On professions and being professional

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This version September 2015.

1 Introduction

This short paper grew out of a 2002 article by the author in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists,* vol. 23 no. 1. An earlier version was also published by the former Institute for Learning in 2009.

The paper explores the idea of 'profession' and associated matters such as professional knowledge, entry routes and what it means to be a professional. It is a personal take on the subject rather than an academic paper, though I have provided references as well as a few extracts from other of my reports or journal papers (these are italicised or in quotes, and referenced in the endnotes). The paper will be updated or added to from time to time (see above for the last revision date).

2 The idea of 'profession'

The word 'profession' stems from the Latin verb profiteri*, to profess, in the sense of making a formal commitment or vow (as in taking a monastic oath). This can be interpreted as suggesting that joining a profession requires a commitment to acquiring its knowledge and skills, and to adopting its ethos. If there is any agreement on what is needed for an occupation to be a profession (using the term in its more restrictive Anglophone sense) it remains close to this etymological root. Drawing on Hoyle and John[1] and Freidson[2], characteristics that gain fairly wide acceptance are the need for expert knowledge, normally drawing on some form of theoretical base; the presence of an ethos that serves the public good; and independence of thought and judgement that transcends any employment or contractual relationship[3].*

A historic perspective on professions[4] will tend to group them into four or more types depending on the era when they began to professionalise. Generally these are the ancient professions (the priesthood, university teaching, law and physicianship); the mediaeval trade occupations (including surgery, dentistry and architecture); the industrial-era professions (typified by engineering); and various groups that emerged or professionalised in the twentieth century (from teachers and social workers to accountants and personnel managers). A recent trend is for some old-established learned professions (such as curators and some scientific occupations) to re-professionalise according to more contemporary models.

A social construct perspective on professions considers what kinds of occupations are generally construed to be 'professions.' Nathan Glazer's distinction between 'major' and 'minor' professions partly takes this approach[5], and it is also explicit in Peter Morrell's 'primary' and 'secondary' professions[6]. It can produce slightly different lists to other approaches to the study of professions (Glazer's 'major professions' include business management, and Morrell includes senior military officers, police chiefs, professors and judges in his list of primary professions), and the results depend

to an extent on how the idea of 'profession' is presented. In my experience most people will include medicine and law in their list of obvious professions, then it depends on personal knowledge and experience: architects, engineers, vets, dentists, teachers, accountants are among those commonly mentioned. A list like Morrell's is more likely to result from asking for occupations that are regarded as having authority in their fields.

A static or trait perspective identifies characteristics that mark out occupations as professions. Classic examples are provided by Millerson[7] and Schein[8], while a more contemporary one is given by Belfall[9]. Belfall's list includes the presence of an assessment process for entry to the profession, a common body of knowledge, a code of ethics and a professional association. The difficulty with this approach is that it can be debated endlessly, it tends to be based on a few ideal types and therefore represents a particular view of profession, and it also tends to be a product of its time. Nevertheless a few characteristics do appear to be fairly general and stand the test of time, as suggested in the opening paragraph. These characteristics have the advantage of being independent of any particular model of organisation, and they can be applied to individual practitioners as much as organised professions.

Of the main sociological perspectives on professions, structuralist or functionalist approaches study the functions that professions perform in relation to society, so that for instance they can be seen as means of making expertise available to the public good, and professional ethics as offering safeguards against external pressures such as those of bureaucracy and the market;[10] a summary of the functionalist argument is provided by Hoyle[11]. Neo-Weberian approaches, such as the work of Larson[12], focus on professionalisation as a market 'project' and its effect in creating market or employment rewards for those who achieve professional status. Marxist approaches focus more on professions in relation to power and class relationships within society[13], while interactionist approaches are concerned with the interactions that occur within practice situations and the meanings that these have in terms of wider occupational or societal relationships[14]. Systemic approaches examine professions from an evolutionary perspective and in terms of how they interact with each other and with other societal institutions[15]. More recently, sociologists have tended to focus on "themes such as gender, class and social mobility[16], examine the colonisation of the professional ideal for managerial or political ends[17], or analyse how professions work internationally[18,19].

3 Professions, professional associations and professionals

These three concepts are often confused and characteristics overlapped, so it is worth looking at them separately.

