PGCE?
10. What are the disadvantages/ negative points of the Postgraduate PGCE?
11. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?
12. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for your institution?
13. How is the Postgraduate PGCE delivered? (Who delivers the programme? Do these tutors have masters level qualifications themselves? Do these tutors teach on the MA programme too?)
14. Do you think many trainees will go on to complete masters degrees as a result of taking the Postgraduate PGCE? Is there provision for this within the institution?
15. Were school-based tutors involved in the decision-making process/ engaged in the introduction of the new arrangements?
16. Other comments/ issues?

Interview questions for ITT providers operating M level model only

1. What were the main reasons for deciding to introduce the level 7 PGCE?
2. Why did you choose not to operate the dual model of both the H level Professional and M level Postgraduate PGCE?
3. What is the situation for trainees who do not achieve the 60 M level credits?
4. How have tutors found the Postgraduate PGCE?
5. How have trainees found the Postgraduate PGCE?
6. How successful do you feel the Postgraduate PGCE has been? Are there any improvements you would make?
7. What are the advantages/ positive points of Postgraduate PGCE?
8. What are the disadvantages/ negative points of the Postgraduate PGCE?

9. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?
10. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for your institution?
11. How is the Postgraduate PGCE delivered? (Who delivers the programme? Do these tutors have master's level qualifications themselves? Do these tutors teach on the MA programme too?)
12. Do you think many trainees will go on to complete master's degrees as a result of taking the Postgraduate PGCE? Is there provision for this within the institution?
13. Were school-based tutors involved in the decision-making process/ engaged in the introduction of the new arrangements?
14. Other comments/ issues?

APPENDIX B

Focus group questions for trainee teachers on Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme (dual model HEI)

1. Why did you decide to do the Postgraduate PGCE?
2. What do you think are the benefits/ positive points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
3. What do you think are the disadvantages/ negative points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
4. What do you feel are the main differences between the Professional and Postgraduate PGCE?
5. How has the Postgraduate PGCE gone this year?
6. Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the Postgraduate PGCE? Why (not)?
7. What do you think will be the benefits to you as a teacher as a result of completing the Postgraduate PGCE? What have you gained?
8. Has the Postgraduate PGCE supported your classroom practice/ teaching skills? How?
9. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?
10. Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree? Why (not)? If Yes, has gaining M level credits from the Postgraduate PGCE encouraged you to undertake a masters degree? Would you have considered doing a masters degree before completing the Postgraduate PGCE?
11. Do you think teachers should have masters degrees?
12. What benefits do you think having a masters degree will bring to the teaching role?

Focus group questions for trainee teachers on Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme (dual model HEI)

1. Why did you decide not to do the Postgraduate PGCE?
2. What do you think are the benefits/ positive points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
3. What do you think are the disadvantages/ negative points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
4. What do you feel are the main differences between the Professional and Postgraduate PGCE?
5. How has the Professional PGCE gone this year?
6. Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the Professional PGCE? Why (not)?
7. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?
8. Will you undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree? Why (not)?
9. Do you think teachers should have masters degrees?
10. What benefits do you think having a masters degree will bring to the teaching role?

Focus group questions for trainee teachers on Postgraduate Certificate in Education (M level model only)

1. Why did you decide to do the Postgraduate PGCE?
2. What do you think are the benefits/ positive points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
3. What do you think are the disadvantages/ negative points of M level work/ credits within a PGCE?
4. How has the Postgraduate PGCE gone this year?
5. What do you think will be the benefits to you as a teacher as a result of completing the Postgraduate PGCE? What have you gained?
6. Has the Postgraduate PGCE supported your classroom practice/ teaching skills? How?
7. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?
8. Will you undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree? Why (not)? If Yes, has gaining M level credits from the Postgraduate PGCE encouraged you to undertake a masters degree? Would you have considered doing a masters degree before completing the Postgraduate PGCE?
9. Do you think teachers should have masters degrees?
10. What benefits do you think having a masters degree will bring to the teaching role?

APPENDIX C

Your Opinion of the level 7 PGCE programme (dual model HEI)

Your comments are very important to this research, in ascertaining your opinion of the level 6 and level 7 PGCE. The data collected will be shared with others, but individual responses collected will obviously be anonymous.

1. Why did you decide to do the level 7 PGCE programme?

- Eligible Improved chances at interview No cost involved
 M level credits towards masters degree Enhanced career opportunities later
 Encouraged by tutor Other reason (Please specify below)
-

2a) How do you feel about doing the level 7 PGCE programme?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Not satisfied No opinion

b) Please give any reasons below

.....

3. Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the level 7 PGCE?

- Yes No (Please give any reasons below)
-

4. Will you continue with postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

- Yes No Not sure (Please give any reasons below)
-

5a) Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?

- Yes No Not sure

b) Please give your reasons

.....

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire

Lorraine Thomas

Your Opinion of the level 6 PGCE programme (level 6, HEI 1)

Your comments are very important to this research, in ascertaining your opinion of the level 6 and level 7 PGCE. The data collected will be shared with others, but individual responses collected will obviously be anonymous.

1. Why did you decide not to do the level 7 PGCE programme?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional work | <input type="checkbox"/> Demands of school-based experience | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demands of course | <input type="checkbox"/> Not important in gaining job | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st year of level 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Credits may not be transferable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged by tutor | <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in masters degree | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in masters degree yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Consequences of failing level 7 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching element more important | <input type="checkbox"/> Other reason (eg not eligible) | |
| | (Please specify below) | |
-

2a) How do you feel about doing the level 6 PGCE programme?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Not satisfied No opinion

b) Please give any reasons below

.....

3. Would you advise next year's trainees to opt for the level 6 PGCE?

- Yes No (Please give any reasons below)
-

4. Will you undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

- Yes No Not sure (Please give any reasons below)
-

5a) Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?

- Yes No Not sure

b) Please give your reasons

.....

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire

Lorraine Thomas

Your Opinion of the Master's level PGCE programme

(M level model only)

Your comments are very important to this research, in ascertaining your opinion of master's level PGCE. The data collected will be shared with others, but individual responses collected will obviously be anonymous.

1a) How do you feel about doing the M level PGCE programme?

Very satisfied Satisfied Not satisfied No opinion

b) Please give any reasons below

.....

2. Will you undertake postgraduate studies to gain a masters degree?

Yes No Not sure **(Please give any reasons below)**

.....

3a) Do you think teachers would benefit from studying at masters level?

Yes No Not sure

b) Please give your reasons

.....

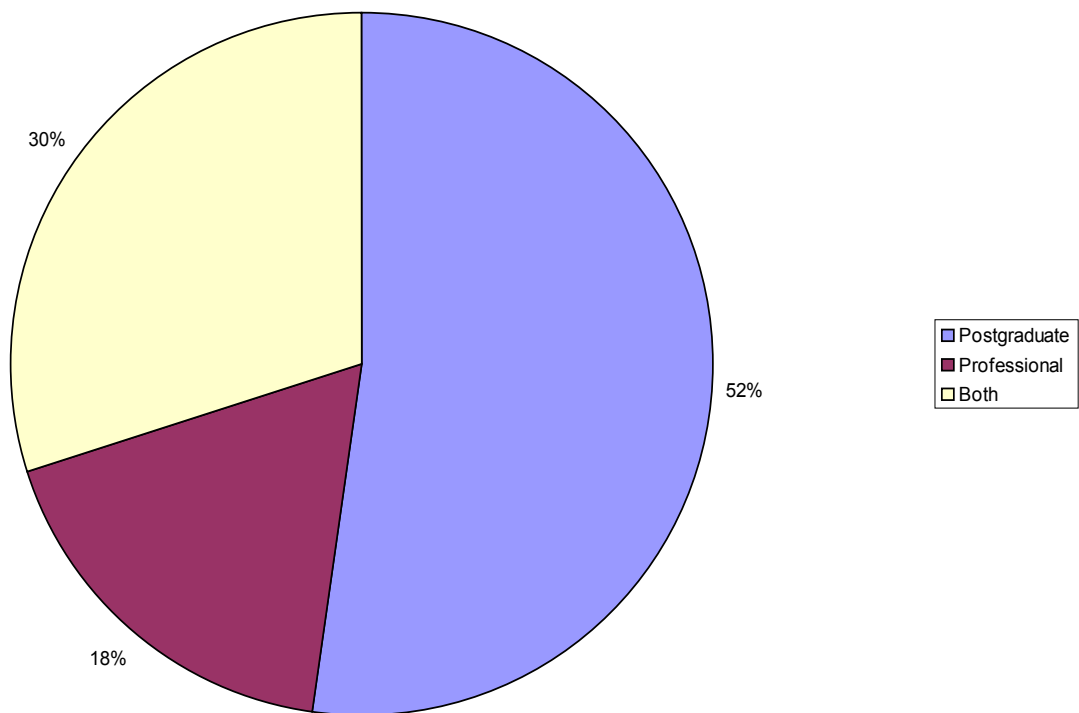
Many thanks for completing this questionnaire

