

**How Do You Educate a Journalist?  
The Competing Discourses of Journalism Education**

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**Thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Education**

**University of Sheffield**

**February 2005**

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank a number of people for their support and assistance during my work on this thesis. Firstly, I am very grateful to my supervisor, Professor Gareth Parry, for his skilful, supportive and insightful guidance throughout the research process. This was backed up by the EdD staff in general and the class of 2000 who provided much intellectual stimulation and enjoyable company over the four years of the doctoral programme.

I would like to thank my colleagues in DIT Aungier St, particularly those in the School of Media, for their interest and encouragement and also their forbearance as I completed the thesis. A special word of thanks to those from DIT who successfully completed the Ed.D. before me and who were generous in sharing their experience. I would like to mention Dr Tom Duff in particular in this regard. I also wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of Brian Trench of the School of Communications in Dublin City University for facilitating access to documentation which was crucial to my work.

Finally and most importantly, my family and friends in their different ways provided me with support, advice and understanding over the last few years. They never doubted that I would reach the end, which was a great spur to bring the work to its completion.

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## Abstract

This research is concerned with the curriculum in an area of professional education, that of journalism. Competing concepts of journalism and journalism education exist which have led to variety and some confusion in the structure and content of educational programmes. The research investigates the beliefs and values underlying the two main undergraduate degree programmes in journalism in Ireland, at Dublin City University and the Dublin Institute of Technology, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the issues involved. The study is set in the context of the more general debates on journalism education and professional education.

As the topic is to do with meaning and language, a discourse analysis approach was used, specifically the method of critical discourse analysis developed in the work of Fairclough. This approach entails a comprehensive, multi-layered analysis starting from a small amount of data or core texts. The data used were documents. The brief published descriptions of the two courses served as the core texts, the analysis of which was further tested through examining documents detailing the course modules and course rationale. The third layer of analysis looked at the usage of the concepts in texts from the wider journalistic and educational contexts in which the courses were developed.

Discrepancies were found in the concepts of journalism and journalism education within and between the texts at the different levels of analysis. There were differences in the perception of journalism as distinct from or part of the media in general, differences in the nuances attached to its role, and differences as to whether its status is that of a profession. The two curricula studied exemplify the two common journalism education models which are difficult to place within the conventional models of professional education. The findings of the study are discussed in so far as they have implications for practice.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACEJMC	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
AJE	Association for Journalism Education
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCI	Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
BJTC	Broadcast Journalism Training Council
CAO	Central Admissions Office
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDVEC	City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
CFJ	Centre de Formation des Journalistes
CIT	Cork Institute of Technology
DA	Discourse Analysis
DCU	Dublin City University
DIT	Dublin Institute of Technology
DPS	Discourse Psychologists
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEC	European Economic Community
EJTA	European Journalism Training Association
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GCD	Griffith College Dublin
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IAMCR	International Association for Media and Communications Research
IBI	Independent Broadcasters of Ireland
ICA	International Communications Association
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IOJ	Institute of Journalists
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IUT	Institut Universitaire de Technologie
IMF	International Monetary fund
JourNet	Global Network for Education in Journalism (UNESCO)
NARN	National Association of Regional Newspapers
NCTJ	National Council for the Training of Journalists
NIHE	National Institute for Higher Education
NNI	National Newspaper of Ireland
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
NUI Maynooth	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification



OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development
PNI	Provincial Newspapers of Ireland
PTC	Periodical Training Council
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RTE	Radio Telefís Éireann
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation
WAN	World Association of Newspapers
WTO	World Trade Organisation

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The research topic

#### 1.1.1 Introduction

This research is concerned with curriculum development in an area of professional education, that of journalism. The aim is to examine the underlying values, beliefs and ideologies on which the journalism curriculum is based. My reason for choosing this research is that there is no agreed framework for journalism education. Competing models of the curriculum exist each with its own adherents. It is generally agreed that journalism is not yet fully established as a mature professional discipline in higher education, not only in Ireland, which will be the focus of my research, but also more widely in Europe and in the US (Deuze, 2001b; Adam, 2001). The lack of clarity and agreement about the basic principles of journalism education is a serious impediment to its progress. This study is intended to clarify these fundamental differences and thus contribute to its development.