A professional might be considered as a person who embodies the idea inherent in 'profiteri', and following Hoyle & John[20], makes proficient use of expert or specialist knowledge, exercises autonomous thought and judgement, and makes a voluntary commitment to a set of principles. Such a person need not be a member of an easily-defined profession or of a professional association; it is possible to work as a professional from a set of expertise and skills that is relatively unique to the individual. The concept of 'extended professionalism'[21], as well as my 'Model B' practice (see later), are both indicative of practitioners that while they may be affiliated to a recognised profession are able to practise from this independent perspective.

A profession might be considered as a reasonably well-defined occupation that meets a defensible set of criteria for being a profession, whether those are derived from a social construct, trait or sociological perspective. Arguments about whether or not occupations can be considered professions are highly perspective-dependent, so the perspective and criteria being used need to be stated. A rule-of-thumb that is sometimes applied is that a profession normally requires education or training at university level or the equivalent, and is governed by a professional body of some form; but even that is problematic as it excludes among others teaching (including the ancient profession of university teaching) and the priesthood, as well as newer professional groups particularly in the technology and communications field. In practice it is not strictly necessary for a profession to have a professional association or registration body either because sufficient identity and coherence is provided through employment, or because (particularly in rapidly-evolving areas) formal organisation has few benefits.

Professional bodies exist in a wide range of types that include learned societies, semi-formal associations based on communities of practice, self-regulating professional associations, state-backed regulatory bodies, bodies that perform a similar role to a trade union, and 'paired' bodies where one organisation is responsible for registration and regulatory matters and another for membership, promotional activity and continuing development.

4 Professions in British law

The idea of a 'regulated' profession is not a precise one in the UK. A distinction is sometimes drawn between professions that are self-regulating, i.e. members voluntarily join an association that has some form of entry-gate, qualified status, code of practice and means of expulsion for malpractice, and those that are regulated by law. However, few professions have all of their customary activities protected by law, and in many of those where there are legal restrictions, there is rarely direct state involvement in regulation. Regulation (voluntary or statutory) may be carried out by a unitary professional association, by far the commonest model; a regulator or registration body that works in parallel with a membership association (common in the legal professions); or a regulator that is separate from any membership body (the norm in the health and social care sector). Regulatory or registration bodies normally have significant lay representation on their boards, while self-regulating associations may or may not have lay members.

Two kinds of legal restriction are used in the UK. A 'reserved function' is created by a statute that defines both an area of work and who (in terms of qualification or licensing) can carry it out; examples include auditing corporate bodies (restricted to qualified members of particular accountancy bodies), and representing clients in court (restricted to barristers and certain solicitors). Reserved functions are not limited to occupations normally considered to be professions, and include for instance fitting and servicing gas appliances, electrical installation, using a marine radio, applying agricultural pesticides, and shoeing horses. Other restrictions may be created applying specifically to the public sector (e.g. teaching in state schools), or in the form of a *de facto* reserved function where the requirements of civic authorities, insurance companies or monopsonistic clients make it very difficult to practise without the relevant qualifications or membership (e.g. banks insisting that business plans are approved by a qualified accountant, or local authorities requiring sign-off of building works by an architect or surveyor). The second legal restriction is a 'reserved title', such as architect, dentist or solicitor, which can only be used by an appropriately-qualified peron; however, on its own this does

not prevent the work associated with the title from being carried out by anyone else. Outside of the health and legal sectors a relatively small proportion of UK professions have reserved titles or functions.

A chartered profession, common in the UK and occasionally found in countries where the British monarch is or was the head of state, is one in which the relevant association has obtained a Royal Charter. A charter is a form of incorporation (i.e. an alternative to a limited company) granted by the Privy Council, a committee of Members of Parliament that in origin were the monarch's inner circle of advisers. Chartered professions must act in a way that reflects the public interest; subject to certain conditions they may confer a chartered title that is exclusive to members of the association, and therefore acts in a similar way to a reserved title (e.g. while 'engineer' may be used by anyone who works in engineering, 'chartered engineer' is restricted to qualified members of the chartered engineering bodies).

