



General Teaching Council  
for Northern Ireland



# **A Professional Voice for Teachers**

## **Building Learning Communities**



# Incidental Meanderings



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# Cautionary Note

**“ In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restricting schools, rewriting curricula and revising texts if we continue to ... dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends...”**

**Palmer P. J**

# Keepers of Tomorrow

- **Teaching is all about mastery but is never far from mystery**
- **Teaching is a daily exercise in vulnerability**
- **Teaching transcends the acquisition of competences and is rooted in values and emotional connectedness**





- **A vision based on consensual values and aspirations.**
- **Building capacity through dialogue, conversations and engagement.**
- **Relational skills rooted in trust & respect.**
- **A commitment to shared learning through experience.**

**West-Burnham, Farrar & Otero 2007**



# More Focussed Meanderings



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- **Competences and Regulation**
- **Working Group processes**
- **GTCNI: teaching as a Profession**
- **Competences & Professional Knowledge**
- **Values and Teaching**
- **Structural Issues**
- **Extended Competence Framework**

# Competences & Regulation

## **GTCNI Independent Regulatory Body**

- 98 Order - Conduct**
- 06 Order - Competences**

**RPA – will clarify aspects of 98  
Order**



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# Working Group Processes

- **All Stakeholders Represented**
- **50% actual practitioners**
- **Evidence informed**
  - **GTCs Scotland Wales**
  - **CASS**
  - **Academics**

## Imprimatur of Council



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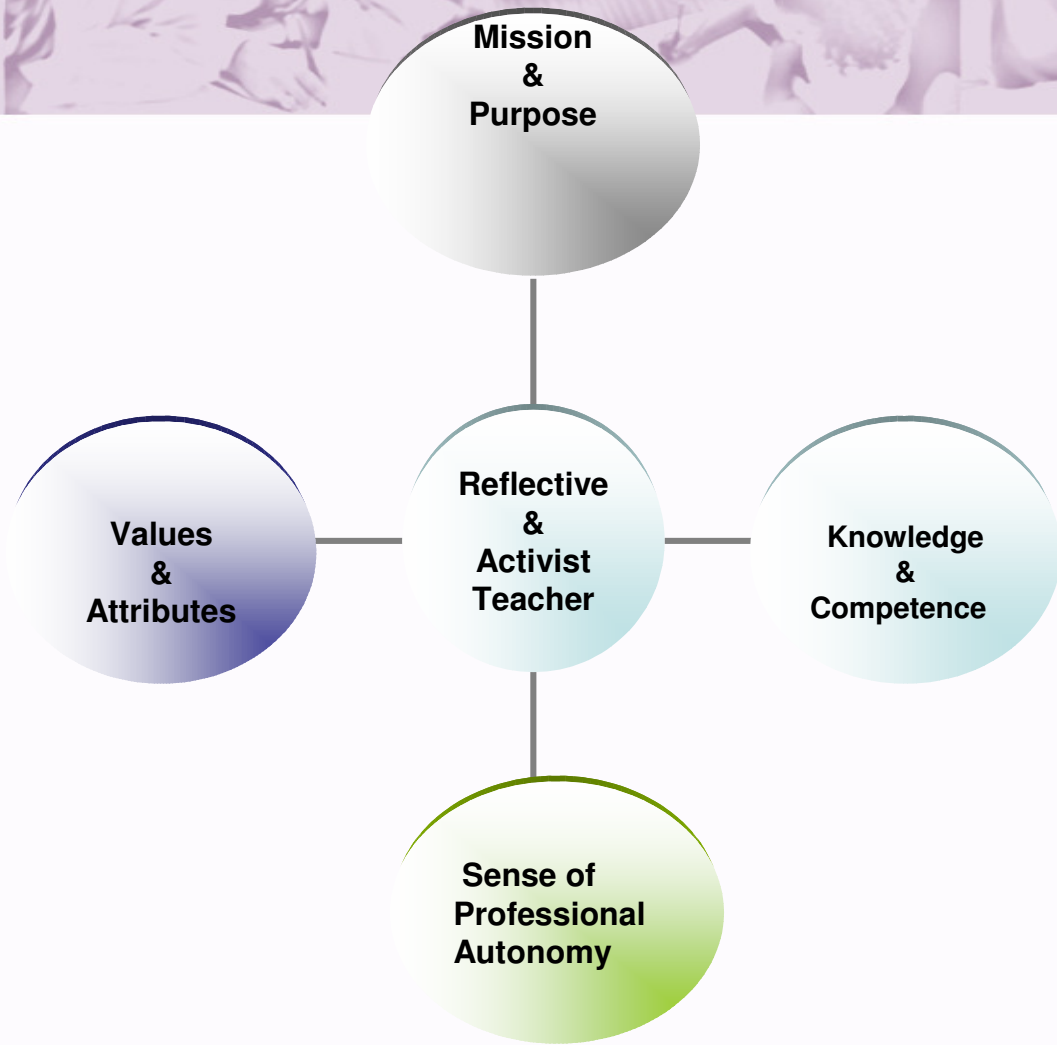
# Teachers as Professionals