#### 1.1.2 The problem

I have chosen this topic as it is an area with which I have been professionally involved in different capacities for over twenty years. The problem at the heart of journalism education is that there is no agreement on what it should be. On each occasion on which, in my institution, the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), we have had to develop or review our undergraduate journalism programme in particular, it has proven extremely difficult to do so. Despite the best intentions of all concerned to complete the process through consensus, this has proved impossible. The difficulty goes beyond the normal differences of opinion, internal politics and personality clashes that come to the fore in similar curriculum development in other areas. It is caused by the lack of agreement on what is most important for journalism students to know, by the lack of an agreed framework of beliefs and values about journalism education on which the curriculum can be based. Bringing these beliefs and values to light in an explicit fashion will allow

the differences to be better understood and will provide a basis on which a possible reconciliation of differences can be built. It will be a step on the way to establishing a firmer basis for journalism education.

This topic is what Toohey (1999) has referred to as the central question in course design: 'What is most important for the students to know and what might be the best ways for them to learn it?'. The answer to the question cannot simply be found by gathering information on the knowledge required for a particular discipline or profession and deciding on how it should be structured. It requires establishing the principles on which the curriculum will be based and is likely to uncover philosophical disagreements, differences in beliefs about teaching and about the importance of different areas of content. These determine the total programme, not only its content, but also its structure, forms of assessment and resource allocation in terms of staffing, space, time and overall budget. These ideas may not always be thought out explicitly but the differences come to light when attempting to lay down the framework, the curriculum plan, the goals and objectives.

For Toohey, these values and ideologies are to do with education. In journalism education, the long-standing dichotomy between professional and academic education is a contentious issue on which there are opposing views and which contributes to the difficulty in finding a common philosophy for the curriculum. In addition, the concept of journalism itself is problematic. It has never been particularly well defined and is currently under considerable pressure from a variety of challenges, including technological, economic, social, political and philosophical change. Therefore, when seeking to reach agreement on this first stage in curriculum design, those involved are coming to the table with very different basic ideas about how the curriculum should be framed. It is not possible to agree on the core knowledge, skills and attributes required by a journalist without a clear vision of journalism. It is not possible to agree on how an intending journalist should be taught when there are differing views on academic and professional or vocational education. It is my aim to make these differences explicit, to examine the different meanings attributed to the terms 'journalism' and 'education' in the context of journalism. I intend to do so by examining the different discourses used through an analysis of relevant documents on journalism education in Ireland.

### **1.1.3 The research questions**

The general question this research seeks to answer is 'How do you educate a journalist?'. The focus is on the differences of meaning attached to the two main terms in the question, 'journalist' and 'educate'. I attempt to explicate the concepts carried in these two terms in texts on journalism education. The question can be broken down to include more specific questions such as:

- What is journalism?
- What is the core function of the work of a journalist?
- What does the journalist need to learn in order to carry out this function?
- What theory of journalism is available/should be developed to underpin the professional teaching of this discipline?
- What form of education is most suitable to provide this learning? Academic or vocational/ professional?
- What other university subjects can contribute to journalism education?
- What is the articulation between these subjects and the core subject of journalism?

### **1.1.4 The boundaries of the study**

As is apparent, the study is limited to seeking a partial answer only to the initial question. It attempts to explicate the differing visions of journalism education that inform decisions on a curriculum. It is not attempting to fully define a curriculum, the detailed objectives and content to be included. It is my contention that we are not yet in a position to do so because of the problematic and contrasting concepts held of the two main terms involved. It is not concerned with the implementation of the curriculum, how it should be delivered, the pedagogical methods and assessment methods to be employed. The research is limited to the current situation. It is not examining in any detail the historic development of journalism education or the evolution of the concept of journalism over time.

The study is also limited because it is not questioning whether a journalist should be educated to degree level. Research in the mid-nineties in Britain indicated disagreement among journalists on this issue, finding that only 22% were

convinced that a university degree was desirable for entry to journalism (Delano and Henningham, 1995). Nor is the study concerned with the debate on whether journalists should be graduates of journalism programmes or graduates of other disciplines such as history, politics or languages. I am taking the position that there is a specific education for journalism, not examining whether a general education is sufficient for would-be journalists.