Lorraine Thomas

APPENDIX D

PGCE programmes

GTRR survey



APPENDIX E

Interview questions for Deans regarding aspirations for a masters level profession and the Masters in Teaching and Learning

- 1.** Do you think teachers should have masters degrees? Why (not)?
- 2.** What are the benefits/ advantages/ positive points and/ or disadvantages/ negative points of M level study for teachers and a masters level teaching profession via the MTL?
- 3.** What do you think will be the impact/ implications of a masters level teaching profession and the MTL?
- 4.** What do you think will be the differences between the MTL and current masters provision?
- 5.** How do you think NQTs will respond to the expectation to undertake the MTL?
- 6.** Why have you decided to bid to deliver the MTL?
- 7.** If the bid is successful, who will deliver the MTL in your institution? Which programmes do they currently teach on? (Do tutors have masters degrees themselves?)
- 8.** Other comments/ issues?

APPENDIX F

Focus group questions for NQTs

1. Do you think teachers should have masters degrees? Why (not)?
2. What do you think will be the benefits/ advantages/ positives and/ or the disadvantages/ negative points of M level study for teachers and a masters level teaching profession?
3. What do you think will be the benefits/ advantages/ positives and/ or the disadvantages/ negative points of the MTL?
4. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of a masters level teaching profession?
5. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the MTL?
6. How do you think NQTs will respond to the expectation to undertake the MTL?

APPENDIX G

Descriptor for a qualification at Masters level which is included in the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i. a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/ or insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- ii. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- iii. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- iv. conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
 - evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;

continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;

decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and

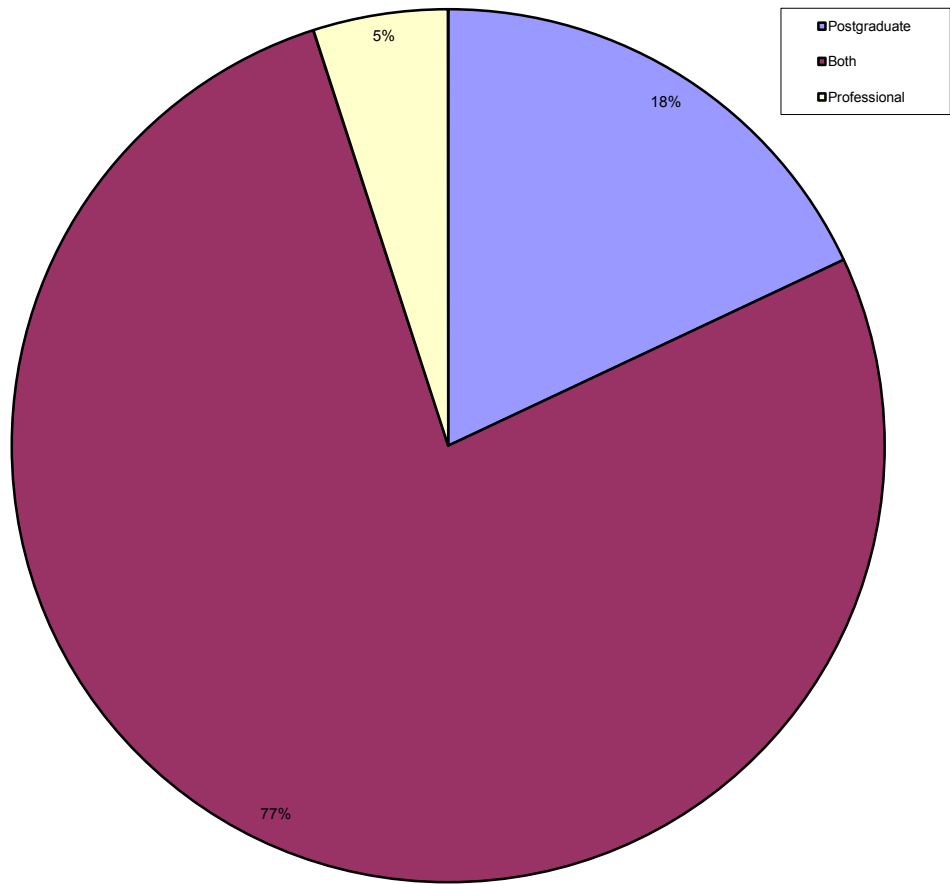
the independent learning ability required for CPD.

The *Framework* points out that Masters degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research, or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes often lead to the degree of MPhil. Most Masters courses last at least one year (if taken full-time), and are taken by persons with Honours degrees (or equivalent achievement). Some Masters degrees in science and engineering are awarded after extended undergraduate programmes that last, typically, a year longer than Honours degree programmes. Also at this level are advanced short courses, often forming part of CPD programmes, leading to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

APPENDIX H

PGCE programmes

UCET survey



APPENDIX I

The MTL Programme

Phase 1	Module 1 (30 credits)		Module 2 (10 credits)	
2 modules 40 credits	Reflecting on professional practice		Developing professional enquiry skills	
Phase 2	Module 3 (20 credits) Content Area 1	Module 4 (20 credits) Content Area 2	Module 5 (20 credits) Content Area 3	Module 6 (20 credits) Content Area 4
4 Modules 80 credits	Teaching and learning, personalisation and assessment for learning	Subject knowledge and curriculum and curriculum development	Child development and Inclusion	Leadership and management, working with others
Phase 3	Module 7 (30 credits)		Module 8 (30 credits)	
2 Modules 60 credits	Professional Practice Enquiry 1		Professional Practice Enquiry 2	

APPENDIX J

Example of transcribed interview

1. What were the main reasons for deciding to introduce the level 7 PGCE?

Because of national demand and being required to stipulate the level at which the programme should be offered. Competition within the community of ITT providers was important – we were interested in the national picture and compared ourselves with other similar institutions with similar constitutions and background. Right now we're starting to look at marketing.

2. How is the PGCE programme organised?

It was a long process to decide/debate amongst ourselves. Some wanted level 7 only, some were more cautious. More team members were wary due to the calibre of students and concerned some wouldn't get through. We had a meeting with the faculty registrar and director of academic quality, to make sure the new course fitted into university regulations. Because of this we wanted to get a progression route to the MA. A maximum of 30 credits at level 6 and 30 at level 7 was allowed by university to the MA. At the beginning in the first two assignments trainees need to achieve a pass rate of 55% to take level 7.

3. Why did you choose to operate the dual model of both the level 6 and level 7 PGCE?

Because it was possible, because of the calibre of students. If we only had level 7 and they fail, they can't get the level 6 PGCE. We also felt we were working at a higher level than level 6 – the course runs at level 6 plus anyway. Being able to offer level 7 is extra. Level 6 is the norm, but I suspect level 7 will become the norm in future when trainees and schools become more familiar that we've re-validated at both levels. We worked backwards from the MA.

4. How many trainees are doing the level 7 PGCE?

30, plus 2 who interrupted study.

5. What are the differences between the Professional and Postgraduate PGCE programmes?

There are only 2 modules which are different with M level criteria. Two-thirds are taught together, one-third taught separately.

6. How have tutors found the Postgraduate PGCE?

They've found level 7 okay. We had training in working at level 7 and the majority of staff teach on the MA. Some have an MA, some don't. Of the two who don't have an MA, one is working towards it and they were both monitored.

7. How have trainees found the Postgraduate PGCE?

Fine, those who didn't do it wish they'd taken level 7 now. They were cautious regarding starting their second placement. We let trainees make their own choices and were careful not to pressurise. I regret in some ways tutors didn't push level 7 - not necessarily the most able teachers who are of academic persuasion.

8. How successful do you feel the Postgraduate PGCE has been? Are there any improvements you would make?

It's been successful. One module may change – it needs refining and improving.

9. What are the advantages/ positive points of the Postgraduate PGCE?

The increase in academic work and everyone was successful in gaining level 7. The work was to a good academic standard – lots of critical analysis and reflective. Done what we wanted to do.

10. What are the disadvantages/ negative points of the Postgraduate PGCE?

Not enough students have done level 7, although many more could have. Out of hours sessions put some off – the extra time of evenings, Saturdays, Half term. The additional time commitment was a downside for trainees. A concentrated whole day extra was piloted by D&T and that was very successful.

11. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for the teaching profession?

Higher level qualifications are becoming increasingly more popular and widespread in teaching. For jobs now additional desirable criteria is often an MA. Expectations are rising. Critical analysis is becoming more desirable. Demand of workforce remodelling – for example, HLTAs can work at a higher level and do much of the day-to-day running of classrooms, which adds to the demand for M level skills and qualifications. The level 7 PGCE will dribble into schools, but there may be no impact on priority subjects - need maths teachers over M level.

12. What do you think will be the impact/ implications of the Postgraduate PGCE for your institution?

Short-medium term more level 7 work will increase numbers doing level 7. We can be choosy and choose better quality candidates with TDA numbers decreasing. I think level 7 will become the norm, but level 6 is available.

