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The professional role of the lecturer in further education[1] and the self assessment of teaching

Teaching methods in further education will need to change as social, technical and economic circumstances continue to alter the goals and objectives of the education system.

1. Introduction

It is understandable that in the past the teaching of many lecturers in further education has often been prescriptive. Traditionally lecturers have taught within a tightly defined structure. External agencies such as regional advisory councils, examination boards, industrial training boards and professional bodies have specified course content and organisation, student entry requirements and assessment procedures. Two developments in particular are encouraging the re-assessment of established teaching methods.

1.1 New criteria are being identified to guide the design of courses concerned with technical and commercial education.

The Committee of Manpower Resources for Science and Technology in its Triennial Scientific Manpower Survey (1965) suggested that it was essential for technicians to have the ability to judge.

> *Technicians occupy a position between that of the qualified scientist, engineer or technologist on the one hand, and the skilled foreman or craftsman or operative on the other. Their education and specialised skills enable enable them to exercise technical judgement. By this is meant an understanding, by reference to general principles, of the reasons for and purposes of their work, rather than a reliance solely on established practices or accumulated skills.*

Haslegrave Report (1969) wrote in a similar vein.

> *Courses must increasingly become vehicles for developing the right attitude on the part of the student and for teaching him how to train and educate himself, and less exercises in imparting a wide range of information…*

If teaching is to be concerned not only with the dissemination of knowledge but with the conscious fostering of attitudes and judgement then the nature of course content and associated teaching strategies need to be critically examined. TEC and BEC[2] provide a context within which such a reappraisal could take place.

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[1] Rogers, D.G. (1980) The role of the teacher in further education. Fern **Journal** No1, 1980
[2] Technical Education Council, Business Education Council

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1 August 2014 **(20)**

1.2 The need to cater for the needs of students who in the past have not normally received further education.

Holland Report (1977) and the Warnock Report (1979) made various proposals concerning the development of further education courses for students with special needs. The provision of further education relevant to the needs of the unemployed, the handicapped and the less able, presents a new challenge in terms of course design and implementation. Traditional teaching methods are unlikely to be appropriate.

Owen (1979) described recent reports, programmes and proposals which have important implications for the further education curriculum. The following conclusion was reached on the basis of the review.

> The new role of the lecturer in further education will be based on a philosophy of integration, flexibility and teamwork. In addition the lecturer will need to be much more involved with counselling, curriculum development, industrial liaison and evaluation of learning, which in turn will include different teaching methods, resources and a changed working environment.

More recent changes in the nature of further education provision have emphasised these historical views of the sector.

Before describing findings which suggest particular changes in the nature of the skills required by teachers, it is appropriate to outline a basic model of professional competence.

2. A model of professional competence

2.1 Rogers (1973) attempted to classify examples of skills associated with teaching under the following headings:

Professional competence of lecturers in further education	
Implementary skills	Professional judgement
Associated with classroom performance, and including:	Guiding decisions concerned with the structure of teaching programmes and course design:
clarity and fluency of expression	identification of student characteristics
skills in exposition and discussion	selection and arrangement of content
effective use of audio-visual aids to illustrate teaching points	choice of teaching method
sensitivity to response of students to teaching	design of effective examinations and the selection of forms of assessment compatible with course aims and objectives

2.2 Hudgins (1974)[3] made a similar distinction between teaching performance and the wider context within which the teacher exercises professional judgment. Interactive teaching was defined as:

> …all events and transactions that occur in the classroom during the time that the teacher and students are mutually engaged in implementing the educational programme.

It was suggested

> …interactive teaching occurs within a social system composed of four mutually dependent elements: (a) the teacher; (b) the content which represents the curriculum…; (c) the students as a social group…; (d) the students considered as individuals operating in a social context.

2.3 Hoyle (1974)[4] proposed a model of teaching comparable to that made by other authors.

> The core professional act of the teacher lies in his transaction with pupils… yet the work takes place in a context which is shaped by professional theory… greater professional control would appear to require a more extended form of professionality, a professionality which is not limited to classroom skills.