The research also concentrates on the undergraduate journalism degree programme. Journalism education includes sub-degree courses and postgraduate courses. I would agree with Adam (2001) and Medsger (1996) that it is in the undergraduate programme that the issues and conflicts on journalism education are at their sharpest, the 'struggling philosophies' are most apparent. At both the higher end of postgraduate course and the lower level of certificate, the programmes are shorter, concentrate in differing ways on skills and are less problematic. At undergraduate level, the longer period of study allows for greater expansion and requires a comprehensive vision of journalism education. It bestows responsibility for the whole of a journalist's university education on the journalism educators. In Adam's words, it requires:

*to think richly about education as well as training – about the formation of journalists as a whole rather than their apprenticeship into specific, albeit fundamental skills. (2001: 318)*

### **1.1.5 Significance of study**

Journalism education in Ireland has been little researched. This study thus commences an exploration of the curriculum for a professional degree in the Irish context. Its findings will, hopefully, contribute to the wider on-going debate within journalism education, as exemplified in the US by the already mentioned Adam (2001), Reese (1999) and Medsger (1996), and to the less developed debate within Europe by, for example, Deuze (2000a, 2001b), Bierhoff and Schmidt (1997), and Bierhoff et al. (2000).

At the same time, there has been little empirical study of the issue anywhere. Although Bierhoff et al. (2000) carried out large-scale documentary and interview-based research on the further education of journalists in five European countries,

they concentrated on the reorientation needed in further training because of the changes confronting journalism. No consideration was given to educational issues per se. In the US, the research on which the Freedom Forum report (Medsger, 1996) was purported to be based – Adam claims it misrepresented the findings – is even more limited. It provided a list of skills, knowledge and competences, and asked informants to indicate how important these were for those entering journalism and how well they are currently being taught. Not only does it not investigate any notions about education but also the set of closed questions gave no opportunity to expand on opinions or to suggest any other issues that need to be addressed. The research for this thesis is small in scope but as I am using a qualitative type methodology, it is intended to contribute something different and deeper to the discussion. In that way, it is intended to contribute to the more firmly based establishment and development of journalism as a discipline of professional education within the academy.

Before outlining the research design, it will be useful to indicate briefly the context of the study in relation to journalism education in Ireland and elsewhere, and to introduce the discussion on the central concepts to be investigated, journalism and education.

## **1.2 The context of the research**

### **1.2.1 Journalism education in Ireland and elsewhere**

The two main centres for journalism education in Ireland are DIT and Dublin City University (DCU) both of which offer undergraduate degrees and masters degrees in journalism. The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), has a postgraduate course only; a private college, Griffith College, Dublin offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses. There are some shorter courses at a lower level in further education colleges. As DCU and DIT are the two most established and recognised centres, the research focuses on them.

Degree courses in Ireland, as in Britain, are a relatively recent phenomenon. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that there is still a great deal of uncertainty and disagreement surrounding them. Winston (1997) and Stephenson (1997) have

raised this in the British context. Other European countries, despite different journalistic traditions and varying models of journalism education, are experiencing similar difficulties. According to Deuze (2000a), quoting Bierhoff (1999), traditional dichotomies and the construction of comprehensive programmes 'are currently in discussion, if not in crisis'. And in the US, where journalism has been established in the university since the early years of the twentieth century, the problem is still apparent.

Because of its longer history and because its journalistic tradition is closer to that found in Britain and Ireland than those in other European countries, the debate in the US proved particularly useful in carrying out the research. It is couched as a debate over academic versus professional education. On all sides of the argument, there is recognition that journalism educators need to get to grips with the concept of journalism (Medsger, 1996, Adam, 2001). Adam recognises that it is the failure of journalists as a professional group 'to express adequately their professional and pedagogical tasks' that has led to the deficiency in the curriculum and the lack of progress in the establishment of journalism as a full professional discipline.

### **1.2.2 The concept of journalism**

The main concepts with which the study is concerned, 'journalism' and 'journalism education', are studied within the current literature before being explored in the data from the research itself. In this first chapter, I will briefly indicate the issues that arise.

Even though the overall concept of journalism is ill-defined, there is general agreement on the core journalistic skills required for news writing and newsgathering. Likewise there is no dispute over the need for journalists to have judgement with regard to what is news, to have critical and analytical skills that can be applied to any field. It is acknowledged that they are concerned with seeking, uncovering and reporting 'the facts', of analysing and commenting on events in a manner that is informed, insightful and honest (Adam, 2001; see also Deuze, 2000a). It is obvious therefore that journalism is an intellectual activity, yet journalists generally have the reputation of being anti-intellectual (Reese, 1999), of deriding theory, of insisting on dealing with a concrete world of facts and veering

away from the abstract. Journalists also tend to avoid analysis of their own work and resent others critically examining it (Reese, 1999). Such attitudes have hindered the development of the concept of journalism and its establishment as a self-critical, theory-based discipline, integrated into the wider academic community.