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Teachers, in discharging their responsibilities, engage first and foremost as individuals with a sense of **moral purpose** and responsibility and it is in the interaction between **mission, ethical understanding, and professional knowledge** that the mystery that is never far from the heart of good teaching, is to be found. In short, **teaching can never be reduced to a set of discrete skills to be mastered in some mechanical process of assimilation.** To adopt such a reductionist approach would be to deny the **intellectual basis for our work and the richness of the ongoing dialogue and learning that enhances our professional practice.**



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# Characteristics of Professional Relationship

## Trust - in respect of :

- **Competence**
- **Conduct**
- **Commitment**



# The Reflective Activist Profession



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# Reflective & Activist Professional 1

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- **concerned with the purposes and consequences of education, as well as what might be called technical proficiency;**
- **prepared to experiment with the unfamiliar and learn from their experiences;**
- **have an approach characterised by open-mindedness and wholeheartedness;**

# Reflective & Activist Professional 2

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- **committed to professional dialogue in school and beyond;**
- **have working patterns characterised by a process of action, evaluation and revision; and**
- **assume, as life-long learners, responsibility for their ongoing professional development**

# Dalmau & Gudjonsdottir

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- **‘pedagogues and experts in teaching and learning’**: activist teachers share their knowledge and understandings in an on-going professional dialogue;
- **‘reflective and critical problem solvers’**: teachers continuously monitor pupil progress and learning within the classroom; outside that environment they reflect both as individuals and as communities of practice on their practice and pupil progress;
- **‘researchers and change agents’**: in seeking a deeper understanding of their practice, or in seeking to plan for change, teachers use a variety of evaluation and action research techniques to collect and interpret findings, to inform their thinking and decision making; and
- **‘creators of knowledge and theory builders’**: in the process of reflective practice and action research teachers develop new understandings of learning, teaching and educational change.



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# Professional Knowledge: A perspective



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# Professional Knowledge

Rhona Sharpe

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“ Professional knowledge is no longer viewed as just consisting of a **standardised, explicit and fixed knowledge base**. It is now seen as knowledge which **exists in use, is ethical in its use and is changed by experience**. The distinctive nature of professional knowledge lies in the **interplay between its construction and use**. When teachers use their knowledge, use changes what that knowledge is.”



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# Structures



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# Competence: developmental continuum

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- **Life-long — hence Code Commitment**
- **Competences - never fully mastered!**
  - the nature and level of the teacher's experience and their personal effectiveness;
  - the work-based context; and
  - the roles teachers have experienced and the development opportunities arising from such experiences.



# Dimensions of Development 1

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- **greater complexity in teaching e.g. in handling mixed-ability classes, reluctant learners, classes marked by significant diversity, or inter-disciplinary work;**
- **the deployment of a wider range of teaching strategies;**
- **the ability to adduce evidence of one's effectiveness;**
- **basing teaching on a wider range of evidence, reading and research;**



# Dimensions of Development 2

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- **extending impact beyond the classroom- fuller participation in the life of the school;**
- **the capacity to exercise autonomy, to innovate, to improvise; and**
- **a pronounced capacity for self-criticism and self-improvement; the ability to impact on colleagues through mentoring and coaching, modelling good practice, contributing to the literature on teaching and learning and the public discussion of professional issues, leading staff development, all based on the capacity to theorise about policy and practice**



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# Core Messages

**complexity – diversity -**

**self criticism - self improvement - growth**

**research - reflect**

**mentoring – coaching - collaboration**

**theorise – reflect - debate**

**innovate – improvise - empathise**

**“CREATIVITY” & “IMPROVEMENT”**

Competence Statement		Phase Exemplars			
Number	Aspect of Competence	Initial Teacher Education	Induction	Early Professional Development	Continuing Professional Development, collaborative practice and school improvement
General competence statement.	Aspects for clarity of understanding and precision.	Essential knowledge, understanding and skills acquisition along with the principles of basic reflective practice and evaluation.	Application to pupil and classroom context with evaluation and adaptation	Application to pupil, classroom and wider school context with adaptation, evaluation and refinement.	Application and evaluation to classroom and whole school practice. Adaptation and refinement to context, meeting wider corporate responsibilities.



# Extended Framework



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# Chartered Teacher

- Concept not new
  - Scotland tied to salary
  - Wales-Assembly funding pilot
  - NI Original NITEP
- Need to provide a coherent pathway
- Creates a template to “map” provision
- Provides foundation for “Portfolios”
- “Situates” PRSD



# Our Collective Responsibility

To be....“**active agents** in the production of a new pedagogic discourse, rather than merely the consumers of the professional knowledge produced by academics and educational researchers.”

*(Edwards & Brunton)*