Figure 1: The concept of professional competence

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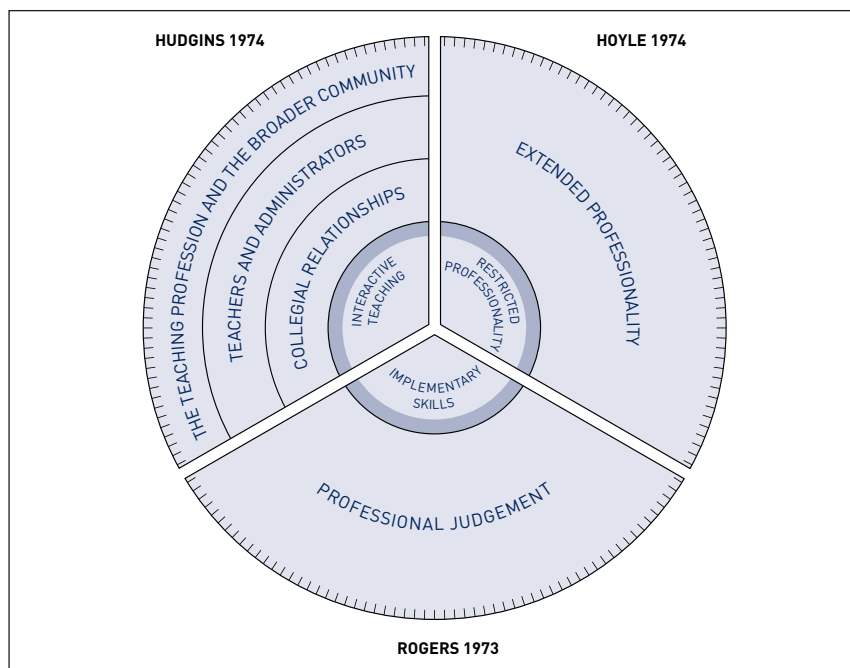
[3] Hudgins, B. (1974) Concepts in the pedagogical domain of teacher education. **Journal of Teacher Education.** Vol. XXV, No.4, pp 330–337.

[4] Hoyle, E. (19740 Professionality, professionalism and control in teaching. **London Educational Review.** Vol. 3, No.2, pp 13–19.

2.4 Effective interaction with students is central to the role of the teacher. It is clearly important that teachers have the ability to evaluate their work in the classroom. It is the basis of professional credibility as Elliott (1977)[5] suggested.

> *If teacher education is to prepare… experienced teachers for accountability then it must be concerned with developing their ability to reflect on practical teaching solutions… that teachers are able to identify and diagnose practical problems is very important because it indicates a respect for the teacher as an autonomous person who is capable of improving his own performance in the light of reflection.*

Teachers have gained increasing responsibility for all aspects of course design and assessment at a time of considerable innovation and change. It is essential that they have the means of developing a coherent body of knowledge concerning the creation of effective learning experiences for students in the classroom, laboratory, studio or workshop.

3. Possible changes in teaching and learning strategies

A number of studies have attempted to identify the precise nature of the skills which may be required by teachers in the context of contemporary changes in education.

3.1 Stukat (1971)[6] attempted to identify expected changes in the role of the teacher associated with contemporary changes in education. It was considered likely that a teacher working with systems based on the principles of individualised instruction and educational technology would be more involved in the following tasks:

- contact with individual students and less involvement with whole classes;

- diagnostic and evaluative activities;

- planning and organising learning materials;

- stimulating and motivating students by providing positive feedback, and a reduced involvement in presenting factual information and drill practice activities.

The implications of these competences for course costs and financial viability were not considered.

3.2 Hyer and McClure (1974)[7] observed:

> *Teachers formerly relied to a great extent on textbook assignments, lecturing, and question-answer or drill requiring rote learning. Now new methods are needed to accomplish broader and more socially-oriented goals. No longer is it sufficient to "teach the class"; provision must be made for the individualisation of instruction. Teachers must also utilise a variety of teaching-learning resources, print and non-print, as well as resources outside the school itself…*

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[5] Elliot, J. (1977) preparing teachers for classroom accountability. **Cambridge Journal of Education.** Vol. 7, No.2, pp 49–71.

[6] Stukat, K.G. (1971) Teacher role in change. **Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research.** pp 61–79.

[7] Hyer, A.L and McClure, R.M. (1974) **New Patterns of Teacher Education and Tasks.** Paris: OECD.

The innovations identified have significant cost implications and these need to be considered in designing courses.

3.3 Marklund (1976)[8] reported the following changes in teacher activity in an innovative school in Sweden for the academic year 1969-1970.

Teaching skills	Traditional model	Innnovative model
Teaching in classes or large groups	45%	14%
Individual tuition	46%	66%
Reading and listening to oral tests and accounts	9%	19%
Evaluation of work with pupils	0%	1%

4. Innovation and change brings a greater responsibility to analyse and evaluate our actions as teachers. There is evidence to suggest that the study of teaching has not been sufficiently emphasised in the past.