Difficulties with regard to the concept become obvious when it comes to defining journalism's role where there are two distinct discourses. The more common discourse views journalism as a form of public service that ensures the public is adequately informed in support of the functioning of democracy (Adam, 2001; Deuze, 2000a). This role is examined not only in how it has been manifest in different times and places but also in the light of current challenges from new technology, globalisation, and consumerism. Consideration is also given to the alternative discourse of journalism as primarily a business, a part of the media entertainment industry. The concept of public service seems far removed from much journalism which is perceived to sensationalise and trivialise the news, and to promote the concerns, especially the commercial concerns, of press publishers rather than the genuine concerns of the public.

The study also addresses the controversy surrounding the status of journalism, whether it is defined as a profession or as simply a trade or craft. Journalists themselves do not agree on this matter which in turn affects attitudes towards the educational provision appropriate for journalism (Corcoran and Kelly Browne, 1998; Delano and Henningham, 1995). At present, journalism can have difficulty in distinguishing itself from other areas of media activity. It can be seen as simply one form of media practice amongst others and journalism education can be informed by general media theory. Different views of its status make it difficult to clarify what journalists need to know and how they should learn it. It complicates the comparison of journalism education with professional education in general.

### **1.2.3 The concept of journalism education**

In line with Toohey's work on curriculum development and that of Adam (2001) and Deuze (2001b) on journalism education, the starting point for establishing a curriculum requires not only a clear vision of journalism but also a clear conception



of education and of professional education in particular. The research is informed by the general debate in higher education between academic and vocational education and more specifically by debates on professional education. The different models proposed for professional education are compared and contrasted with those found in journalism education (see for example, O'Reilly et al., 1999). There are not only differences in the general discourse on academic, vocational and professional education but also differences and confusion within journalism education with regard to how these terms are actually used.

Journalism education is discussed as a form of professional education in that it has an extrinsic purpose, the preparation for work, rather than an intrinsic purpose only as in academic education (Pring, 1995). It is thus a form of vocational education. Vocational education has been dominant in higher education in Ireland as in other countries over the last few decades. However the emphasis has been on education for economic development, with little emphasis on socially relevant education. Moreover, it should be noted that academic education in Ireland has remained framed by Newman's idea of education as an end in itself. Educational debates have, on the whole, ignored Dewey's view of its political role in forming good citizens, a discourse which would suit journalism well.

The journalism courses in DCU and DIT are compared with the two main types of undergraduate journalism degrees found elsewhere, which echo the division and the lack of agreement over the form of education most suitable for journalism. In Britain, which is most closely comparable to Ireland, the two are represented by integrated degrees incorporating theory and practice, and double honours arts degrees where journalism is studied alongside an independently taught subject. A somewhat similar divide is found in the US where the division lies between integrated journalism courses often part of communications programmes and courses where journalism is taught independently alongside a range of liberal arts programmes, although here journalism typically makes up just 25% of a student's total programme. Reference is made to the vociferous debate in the US over the two models (Medsger, 1996; Adam, 2001; Reese, 1999; Reese and Cohen, 2000). As an illustration of the confusion within this debate, it should be noted that the

integrated courses are referred to as academic courses and the courses where journalism is taught as a separate component are referred to as professional courses.

This naming of the models of journalism education shows a lack of knowledge of other areas of professional education where integration is the norm. With the exception of Adam and Reese, journalism educators rarely refer to more general educational issues or to other areas of professional education. Yet, in Adam's words, 'the questions for journalism professors are no different in principle than they are for professors of business and engineering'. The study examines the accepted curriculum models of professional education and attempts to map the journalism courses onto them.