A final point relevant to the discussion that follows is the distinction between qualifications and qualified status (or 'being professionally qualified'). Outside of strict legal usage, the term 'qualification' has come to mean a certificate, diploma or degree that once achieved is normally held by the person for life... On the other hand, qualified status (sometimes referred to as licensing or accreditation) is conferred by a professional or similar body and normally requires ongoing conditions to be met in order to retain it; it can be revoked for non-compliance. Commonly, gaining a qualification is part of the process of becoming qualified in a profession, but other conditions normally need to be met such as completing a period of supervised practice and passing further assessments[22].

5 Conceptions of profession

Over time a number of models of professionality have emerged, which I classify broadly as classical, trade, technical and reflective. These are not the only models available but they do appear to provide a useful set of reference-points.

The classical model emphasises the importance of professional education founded on a broad base of learning and culture. It is the archetypal model for the ancient professions, and by the 19th century if not earlier became associated with a university education. In this model there is an expectation that the practitioner will have a broad general education as well as specific expertise in the profession concerned, while practical training and 'licensing' tends to be defined tacitly by the community of practice.

The trade model grew out of the mediaeval trade occupations, often governed by guilds; it emphasises practical training and building expertise through experience. Approval to practise tends to be informal and based on timeserving, though often subject to strong tacit rules. An assumption of craftsmanship and the honing of skills, rather than an expectation of general learning, is often present in this model.

The technical(-rational) or technocratic model is a product of the Industrial Revolution and the growth of scientific method, as well as the evolution of complex work organisations outside the state sector. It emphasises rational solutions to problems, standardised training, formal control of entry-routes, and

occupational demarcation and expertise. There is now generally an assumption of the need for formal updating.

The reflective or creative-interpretive model has emerged most strongly over the last forty years. It emphasises learning through action and reflection, making judgements in uncertain contexts, and working with problematic situations rather than clearly-defined problems. It generally includes an assumption of ongoing learning linked to practice.

To generalise, there has been a tendency for newer models to become overlaid on earlier ones as perceptions of professional activity have changed. This has particularly been the case with the technical model in the 20th century, and many of the characteristics that professions are commonly held to display arise directly from a technical-rational view of profession. The 'crisis of the professions' of the late 20th century[23] stems from challenges to the ideal of professional-as-expert and realisation that the technocratic view of professional knowledge is insufficient to meet many of the demands of practice. The reflective-interpretive model emerged partly as a response to this. It is particularly associated with the reflective practitioner philosophy of Donald Schön[24], although it also draws on critical action research[25] and action learning[26] traditions. It is still a long way from displacing the technical perspective and some factors, such as increasing demands for accountability and regulation, appear to be favouring a technical-bureaucratic approach; this is apparent in things such as the occupational standards movement of the 1990s, recent positivistic interpretations of the idea of evidence-based practice, and more broadly the emphasis on accountability and audit in public-sector management. Nevertheless it is difficult to see how a technical-rational view of professional work can maintain its adequacy in the face of increasing societal complexity and environmental uncertainty, and the reflective-interpretive model is gradually being overlaid on the technical one even in the more technical professions. My own take on the two models, updated from a paper written in the early 1990s[27], is given at the end of this paper.

6 Professional knowledge

In tandem with evolving ideas of profession, the way in which professional knowledge is conceptualised has also undergone change over the last quarter-century or so[28]. The technical-rational approach tends to view knowledge as a relatively slowly-evolving body, with new knowledge being produced through formal research from relevant academic disciplines and to a lesser extent research on practice-related problems. This is gradually filtered through to practitioners in the form of curriculum change, updating events, technical articles and publications, and advisory notes. In many respects this reflects a classic positivistic or post-positivistic approach to knowledge, rooted in scientific method and assuming that practice is primarily about technical problem-solving. The reflective paradigm challenges this in seeing knowledge as being actively used, changed and developed by practitioners in the course of their work. From this viewpoint professional knowledge is seen as evolving more quickly, created in the practice setting as well as through academic research, and changed through the contexts in which it is applied. The idea of a monolithic 'body of knowledge' owned by the profession becomes less important than the idea of knowledgeable and knowledge-generating practitioners who are able to reflect on practice and produce knowledge from it, as well as being able to critique and contextualise externally-generated knowledge and research.

As suggested in the previous section for models of professionality, it is probably more accurate to view the reflective or Mode 2[29] view of knowledge as something that has become overlaid on the older technocratic or Mode 1 one, emerging in some professions as the dominant perspective. Innovations from research outside the practice situation are vitally important in many fields and do constitute a form of common knowledge-base, but they are augmented and interpreted through knowledge-in-use generated by practitioners. This appears to be reflected in changes to some professional curricula, where the emphasis on mastering a set body of knowledge is receding in favour of being conversant with key principles and theories underpinning practice, along with skills of reflection, enquiry, analysis and critique. The importance of contextual knowledge is more widely recognised along with the need for factual knowledge and know-how to be available 'just-in-time,' both on a dissemination or extension basis and in response to practitioner need.

In recent years there has been something of a reassertion of the need for professionals to have a firm grounding in appropriate theory, led by theorists such as Basil Bernstein[30] and Michael Young[31]. These 'curriculum' theorists criticise practice or 'fluency' theorists such as Donald Schön and Dreyfus & Dreyfus[32] for underestimating the importance of theoretical knowledge as a basis for professional practice, arguing that without it practitioners lack the resources to develop as effective professionals; they may be able to reflect on and learn from practice, but in an unstructured, ineffecient and in some cases even dangerous manner. While this criticism is not without foundation (practice theorists have tended to focus on what has been lacking from professional development routes), there is also a tendency among curriculum theorists to downplay the extent to which practitioners' knowledge continues to develop through practice, and in particular how practice knowledge can add to and modify the knowledge-base of the profession[33]. The balance of importance of theoretical and practical knowledge will also differ between different professions (compare chemical engineering and social work). At least some recent conceptualisations, both from theorists such as Christopher Winch[34] and in professions themselves[35], appear to be integrating both sets of ideas.

7 Professional work: delivery or realisation?

The idea of 'delivery systems' and 'realisation systems' harks back to the 1960s and the 'crisis of the professions', but it is still relevant to the way that professions are developing in the twenty-first century. A 'delivery system' is one in which a practitioner assesses a situation and delivers a solution based on his or her expertise. The client/s, public or what we might now call stakeholders have little part in deciding the shape of the solution. This kind of approach is perhaps typified by the traditional medical model of diagnosis and prescription. On the other hand a 'realisation system', or what is sometimes called 'co-production' or 'co-creation'[36], involves the professional working with the client or stakeholders in a more collaborative way to produce outcomes that are owned by the latter. While it will still involve the use of expertise, it is closer in principle to the work of a counsellor or facilitator.

Writing in 1970, Sheldon Schiff[37] postulated a general movement from delivery systems to realisation systems, with consequent changes being needed in the way that professionals are prepared for practice. His ideas also fit with the movement from a technocratic to a reflective-interpretive mode of practice. While this has happened to some extent, it has been overshadowed in some fields by a move to what I have termed a modified delivery system, based on a more contractual relationship in which the consumer (or the regulator acting on their behalf) has increased power and the professional becomes a 'deliverer' of services. This has become a particular feature of much professional work in

the public sector under the more contractually-oriented, target-driven and formally audited regime of what has been called 'new public management'[38], as well as where some types of professional service (property conveyancing is a good example) have been opened up to wider competition. It can be appropriate for standardised and easily-defined services, but it works against excellence, creativity and genuinely appropriate solutions where there is any complexity involved. The following diagram is taken from a critique of the modified delivery system in the context of higher education[39].

Table: From delivery to realisation

model:	**Delivery** (expert)	**Delivery** (consumer)	**Realisation**
basis:	trust	contractual	partnership
relationship:	expert – layperson	producer - consumer	collegial
power:	provider	polarised (plus regulator)	shared
nature:	service provided in interests of client	service provided to meet consumer needs	shared endeavour
emphasis:	expertise, judgement	quality, standards, specifications	solutions, ways forward

8 Defining the scope of a profession

Along with the above trends there have also been changes in emphasis in the way that professions articulate their scope. Arguably the longest-established approach to this has been by reference to the education and training of practitioners, sometimes coupled with the authority provided by a generic employment type: so for instance the master's degree (and later the doctorate) as conferring authority to teach the relevant subject in a university, and the medical practitioner's training providing the ability to make diagnoses and decisions relating to patients. While the development of the professional curriculum is necessarily informed by the demands of practice, the profession's boundaries are in turn defined by the curriculum.

The more recent (relatively speaking) emergence of legally reserved functions has required definition of what it is that is being protected, and outside of this most professions have evolved some form of (normally looser) definition of what their practitioners do that supplements the curriculum-based approach. Extending this functional approach further, a trend apparent in Anglophone countries towards the end of the twentieth century has been to define the profession more by the roles and functions undertaken by practitioners than by their education and training. This has been accelerated by the use of a process called functional analysis in the 1990s[40] to develop occupational descriptions and competence standards for a wide range of job roles, taken up directly or in modified form in some professions to produce standards of practice. The advantage of this approach is that it focuses on what practitioners do rather than how they are educated and trained, and places the emphasis on workplace activity and needs rather than the processes of preparation. Its disadvantages have proved to be a tendency towards excessive and sometimes trivial detail (largely a resolvable problem), and more fundamentally a lack of flexibility both to recognise the diverse and sometimes individual nature of the roles that practitioners can actually undertake along with a slowness to respond to changes and developments in practice and in the environments in which it takes place.

More recently some professions' descriptions of their practice have begun to move away from the functional model to one based on capability[41], where the essential nature of the profession is still defined in external or output terms (what practitioners can do as opposed to the education and

training curriculum) but this is specified at a broader, less function-specific level more in keeping with the idea of a capable practitioner able to apply a repertoire of abilities in roles and situations that cannot all be envisaged in advance. This approach changes the emphasis from a 'bounded occupation' model concerned with functions and boundaries (what does the profession cover?) to a 'centre-outwards' one concerned with core capability (what are practitioners equipped to do?), and leads to a more flexible form of specification more in keeping with the reflective-interpretive view of professional activity[42]. Pragmatically while some professions are moving to a more capability-oriented model, others will retain aspects of the functional approach particularly where they need to include to define reserved functions in detail.

9 Professional ethics

Ethics as a branch of philosophy is concerned with what is right, moral or fair. General ethical codes exist in religion and philosophy; they can be inherent in ideas such as citizenship and civil values, and many people would claim to have a personal set of ethics that guides their behaviour. Most professions have some form of ethical code that either takes the form of a code of practice or conduct, or forms a more general set of principles that governs behaviour in the profession, with the code of practice describing specific behaviours expected in particular situations; typically there is considerable overlap between the basic principles behind ethical codes across professions, although not all agree on every aspect of ethical behaviour[43].

Ethical codes are important in professions not only for providing a guide to expected behaviour, but as principles that can be used to take action against members accused of malpractice. However traditional professional codes are sometimes criticised for being too narrow in approach and encouraging practitioners to take a rule-bound view of ethics instead of understanding and 'living' ethical principles. The ideas of 'ethical competence'[44] and 'ethical literacy'[45] reflect a more considered ability to act ethically across one's practice, emphasising things such as:

- knowing what is right in any given situation
- being able to recognise ethical issues in practice situations
- being able to resolve ethical dilemmas
- reflective ethical practice
- the qualities of respect for others and their dignity and values, personal integrity, and responsibility to others and to broader professional principles.

Experienced, ethically responsible professionals may rarely refer directly to ethical codes, though they act in a way that accords with and goes beyond them. As many professions recognise, proficient practitioners need to be able to manage value-conflicts and resolve ethical dilemmas while ensuring that their actions are in accordance with the minimum requirements of the profession.

In practice the way that professions emphasise ethics and enforce their codes varies, with some placing ethical principles at the heart of their self-definition, while for others they form little more than a set of vaguely desirable behaviours that are not particularly well-promoted to members and are enforced only *in extremis*. Professions where there is a high and immediate level of public risk or externally-defined and legally enforced standards might be expected to give greater attention to

ethical principles or at least codes of practice, while those where the profession is more market-driven and less regulatory in nature could be expected to have a lower level of focus on ethics.

10 Entry and qualifying processes

Patterns of initial professional development have evolved in ways that reflect, to some extent, both the historic evolution of professions and the different conceptions of profession and professional knowledge outlined in sections 4 and 5. A broad categorisation is given by Hazel Bines[46] as apprenticeship or pre-technocratic, technocratic, and post-technocratic. Strictly speaking this ignores the classical university model, although there is little evidence of this surviving in its pure form into the 21st century. These approaches broadly reflect the trade, technical-rational and reflective/creative paradigms discussed in section 5, with the technocratic approach having been dominant since the middle of the 20th century. Briefly, it tends to be characterised by a view that professionals need to be inculcated with a body of scientific or academic knowledge from which applied knowledge is developed and then applied to practice[47]. A typical technocratic development route consists of a university degree, possibly a post-degree professional course, and a period of supervised practice. This is a sequential development route; a less common (although currently reviving) alternative is the parallel route, where on-job training runs alongside a part-time or distance course. In practice there are several variations on these basic models with different professions evolving different routes, increasingly with a variety of routes in the same profession[48].

The post-technocratic approach is ideally reflected by an integrated route, where practice and theory are developed alongside each other either in the workplace or in a 'practicum' that mirrors the workplace[49]. An integrated approach implies more than the parallel model, as the workplace or practicum is used as a source of knowledge rather than just a place where it is applied and refined; nor is it an apprenticeship in the traditional sense, as it requires development of theory through reflection on both practice and documentary sources (the more recent concerns about theory discussed at the end of section 6 are relevant here). Training routes for nurses, some other health professionals, and teachers (particularly through school-based routes) show some of the characteristics of an integrated development route, and in a few other professions there is either a minority route that follows this pattern at least partially, or where individuals can build something similar by combining suitable work with a work-based (rather than conventional part-time) university programme[50]. A well-designed integrated route enables practitioners to develop a good theoretical base as well as practical competence, but in a way that is integrated with rather than detached from practice.

A more noticeable impact of the post-technocratic perspective is that attention is increasingly being given to the period of experience between finishing the academic course and being signed off as ready to practise independently. Other trends include:

- from 'exams' that are passed or failed *en bloc* to 'modules' that can be accumulated and carried forward (including sometimes into another profession's training route or to a university qualification)
- a greater variety of assessment methods
- multiple entry-routes rather than a single type of approved degree or course

- multiple modes for courses - full-time, part-time, distance as appropriate, with alternatives to full-time higher education becoming more common
- recognition of previous learning - including, increasingly, experiential learning
- a greater emphasis on fair and valid entry-routes and assessment methods – and increasingly recognition of social justice and workforce diversity issues particularly relating to career-change, progression from related occupations and the affordability of higher education.

There is a growing trend towards more formal processes for final sign-off for qualified or registered status, as opposed to requiring (for instance) completion of a course plus a time-bound but unassessed period of experience. This is typically by continuous assessment (e.g. by a mentor or supervisor), through an end-process (e.g. project/portfolio, interview or work-based assessment), or using a combination of the two. Linked to this there has been a trend towards using practising standards for guidance and as a basis for assessment, and in some cases these have been used slightly more contentiously to influence off-job development[51]. In a few professions including civil engineering, heritage conservation and landscape architecture increasing confidence in standards of this type has enabled the profession to dispense with the requirement for a set period of work-based training in favour of the person simply meeting the assessment criteria when they are ready to do so[52].

11 Continuing professional development

'CPD' as a formal process or requirement started to appear from the 1960s onwards, reflecting recognition that initial learning needs to be updated to maintain effectiveness[53]. Most professional associations' approaches to CPD were initially strongly influenced by the technocratic paradigm and typically focused on meeting requirements through courses or through a minimum number of hours or points spent on approved activities. More recently there has been a tendency to move away from these input measures towards a more flexible 'learning cycle' approach where practitioners need to identify their development needs, act to meet them, and reflect on the results[54]. This has proved more relevant and in keeping with the dynamic of work in most professions, but it can still have drawbacks particularly in undervaluing more serendipitous and just-in-time learning, and (where CPD reviews are required for audit by professional bodies) creating a burden of recording and reviewing[55]. One of the main problems with formal CPD schemes is that they may do little to move forward the 'laggards' who are falling behind with their practice, while failing to provide anything stimulating for practitioners who are closer to the leading edge[56].

Research on real-life ongoing development[57] suggests that the most effective practitioners combine general updating, specific learning for particular activities and projects, and where appropriate more developmental learning that links to career objectives or the development of extended professionalism. The use of approaches such as reflective practice, action research or other forms of practitioner research, and action-based learning tend to feature in this kind of development as much as do more formally quantifiable activities, and incidental, just-in-time and project-driven learning tend to be regarded as more critical than planned activities. While professional bodies tend to focus on CPD as updating and maintaining competence[58], a 'Model B' or creative-interpretive approach to ongoing development might see it as evolving a progressive repertoire of abilities that partly follows and partly directs the practitioner's practice. Recent strategies have included experimenting with web-based tools that facilitate capture of less formal kinds of CPD, and the professional body stepping

back from CPD auditing completely and recognising the responsibility of members and their firms for remaining competent to practise[59].

12 A note: an Anglophone bias

This paper largely assumes an Anglophone model of profession, that can broadly be summed up as assuming a free-market self-regulated context where the profession is defined by expertise, autonomy and ethics. While much of the more theoretical discussion is independent of national boundaries and to some extent cultures, the way professions are organised and defined can be subtly different. To provide some examples from continental Europe, in France and Italy the idea of a professional can be more one of an elite office-holder defined by academic qualification and state registration[60]; particularly in France there is little tradition of authoritative independent professional associations, these having been viewed in the past with suspicion of being anti-egalitarian. In Germany, despite a tradition of well-defined training routes and career paths (the '*Berufsbild*'), there is no concept directly equivalent to the English 'professional': in different circumstances the concepts of *freie Berufe* (liberal or self-employed occupations), *akademische Berufe* (academic occupations), or *Bürgertum* (burghers, with its connotation of respectable middle-class citizens) have some parallels with the idea of profession[61].

Patterns of professional education and licensing can therefore be significantly different, typically with more emphasis in mainland Europe on academic development and certification (often with a greater emphasis on work experience within the degree), but less on post-training practice-based development or the separate accreditation process that is common in the UK and Ireland. Where traditions and standards vary significantly at the point of registration or award of the licence to practise, this can lead to difficulties in developing appropriate standards for mutual recognition. In some instances these have led to the introduction of additional (higher or lower) standards in one or more countries to achieve comparability, while in others they have resulted in an impasse or agreement to differ. Tensions also exist between European directives on mutual recognition that specify particular kinds and lengths of entry-routes, practices in some countries (not limited to the UK) that are moving away from defined routes to defined criteria, and the European lifelong learning agenda and qualifications framework that focuses on levels and criteria rather than processes and timescales.

Appendix: two paradigms of professions and professionality

	Model A	Model B
character	technical, logical; problemsolving	creative, interpretive; design
capability	solvable, convergent problems	congruent futures; 'messes,' problematic situations, divergent / 'wicked' problems
approach	solving problems; applying knowledge competently and rationally	understanding problematic situations and resolving conflicts of value; framing and creating desired outcomes
criteria	logic, efficiency, planned outcomes; cause-effect, proof	values, ethics, congruence of both methods and outcomes; systemic interrelationships, theory, faith
epistemology	objectivism: knowledge is stable and general; precedes and guides action (pure science, applied science, practice)	constructivism: knowledge is transient, situational and personal; both informs action and is generated by it (cyclic / spiral relationship between theory and practice)
validation	by reference to others' expectations: standards, accepted wisdom, established discourse; 'truth'	by questioning fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose and systemic validity; 'value'
thinking	primarily deductive/analytical; sceptical of intuition	inductive, deductive and abductive; uses 'intelligent intuition'
profession	a bounded, externally-defined role, characterised by norms, values and a knowledge-base common to the profession	a portfolio of learningful activity individual to the practitioner, integrated by personal identity, perspectives, values and capability
professionalism	objectivity, rules, codes of practice	exploration of own and others' values, personal ethics, mutual enquiry, shared expectations
professional standards	defined by the employer, professional body or other agency according to its norms and values	negotiated by the participants and other stakeholders in the practice situation in accordance with their values, beliefs and desired outcomes
professional development	initial development concerned with acquiring knowledge, developing competence and enculturation into the profession's value system; continuing development concerned with maintaining competence and updating knowledge	ongoing learning and practice through reflective practice, critical enquiry and creative synthesis and action; continual questioning and refinement of personal knowledge, understanding, practice, values and beliefs

'Model A' and 'Model B' were first put forward in an article I wrote in the early 1990s[62]. The two paradigms are not mutually exclusive; I prefer to read Model B as embracing and including Model A, so that a Model B practitioner has the flexibility to work in 'pure' Model B mode when needed but can also adopt a more technical style of working where appropriate.