4.1 Watkins (1977)[9] analysed the subject matter and authorship of papers published in the journal *The Vocational aspects of Education* for the period 1968–77. The largest group of papers were concerned with the history of technical education, and the number dealing with teaching and course design formed less than 3% of the total number of published articles. University staff were authors of 41% of papers and only 10% of authors were employed in further education colleges. These figures refer to a periodical produced by the four former colleges of education (technical) and designed to meet the needs of practising teachers in further education.

4.2 Dunkin and Biddle (1974)[10] in an authoritative review of the literature concerned with teaching studies noted the relatively slight amount of research undertaken in the area.

> *…all of the studies reviewed here have involved systematic observation of teaching in classrooms.*

> *To say that these studies involved 'observation' means that the investigator actually looked at the processes of classroom interaction – although their observations may have taken place through mechanical means such as audio or videotape recordings.*

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[8] Marklund, S. (1976) **Towards a New Teacher Professionalism in European Perspectives in Teacher Education.** ed. Lomax, D.E. London: John Wiley.

[9] Watkins, (1977) The Vocational Aspect 1969–77: A Classified List of Articles from Numbers 48 to 74. **The Vocational Aspect of Education.** Vol. XXIX, No.74, pp 87–97.

[10] Dunkin and Biddle (1974) **The Study of Teaching.** New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

To say that these observations were 'systematic' means that instruments were developed for noting or measuring events that took place in those classrooms observed – and usually that a number of different classrooms or lessons were studied.

…only a 'handful' of studies have been conducted to date that meet these criteria. In preparing this text we reviewed somewhat less than 500 studies. Not all of these proved to concern research on teaching, according to our definition, and not all of those that did were sufficiently well conducted to be worth citing. Although not exhaustive, our search unearthed the majority of applicable publications. Thus this research effort is as yet a far cry from the more than 10,000 studies that have been published to date on 'teacher effectiveness' or the literally hundreds of thousands of studies conducted in well-researched areas of chemistry or medicine.

4.3 Crick and Ralph (1980) made the following observation concerning teaching in further education. The conclusion of the extract is perhaps of particular interestin the light of the statement just quoted.

It can clearly be seen that in the formal classroom in F.E. (as in the primary and secondary sectors) the commonest pattern of discourse exhibited is:

1. teacher initiates
2. student reacts
3. teacher follows up.

Very rarely, in this type of teaching, have we found the teacher renouncing the chance to evaluate a student's response. Even more rarely have we found examples of students developing each other's responses. In other words, only very rarely do students use (1) opening, or (3) following up moves… We hold that the learning deficiency implicit in these practices, reflect an over-reliance on formality…

It is appropriate to consider the possible approaches that may assist the detailed study of teaching and learning experiences.

5. The professional training of lecturers

In the introduction to a course of professional training for further and higher education lecturers a group of 24 lecturers was split into 4 groups to review a list of 45 professional competencies. Each group was asked to identify 6 competencies which they regarded as of major importance and a similar group of competencies they considered to be of little personal significance. The groups produced clusters of competencies that were compatible with some items being selected by many of the groups. The results of the study were broadly consistent over several years. The following table summarises the results for a typical year group.

Competencies given the **highest** priority	Competencies given the **lowest** priority
3 The teacher exemplifies the type of behaviours desired as student behaviours	**14** The teacher can treat students in a way that is appropriate to their level of maturity
8 The teacher can make it possible for students to evaluate their own work and progress	**16** The teacher can help students identify their aptitudes and abilities
29 The teacher can design learning experiences which develop inquiry, decision making and problem solving skills	**23** The teacher can develop in students the attitudes required for their effective participation in society
30 The teacher can help students perceive and deal with each other as human beings of intrinsic worth	**26** The teacher can utilise community resources for the purpose of improving classroom instruction
31 The teacher can provide opportunities for successful learning experiences which help students gain confidence	**32** The teacher can sequence course content in a way that enables students of all levels of abilitiy to progress satisfactorily
42 The teacher can include culturally relevant material in the classroom	**40** The teacher can employ appropriate strategies for the attainment of desired behavioural objectives