### **1.3 Research design**

Having outlined the background issues to the research topic, I will briefly sketch the research design, indicating the theoretical framework and methods used. The study seeks to clarify and understand the key terms of 'journalism' and 'education', in order to elucidate what 'journalism education' should be. It attempts to investigate beliefs and values attached to these key terms and was thus concerned with meaning. As the normal way to do this is through examining the language used, I have used a form of discourse analysis to carry out the research. On a practical or technical level, this can be seen as the logical way to study this question. It also reflects an interpretive approach where the social world is seen as constructed and where the curriculum is regarded as socially and historically produced knowledge (Young, 1998).

Amongst the many forms of discourse analysis available (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999) I have chosen Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA), which emphasises close linguistic analysis and which takes a social constructionist view of language. Frequently used in the analysis of media texts, it is an empirical method of analysis tying in with the more abstract theories of discourse, ideology and power of Foucault. It seems an appropriate and powerful instrument for the research, based as it is on differences and contestation over meaning.

CDA is discussed in detail in chapter three. It entails a comprehensive, multi-layered analysis starting from a small amount of data which is then referred to greater amounts of data from the discourse practice and the wider social context. The study is confined to the Irish context, and to the two main journalism educators, DCU and DIT. The analysis is carried out at three levels. The first level is the analysis of the core texts, the brief published descriptions of the two undergraduate courses. The second level comprises the analysis of the self-study or critical review documents and the detailed course syllabi from the two colleges. These provide the rationale and the structure and content of the two programmes, and represented the discourse practice, allowing to probe behind the core texts to examine their production. At level three, documents are analysed which link to the wider context within which the courses were developed. These texts relate to the journalism and education, and show the national and international influences which have shaped journalism education in Ireland in recent times. In Fairclough's terms, they represent the social practice. Using documents only as data has the advantage of their being pre-existing statements of the views and positions of those involved. In other words, the data is soundly empirical. However, other aspects of the research, the analysis of the data, the research findings as well as the methodology chosen carry more subjective dimensions.

#### **1.4 Positionality and ethics**

It is generally acknowledged that social research is never completely objective but reflects the horizons or values of the researcher (Stephenson, 2000; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Troyna, 1994). I will therefore give a brief account of my background within journalism education and my academic background more generally in order to clarify my position with regard to the research.

I have been head of the department of communications and journalism in DIT since 1989. Prior to that, I was a lecturer in languages and linguistics in the same department. My work includes responsibility for undergraduate journalism education. I have therefore been very involved in the debates and decision-making on the journalism courses but did not have a direct role in the development of the 2002 document which is a subject of this study. I also have had some involvement

with DCU, serving as a member of its Governing Body from 1993 to 1997. I therefore do not feel loyalty to DIT alone but have an interest in the advancement of both institutions.

My original academic background in languages and linguistics has a number of implications. Firstly, I am not and have not been a journalist so have no personal professional experience of this area, which is likely to be regarded by some journalists as a barrier to understanding their professional activity. Secondly, it is why I chose to research a topic that concentrates on the use and meaning of language and where the method of analysis is linguistically based. Finally, my familiarity with linguistic theory oriented me towards interpretative approaches to research. The most basic tenet of linguistics is that language is arbitrary, that the link between form and meaning changes over time and can be used in different ways by different people. Such an approach explains how the differences of opinion over the key terms in this study, of 'journalism' and 'education', have arisen. It is through linguistic analysis that the different conceptions of the terms can be better understood.

I have been operating as an insider researcher, with the benefits and disadvantages that go with that role (Potts, 2002). My involvement in journalism initially provided me with easy access to the data sources. Much of the documentation I required is in the public domain. I have had automatic access to all relevant documentation within DIT. I am also acquainted with the journalism staff in DCU which eased negotiation for access to the documentation which I required from there. However, being an insider researcher meant that I am not approaching the study as a detached outsider. I have been committed to a particular form of journalism education, the integrated journalism degree; I am attached to a particular academic institution focussed on vocational education; and I am a non-journalist researching an area where the professionals are notoriously sensitive to outside criticism. I have been aware of the dangers of inserting my own beliefs into the research process, particularly in terms of analysing the data. I have tried to maintain a critically reflexive attitude to the research and to ensure that it was carried out in an open transparent manner.

Because of the nature of the proposed study, no major ethical issues as discussed for example by Crow (2000) and Kent (2000) were likely to arise. The documents used are agreed official statements. The issues involved are controversial in that they attract varying opinions but they are not such as to cause political or personal offence. Given the small circle of journalism education in Ireland it would not be possible, even if I wished to, to carry out the research in a covert manner.

