



**The Well Versed pilot project:
An investigation into developing a bespoke
qualification for poets working in schools.**
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1. Project rationale

Within the Motion report (2010), investigating poetry and young people, it was stated that funding need to be:

“To support the development and delivery of accredited training programmes and resources for poets wishing to improve their skills when working with young people in schools and in out-of-school learning contexts.”

The ‘Poetry and Young People’ report (Motion, 2010) also identified four key areas for future focus:

1. To improve training for teachers and other education practitioners so they are more confident and skilled in their approaches to teaching poetry across the educational phases, across all areas of the curriculum and beyond
2. To support the development and delivery of accredited training programmes and resources for poets wishing to improve their skills when working with young people in schools and in out-of-school learning contexts
3. To support the development of innovative digital resources and platforms for poetry which engage young people
4. To encourage a greater involvement of young people in the decision-making, priority-setting and leadership associated with improving the poetry offer to young audiences and participant

One of these key areas that the East of England regional pilot project was aiming to address was; “FE/HE engagement to outline accreditation options, inset potential and pathways to work/employment opportunities in FE contexts” (Writers’ Centre Norwich, anon).

Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to investigate the possibilities of creating a qualification that provided development and support for poets and also to provide a quality standard for the work that poets do in schools and how local FE links could be used to support this. In order to do this the activities of the pilot project have been investigated. These activities would form the basis of the poets development programme. In order to convert this development programme into an assessed qualification it must be included in the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). There are three options for doing this. Each of these is considered with its benefits

and limitations. The choice of awarding body is considered comparing National Open College Network (NOCN) and City College Norwich Qualifications (CCNQ). Once decisions about the type of qualification and the awarding body had been made, the next steps would then involve the development process that has been outlined in this report.

2. Data sources

The following research has been undertaken:

Notes from preparation sessions for poets

Observation/Recordings of teaching sessions conducted at Wicklewood Primary School, Hammond High School Swaffham, Costessey Junior School

Discussions with/ feedback from poets and teachers

Discussions with Writers Centre Norwich

Discussions with CCNQ and NOCN

Notes/Recording of evaluation session with poets

3. Poets activities in the Pilot

The poets have undertaken four sets of activities during this pilot project, which covered: 1/ knowledge and understanding, 2/ planning, 3/ delivery and 4/ review. These main areas for development within the poets provide a logical structure for any proposed, practice-based qualification.

The poets' development programme within the Well Versed pilot project also provided an underpinning knowledge and understanding of the wider education environment. It included the following subject areas, primarily, delivered as class based sessions.

1. Curriculum update
2. Local Authority structures and developments
3. Lesson planning across early years, primary and secondary
4. Best practice (in theory and practice) teaching and writing skills
5. Exploring modern poetry: the canon versus the live arena
6. Exploring mutual criticism (age appropriate)
7. Exploring performance (poetry/live lit) in the classroom

8. Exploring technologies (old and new).

The 'Planning the delivery of a session' was conducted with teaching staff and consisted of a short session where planning could take place between the poet pairing and teacher.

Delivery of activities in the classroom involved two poets working with one class of pupils and their teacher over 4 sessions. A wide variety of exercises, games and activities were used to encourage the learners to write and perform their own poetry.

A review and evaluation was conducted at the end of the project, with separate sessions for poets and teachers. Poets were invited to meet and discuss their experiences and reflect upon the success of their work.

4. The Qualification

The four key stages identified from the pilot; knowledge and understanding, planning, delivery and review provide a logical structure for any future practice-based qualification.

This was largely supported by the Poets evaluation session, which emphasized the need to support poets new to working in schools. However, many of the poets involved within the review session were already quite experienced to working in schools. The activities from the pilot that they thought were particularly useful included; shadowing other poets, provision of practical exercises and mentoring. They also highlighted the importance of developing their relationship with the teacher and planning sessions jointly with the teacher. Their comments also highlighted a need to address an apparent lack of structure and information from the taught sessions. The poets felt that the underpinning knowledge could have been delivered in a more flexible way, such as the material being provided in a handbook format. However, ultimately, their discussions reflected a feeling that they had learnt best from being in the classroom, initially with other poets and teachers but also by gradually getting more involved with the delivery themselves.

This type of work-based learning, often referred to as experiential learning, using the poets' own experience of planning, delivering within schools, review and evaluation of their performance, supported by underpinning knowledge and understanding,

could easily form the basis of a qualification that would provide naturally occurring opportunities for both development and assessment.

4.1. Structure of Qualifications

The QCF is an OFQUAL regulated national system for recognizing skills and vocational qualifications. Each qualification is constructed by using 'x' number of units (see example qualification in Appendix A). Each unit within a qualification carries a 'credit value'. This 'credit value' specifies the number of credits that a learner would gain were they to complete that unit. Learners would need to accumulate a certain number of credits in order to gain the qualification. Also, a 'level' would be awarded to each unit that indicated its difficulty, which can vary from Level 1 to level 8 (see Appendix A, which gives an example of a qualification with and associated unit in Appendix B).

As a general rule, one credit represents ten notional hours of learning, indicating how much time the average learner would take to complete that unit. The credits accumulate to form the level of qualification, and are grouped as follows:

1. 1 to 12 credits (Award)
2. 13 to 36 credits (Certificate)
3. 37 credits or more (Diploma)

The 'title' of a qualification, whether an award, certificate or diploma, would indicate a suite of information, such as 1/ its difficulty, 2/ how long it would take the average learner to complete, and 3/ its general content. This information is usually presented as follows:

1. Qualification level (from lowest, 1, up to level 8)
2. Qualification size (award / certificate / diploma)
3. Content of the qualification

Each unit would have assigned to it a number of learning outcomes (LO) (see Appendix B and C for example units). Each learning outcome would have a matching set of assessment criteria. Assessment criteria can be set in a number of ways depending on the type of achievement and the purpose of the qualification. A wide range of assessment methods are used, such as observation of the learner carrying out a practical activity, role play, essay writing and reflective accounts. Prior experience and learning, known as APL (accredited prior learning) or APEL

(accredited prior experiential learning) can be used as evidence where it is deemed to meet the qualification's requirements.

The use of any units from OFQUALs Register of Regulated Qualifications can and must be incorporated into a qualification if it is suitable rather than rewriting a similar unit. (For further information: <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualification-and-assessment-framework/89-articles/145-explaining-the-qualifications-and-credit-framework>)

5. Options for Development of a qualification:

There are three alternative approaches to developing a qualification; 1/ a fully accredited qualification on the Quality and Credit Framework (QCF), 2/ an existing qualification with additional units added, or 3/ a combination of existing and bespoke units.

5.1. Fully accredited qualification

A fully accredited qualification on the QCF, written from scratch or adopting existing units from other qualifications where appropriate, requires the support of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) as the sector skills body responsible. The application process would require a justification for the new course, which would include a rationale for the qualification, support for it from interested parties, learner volume and identification of the proposed target group. These information sets would be considered before approval could be obtained for the new qualification to be added to the QCF register of qualifications. This would be to ensure that it has a unique purpose and does not replicate other qualifications.

Advantages	Disadvantages
A full qualification can include exactly what you require.	The process to accredit is far more lengthy than the other options. It is likely to take between 3 to 12 months from first meeting to accreditation.
It would be listed on the QCF	It has to fall within the guidelines of all qualifications with regard to credit value and naming conventions

Advantages	Disadvantages
It can have a nationally recognized title to convey exactly the purpose of the qualification, its level and its credit value.	As it involves support from other organizations, they may influence the content of the qualification.
This can then be a nationally recognized quality standard for Poets/Creative writers working in schools.	

5.2. Taking an existing qualification and adding additional units to it.

This involves perusing the QCF and indentifying an existing qualification that would almost meet the specific requirements. With the addition of new units, specifically written for the proposed qualification, would then make this the ideal qualification. Poets would then achieve whatever the existing qualification level was, ie, award, certificate or diploma, with additional units listed.

On looking through the OFQUAL register of qualifications there were several qualifications that had similarities but were not based on the same relationship between teacher and poet. Qualifications for ‘Trainers’ and ‘teaching assistants’ could be viewed as matches but in practice cover quite a few areas that were not relevant to this situation (see Appendix A, B and C for examples).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Tried and tested qualification and units	There may not be a suitable single existing qualification that could be used.
Flexibility to add extra units to make it more relevant	This option may require whole units or subject areas being covered for the qualification that are not deemed important or relevant to the work of poets in schools.
This new combination of units can be named but the certificate would show the nationally recognised qualification title plus all units achieved.	

Advantages	Disadvantages
the development of the new units may take 6 - 12 weeks but this would be a quick route.	

5.3. Using a combination of existing and bespoke units

By using a number of existing and bespoke units, to ensure that the subject area is suitably covered as required by the qualification, is a third option. This would not be a formal qualification in its own right, but would be certificated as a number of units. This combination of units could be given a name but could not use the Award, Certificate or Diploma titles.

Advantages	Disadvantages
This is a quick and easy method that produces the units required.	As it is not a recognized qualification then it could lack credibility.
It could be named, but could not use a recognized title (Award, Certificate, Diploma)	It could lack a clear and understandable identity.

6. The Awarding Body

Whichever of the three choices detailed above was to be followed, the programme could be accredited through either the National Open College Network (NOCN) or City College Norwich Qualifications (CCNQ).