Figure 2: A course assessment in relation to a model of professional competence
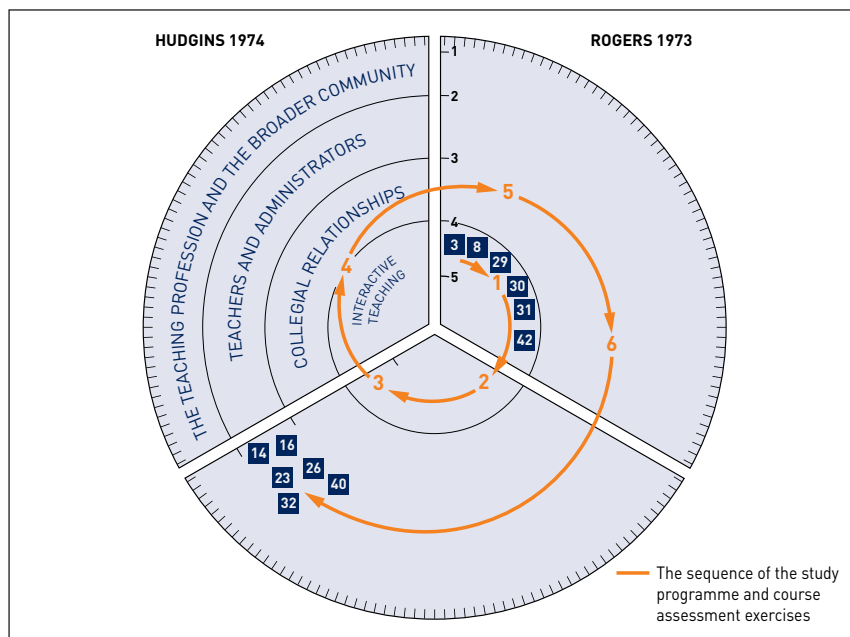
The competencies given the highest priority focus on the implementary skills of teachers guiding interaction with students. The competencies with the lowest priorities identify skills relating to curriculum and broader vocational issues.

6. Competencies and teacher training

The competencies identified by lecturers are an important consideration in planning the study programme.

6.1 The analyses and evaluation of teaching performances were the first element of the course programme. The study of their own classroom performances:

- raised an awareness of personal teaching skills

- provided a basis for the comparison of teaching performances

- promoted the development of new teaching skills and strategies

6.2 Teaching strategies emphasise the need to understand the level of student knowledge and their aptitudes, abilities and aspirations. Workshops explored issues such as reading skills, numerical abilities and spatial awareness.

6.3 The design and use of visual aids and other learning resources as a basis for co-ordinated class teaching.

6.4 The awareness of patterns of interaction in the classroom could inform the design and use of independent study packs.

6.5 The space and teaching costs of courses and the design of financially viable study programmes.

As the scope of the course increased skills emerged to design schemes of work and evaluate curriculum developments designed to improve student studios.. A basis was established to continue action research based on classroom experiences.

7. Methods of analysing and evaluating teaching

Various techniques are described but are not critically assessed.

7.1 Observer

Global analysis based on the observations of a colleague is the most widely used method for the study and assessment of teaching performance.

7.2 Language Studies

Classroom interaction may be studied using methods traditionally associated with literary criticism. This type of analysis requires detailed training over an extended period of time.

7.3   Rating Scales

These may be concerned with a set of skills as in Brown's Classroom Guidance Schedule[11]. The scales can be used by an individual teacher, by a colleague acting as an observer, or by students.

7.4   Interaction Analysis

Interaction analysis is the general label for systematic methods of studying the interaction between teachers and students. The most common system was developed by Flanders (1970)[12] and consists of ten categories. Interaction is coded at set intervals by writing down an appropriate number and at the end of a lesson a frequency count of each type of behaviour is obtained and patterns of interaction are analysed.

Interaction analysis does not evaluate teaching directly. It provides the means by which teachers can assess the quality of a lesson in the context of their objectives, the nature of the subject matter and the characteristics of the students. Classroom interaction is not a mechanical or automatic method of assessment. The strategy aids the professional judgement of teachers rather than rendering such judgement superfluous.

Time line display is an element of interaction analysis. Basic categories are coded at a fixed time interval, usually every three seconds, and the codings are recorded on a grid.

The study of a time display can provide various types of information.

7.4.1   Time spent using specific language categories during a lesson.

7.4.2   Tables which sub-total the types of language used during different parts of the lesson can be translated into graphs to give a visual indication of the ebb and flow of teacher-student interaction.

7.4.3   Pattern of interaction associated with particular learning episodes can be identified.

Perhaps the greatest change in teaching and learning that should occur is the increasing involvement of teachers in the analysis and assessment of their own teaching performances. It is the precise and detailed study of classroom events that will provide the insights and skills that are the basis of professional credibility.`

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[11] Brown G. (1975) Microteaching, London, Methuen.

[12] Flanders, N. (1971) Analysing Teaching Behaviour. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley.