

Competence and Outcomes-based Reform in England

Julian Stanley

Centre for Education and Industry,

University of Warwick

DEHEMS CONFERENCE

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English VET System – a market system

- Largely a school-based system – post 16 Further Education Colleges and plus some provision through general secondary schools
- Small apprenticeship system – strong in limited sectors, e.g. engineering, construction. Delivered by enterprises - sometimes in partnerships with Further Education Colleges and/or private training providers
- Voluntarist – learners choose programmes – funding by level rather by sector/occupation
- Qualifications owned by independent awarding bodies but in accordance with occupational standards produced by sector bodies:
 - ‘Competence-based’ or occupational: National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
 - ‘Vocational’ or ‘Outcome-based’: e.g. BTEC Nationals, OCR Nationals,
 - Social partnership is voluntary
- Labour market is relatively unregulated

'Diplomas': 2007 - 2012

- national vocational or 'applied' qualifications – 14 sectors; for 14 – 19 year olds; levels 1-3
- broad, sector-related, hybrid qualifications
- 'employer led' through state-funded national 'sector' development agencies
- included general knowledge, maths and English and transversal knowledge and skills
- unitised
- learning outcomes not competences
- extensive national consultation and marketing

What happened:

- Increased employer and HE engagement in qualification and curriculum development
- Improved work-related delivery
- Low take up – new qualifications compete with existing qualifications
- Relatively expensive
- Political change in 2010: league table value and funding sharply reduced
- Further fall in take up

Apprenticeship Reform

- Commitment to apprenticeship as preferred mode of vocational learning (Wolf Report)
- Increase in state funding for employers
- Increase in company designed apprenticeships
- Major increase in numbers of apprenticeships
- Surveys show high general levels of satisfaction

Issues around Apprenticeship Reform

- Duration and quality
- Concerns about financial advantages for larger providers, e.g. Carillion
- Deadweight – businesses that convert existing trainees and employees into apprentices
- Lack of increase in apprenticeships for young
- Lack of increase in higher apprenticeships
- Review of Apprenticeships in place

Learning from reforms:

- Outcomes and competence based development may fail to win credibility for new qualifications
- Ownership and interests – finding ways of resolving differences
- Politically and socially contested value of new VET qualifications
- Funding is a key control tool
- Volume and quality of employer engagement can be improved
- Confidence and attitudes of learners and families matter
- Confidence and capability of providers matter