13. How is the Postgraduate PGCE delivered? Who delivers the programme? Do these tutors have masters level qualifications themselves? Do these tutors teach on the MA programme too?

Our PGCE team delivers the level 7 PGCE, but not all of them have masters so we make sure that their work is monitored and that their assessment judgments are fully moderated. A few teach on the MA.

14. Do you think many trainees will go on to complete masters degrees as a result of taking the Postgraduate PGCE? Is there provision for this within the institution?

There's been a stronger interest than in previous years because they've got M level credits. They can go on to the Art and Design MA and MA Education. The MA has a higher profile due to the level 7 PGCE. We've made the route to the masters explicit and shown progression.

15. Were school-based tutors involved in the decision-making process/ engaged in the introduction of the new arrangements?

Mentors were involved in re-writing the whole course, but less involved in level 6/7 discussions as they were outside those meetings. Mentors are more interested in the nitty-gritty of school-based placements - they may become more interested when the impact of level 7 comes into effect.

16. Other comments/ issues?

Other implications for the new MA route - need for there to be strong subject-based modules. Trainees feel more secure in their subject area and continuing with their subject at M level. Level 6 trainees can function quite well and become good teachers at that level. To be better, we need to function at level 7. Our level 6 PGCE is a level 6 plus PGCE. We're easily working at level 6 and probably more, so we're keen and confident for trainees to do level 7. Lots of trainees were well above 55% and should be doing level 7.

APPENDIX K

BERA Ethical Guidelines

Guideline	Description
3	Educational researchers should aim to report their findings to all relevant stakeholders and so refrain from keeping secret or selectively communicating their findings.
4	Educational researchers should aim to report research conceptions, procedures, results, and analyses accurately and in sufficient detail to allow other researchers to understand and interpret them.
7	Participants in a research study have the right to be informed about the aims, purposes and likely publication of findings involved in the research and of potential consequences for participants, and to give their informed consent before participating in research.
9	Honesty and openness should characterize the relationship between researchers, participants and institutional representatives.
12	Educational researchers should communicate their findings and the practical significance of their research in clear, straightforward, and appropriate language to relevant research populations, institutional representatives, and other stakeholders.
13	Informants and participants have the right to remain anonymous. This right should be respected when no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached. Researchers are responsible for taking appropriate precautions to protect the confidentiality of both participants and data. However, participants should also be made aware that in certain situations anonymity cannot be achieved.
23	Researcher(s) have a duty to report both to the funding agency and to the wider public, including educational practitioners and other interested parties. The right to publish is therefore entailed by this duty to report. Researchers conducting sponsored research should retain the right to publish the findings under their own names. The right to publish is essential to the long-term viability of any research activity, to the credibility of the researcher (and of the funding agency in seeking to use research findings) and in the interests of an open society. The methodological principle of maximising the dissemination of information to all interested parties is an integral part of research strategy aimed at testing on a continuous basis the relevance, accuracy and comprehensiveness of findings as they emerge within the process of inquiry.

APPENDIX L

SWOT analysis regarding achieving the aspiration for a masters level teaching profession

Helpful to achieving aspirations for a masters level teaching profession	Harmful to achieving aspirations for a masters level teaching profession
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Differentiated and improved ITT and PD;• greater recruitment to HE postgraduate programmes in education, at a time of cuts;• most HEIs accept M level PGCE credits towards a masters degree;• improvements to learning and teaching and benefits to practice, when links between theory and practice are fully exploited;• recognition of teaching as a complex activity;• brings HEIs and schools closer together in partnership; and• support from key stakeholders.	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• QTS has been given prime importance by its statutory status, above M level study;• not everyone is capable of/ wishes to study at M level, so should not be forced through a one size-fits-all model;• additional workload for teachers;• professional demands of the teaching profession; and• no links to employability/ pay scale/ future career progression.

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<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted (2010) places HEIs above the competition of school-based ITT providers/ private PD providers; • access to M level study for those trainees/ teachers who wish to study at this level; • more highly qualified, articulate and reflective teachers; and • enhances the status of the teaching profession. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves to school-led ITT; • funding limited for M level study by teachers; • increased HE fees from September 2012; • divisive culture may emerge, regarding those with and without M level qualifications; • political and professional elements dictating how a masters level teaching profession must/ should be achieved; • scepticism of the benefits of study at this level; • lack of awareness/ interest by schools; and • current downturn in the economic climate.