6.1. National Open College Network

The National Open College Network (NOCN) is a leading UK awarding organisation, offering high quality, flexible, credit-based qualifications. There were more than 2500 centres nationally offering NOCN qualifications and/or NOCN accredited provision. It currently has over 100 qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). These qualifications were constructed of more than 1,000 units from a wide range of subjects.

Advantages	Disadvantages
NOCN is a widely recognised awarding body with a reputation for delivering high quality, flexible qualifications.	Prefers a relatively large target audience
NOCN had many years of experience in developing accredited qualifications	Does not have experience of course delivery.
NOCN does not charge for the development of full qualification but charges £82 for developing each 'local' unit.	NOCN says the process of developing a qualification can take up to 1 year.

6.2. City College Norwich Qualifications (CCNQ)

City College Norwich was the first College in the country to gain awarding status, which means that it is able to accredit courses or training as nationally recognised qualifications. CCNQ has worked with Norfolk Constabulary to accredit pre-entry training and with financial services companies to accredit a course for new recruits to the sector.

Advantages	Disadvantages
CCNQ is a relatively small organisation and as such can provide flexible and responsive support for more specialist/specific requirements	CCNQ has less experience and a limited track record of developing qualifications
CCNQ offers to minimise the bureaucracy of the process and liaise with outside bodies, such as the sector skills council on its client's behalf	CCNQ is a new awarding body has yet to establish its reputation as an awarding body
CCNQ could draw on the experience of teaching teams at the college to support the writing of the qualification.	CCNQ charges for writing a qualification based on a formula that includes the writers cost plus administration cost e.g. £1200 for 3 awards with a total of 30 credits.

Advantages	Disadvantages
CCNQ estimates the process of developing the qualification and gaining approval takes 3 - 6 months	

7. Next Steps

7.1. Working with NOCN

NOCN encourages the use of either the second or third options given above for developing a qualification; i.e. taking an existing qualification with additional units added or using a combination of existing and bespoke units. Only after it had been established that neither of these two options would provide a suitable qualification for the client, would it then consider a fully accredited qualification on the Quality and Credit Framework (QCF).

The process for a fully accredited qualification involves an initial meeting to establish if the proposal has sufficient market demand and that it meets with NOCN's objectives. NOCN then puts together an initial proposal that would be submitted to their CEO. Once reviewed by the CEO, who would hopefully give it the OK to proceed to gather further information, which would then be presented to a Qualifications Development Approvals group. Providing the proposal received the approval to proceed, NOCN would develop the qualification, work with relevant bodies / organisations to gain support, and finally present it to OFQUAL for approval. Once the qualification was part of the QCF it would then be available for any approved training provider to deliver.

7.2. Working with CCNQ

CCNQ works very closely with clients to produce a tailor made qualification. An initial meeting would be arranged between the client and CCNQ to set out clearly the requirements desired by the client. CCNQ then takes this outline and when appropriate uses teaching staff to assist in putting together a draft qualification, ultimately, for the clients approval. CCNQ liaises with relevant bodies / organisations and would present the final qualification proposal to OFQUAL for its approval. As with NOCN, once the qualification had been formally recognised, it would be available from the QCF for any training provider to deliver. The close involvement between

CCNQ and the CCN's teaching teams would provide a simple and logical route for delivery at CCN.

7.3 An Introduction to teaching for the arts community

Following discussions with Writers Centre Norwich a potentially clearer way forward had been identified that would aim to broaden the scope of any such qualification to the wider arts community, therefore widening its potential audience (see Appendix D)

The aim is similar in most respects to a qualification specifically for poets except for the fact that it broadens the potential target audience to include all artists who wish to engage with teaching but have received no previous training in how to do this. It would aim to provide an introduction and overview to teaching skills, pedagogy and practices, presentational skills, developing and structuring programmes, sessions and delivery formats, either within schools, to the wider community or specific interest groups.

Such a programme could be nationally available and potentially delivered via a blend of distance learning, classroom, study breaks, and mentoring/coaching.

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Appendix A

Sample Qualification

Qualification Number 500/9976/0

Title CIPD Level 3 Award in Learning and Development Essentials (QCF)

Awarding Organisation: [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#)

Qualification Type: QCF

Qualification Sub Type: None

Qualification Level: Level 3

Sector Subject Area: 15.3 Business Management

Purpose B: Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area

Sub Purpose B2: Develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area

Total Credits: 3

Minimum Guided Learning Hours: 15

Maximum Guided Learning Hours: 60

Overall Grading Type: Pass

Qualification Description

The CIPD Level 3 Award in Learning and Development Essentials learners has a minimum credit value of 3 with a maximum of 12 credits permitted. Learners must achieve a minimum of 3 credits from Group A mandatory units. Learners may also choose to complete up to a maximum of 8 credits from Group B optional units.