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Notes and references

[1] Eric Hoyle & Peter D. John, *Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice,* Cassell (London, 1995).

[2] Elliott Freidson, *Professionalism: the third logic*, Polity (Cambridge, 2001).

[3] From Stan Lester, *Association and self-regulation in smaller UK professions,* Avista Press (Taunton, 2014), pp7-8.

[4] Larson ([12] below) provides a good historic summary.

[5] Nathan Glazer, 'The schools of the minor professions', *Minerva* 12 (3), 346-364 (1974).

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[33] See for instance David Scott *et al*, *Professional Doctorates: integrating professional and academic knowledge,* Open University Press (Buckingham, 2004) and Stan Lester, 'Creating original knowledge in and for the workplace', *Studies in Continuing Education* 34 (3), 267-280 (2012).

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[35] Stan Lester, 'Routes to qualified status: practices and trends among UK professional bodies', *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (2), 223-236 (2009).

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[40] Functional analysis was the preferred method of developing occupational standards during the 1990s and beyond: see for instance Lindsay Mitchell & Bob Mansfield, *Towards a competent workforce,* Gower (Aldershot, 1996).

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[42] See Stan Lester, 'Professional versus occupational perspectives on work competence', *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 19 (3), 276-286 (2014).

[43] One example of a cross-professional code is the *Common values of the liberal professions in the European Union,* European Council of the Liberal Professions (Brussels, 2007). See www.ceplis.org/en/values.php (accessed June 2010).

[44] Andrew Friedman, *Ethical competence and professional associations,* Professional Associations Research Network (Bristol, 2007).

[45] Ingrid Lunt, 'Ethical issues in professional life' in B. Cunningham *Exploring professionalism,* Institute of Education (London, 2008).

[46] Hazel Bines, 'Issues in course design' in H. Bines & D. Watson *Developing professional education,* Society for Research in Higher Education/Open University Press (Buckingham, 1992).

[47] Schön (1983, [24] above) provides a discussion of this.

[48] See S. Lester, *Routes and requirements for becoming professionally qualified,* Professional Associations Research Network (Bristol, 2008), and the same author's 'Routes to qualified status: practices and trends among UK professional bodies' in *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (2), 223-236 (2009).

[49] See for instance Bines and Schön, references as above.

[50] See Stan Lester & Carol Costley, 'Work-based learning at higher education level: value, practice and critique', *Studies in Higher Education* 35 (5), 561-575 (2010).

[51] e.g. S. Lester, 'Professional competence standards and frameworks in the UK', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 39 (1), 38-52 (2014).

[52] This section draws generally on Lester (2008/2009) [48].

[53] Cyril O. Houle, *Continuing learning in the professions,* Jossey-Bass (London, 1980).

[54] Stan Lester, 'Professional bodies, CPD and informal learning: the case of conservation', *Continuing Professional Development* 3 (4), 110-121 (1999).

[55] J. Harris (chair), *Regulating competencies: is CPD working?* CPD Institute (London, 2006).

[56] The idea of 'laggards, middle majority, pacesetters and innovators' is used by Houle (above) and originates from E. M. Rogers & F. F. Schumacher, *Communicating Innovation,* Free Press (New York, 1971).

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[58] Hilary Lindsay, *Adaptability: the secret to lifelong learning*, Professional Associations Research Network (Bristol, 2014).

[59] This has been the approach among others of the Solicitors' Regulation Authority.

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[62] S. Lester, 'Beyond knowledge and competence,' above. Acknowledgements to Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner,* see above, and Della Fish, *Quality Mentoring for Student Teachers: a principled approach to practice,* David Fulton (London, 1995) who use similar models.

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