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[Developing yourself as an effective human resources or learning and development practitioner](#)

[Understanding organisations and the role of human resources](#)

Appendix B

Sample Unit from this Qualification

Unit Reference Number: M/600/0671

Qualification Framework: QCF

Title **Delivering learning and development activities**

Unit Level: Level 3

Guided Learning Hours: 30

Unit Credit Value 6

SSAs 13.1 Teaching and Lecturing, 15.3 Business Management

Unit Grading Structure: Pass

Learning Outcome - The learner will:	Assessment Criterion - The learner can:
¹ Be able to create an environment conducive to learning	1.1 Explain the individual and environmental factors that impact positively or negatively on learning
	1.2 Create a positive learning environment
² Be able to plan and deliver a learning and development activity to individuals and groups	2.1 Write a plan with clear aims and learning outcomes based on : - identified need - principles of adult learning - resource availability - appropriate assessment methods
	2.2 Structure, sequence and manage a learning and development activity
	2.3 Support learners through questioning and feedback
	2.4 Demonstrate good practice in assessing learning using formative and summative methods as appropriate
	2.5 Summarise and conclude the learning and development activity
	2.6 Assist learners to reflect on their learning and identifying further development needs
³ Know how to review learning and development activities	3.1 Seek and analyse participant feedback
	3.2 Reflect on and evaluate effectiveness of own inputs
	3.3 Make recommendations for future improvement

Appendix C

Sample Unit From Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools (QCF)

Unit Reference Number: D/601/7711

Qualification Framework QCF

Title **Plan and deliver learning activities under the direction of a teacher**

Unit Level: Level 3

Guided Learning Hours: 21

Unit Credit Value 4

SSAs: 13.2 Direct Learning Support

Unit Grading Structure: Pass

Learning Outcome - The learner will:	Assessment Criterion - The learner can:
1 Be able to plan learning activities under the direction of the teacher	1.1 Explain the objectives, content and intended outcomes of learning activities as agreed with the teacher
	1.2 Explain how the learning activities relate to statutory and non-statutory frameworks for the school curriculum
	1.3 Plan and prepare learning activities, as directed by the teacher, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) individual learners b) small groups of learners
	1.4 Use knowledge of the learners, the curriculum and own expertise to contribute to planning partnership working with the teacher as part of the overall lesson pl
2 Be able to deliver learning activities	2.1 Demonstrate the use of teaching and learning methods to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) meet the agreed learning objectives and intended outcomes b) maintain learners' motivation and interest c) support and challenge learners d) gather feedback on learners' progress and achievements
	2.2 Promote and support the inclusion of all learners involved in learning activities
	2.3 Organise and manage learning activities to ensure the safety of learners
	2.4 Work in partnership with the teacher to support learning activities for the whole class
3 Be able to monitor and	3.1 Monitor learners' responses to activities

Learning Outcome - The learner will:	Assessment Criterion - The learner can:
assess learning outcomes	3.2 Demonstrate ways of modifying activities to meet learners' needs
	3.3 Monitor learners' participation and progress in learning activities
	3.4 Use monitoring outcomes to provide learners with focused support and feedback
	3.5 Use a range of assessment techniques to support the evaluation of learners' progress in relation to the intended learning outcomes

Appendix D

Email Outlining An introduction to teaching for the arts community

Subject: Following yesterday's meeting

Dear Leila,

After our meeting, Rachel and I were thinking about potential future avenues for such a programme and I started to hone in on the following possibility:

Programme title: *An introduction to teaching for the arts community*

Aim: The programme is for artists who wish to engage with teaching / disseminating information but have received no previous training in how to do this. It will provide an introduction and overview to teaching skills / pedagogy and practices, presentational skills, developing and structuring programmes and sessions and delivery formats, either within schools and / or to the wider community / interest groups (for example, we have been involved with another project that uses art/artists in a structured way to engage with people and encourage their therapy).

I think the programme could be at Level 3 (award)?

For starters, typical module titles (thus, giving an indicative coverage of the programme) could be: Introduction to the national curricula; previous experiences of artists in education; how to plan a programme / session and manage it; teaching practices/ pedagogy (blended learning, e-technology, active learning / participatory approach, cohort management, etc.); identifying, setting and methods of assessment; Reflective learning and personal development; etc.. These modules could have variable weighting / credit value as some would likely contain much greater content than others. Each module would need its own module specification sheet, giving information such as its content, learning outcomes, timescales, delivery method and assessment method, weighting, etc., as stated in the report.

The programme could be nationally available and potentially delivered via distance learning and / or through a combination of distance, classroom / study breaks, and / or mentoring / coaching (depending upon the assessment criteria of modules)? I would guess , discussion with a wider audience / partnership would be the next logical step to canvass opinions / thoughts on the idea, which is what I think came out of the discussion yesterday?

The above are just my initial thoughts, but I hope they help you with framing future thoughts / discussions about the possibilities around this matter?

Regards,
angus