## **1.5 Structure of thesis**

The main body of the thesis commences in chapter two which provides the context for the research by discussing the development and current situation of journalism education in Ireland. Chapters three and four consider respectively the two concepts of 'journalism' and 'journalism education'. A discussion of the relevant literatures serves to illustrate the difficulties and disagreements over these concepts. Chapter five discusses the choice of CDA as the methodology for the research and also outlines the research methods. The next three chapters (six, seven and eight) present the analysis of the data, representing the three levels of analysis in the CDA approach as previously outlined. The concluding chapter, chapter nine, discusses the research findings and the research process. It proposes implications for practice based on the findings and indicates areas for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Journalism Education in Ireland

#### 2.1 Introduction

As in Britain, there were some initiatives in journalism education in Ireland in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Institute of Journalists organised a series of lectures in Trinity College Dublin in 1908-9 (Hunter, 1982) and journalism is said to have become a degree subject in Queens College/University College Cork around the same time (Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Murphy, 1995). However these efforts appear to have faded and journalism education is more generally dated from the 1960s with day release courses based in the College of Commerce, Rathmines. Rathmines developed the first full-time one-year certificate course in journalism in 1968. Since then, there has been a gradual expansion in provision in the number of courses available, their level and duration (Horgan, 2001).

Currently, higher education courses in professional journalism are offered at four centres in the country, at Dublin City University (DCU), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), formerly University College Galway, and Griffith College, Dublin. DCU and DIT both run four year undergraduate degree programmes and one year masters programmes in journalism. NUIG has a one year masters and a postgraduate diploma course. Griffith College's range of courses comprise a three year degree course, a three year diploma course – since September 2004 an ordinary degree – and a one year graduate diploma course. This chapter discusses the development of journalism courses since the 1960s and the involvement of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), in educational matters. It then details the current situation in the four centres listed above.

## **2.2 The development of journalism education**

### **2.2.1 The main programmes in journalism**

The College of Commerce, Rathmines, was one of the six third level colleges under the local education authority, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC), which were brought together informally in 1978 to form DIT. DIT was set up by statute in 1992 (*Dublin Institute of Technology Act, 1992*). The courses at DIT represent continuity with the original Rathmines course from the 1960s.

The Rathmines course was developed and run in close relationship with the industry, both the union, the NUJ, and the employers, National Newspapers of Ireland (NNI) and Provincial Newspapers of Ireland (PNI). It was accredited by the London-based National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). The industry, in particular the union, had great influence over the course, insisting on restrictions in the number and age of students admitted to the course, and through the NCTJ, determining its duration and much of its content. The development was from day release to a one year certificate course in 1968; the course was extended to two years a decade later. Its curriculum reflected the NCTJ skills based approach, with the different elements of practical journalism being complemented by courses in law, politics and public administration, and economics. The course went beyond the requirements of the NCTJ in these areas and also included Irish and French. Until the mid-eighties, one of the external examiners was from the NCTJ and a representative from the NUJ sat on the interview board for student admissions. From the late seventies, there were increasing tensions between the college and the union because of the restrictions insisted on by the union and because of the college's desire to up-grade the course. In 1978, Rathmines, by then part of DIT, set up a three/four year course in communications that was originally intended to include journalism. However, the course developed into a film and broadcasting degree without any element of journalism. Apart from opposition from the industry, the eventual exclusion of journalism also reflected the views of the professional media lecturers, who came from Radio Telefís Éireann (RTE), where journalists were categorised as different and distinct from other media professionals.

In 1982, the newly founded National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin (NIHE), developed a postgraduate diploma in journalism, without the agreement of the NUJ and without accreditation from the NCTJ. It was able to take advantage of the blockage that was occurring in the development of the Rathmines course, and it reflected the development of similar postgraduate courses in Britain and elsewhere in Europe at that time (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). After initial opposition, the NUJ soon gave recognition to this course, despite the fact that it was contrary to its policy regarding the appropriate level of education and age of entrants to the profession.

The reason why NIHE developed a journalism programme and became heavily involved in media education in general has to do with the original development of this institution in the seventies. The government at the time wished to develop higher level technological education in the country and proposed to set up two new institutions in Dublin and Limerick. In Dublin, the plan was that the higher level work of the CDVEC colleges should be moved to the new institution: courses and staff were to transfer from one institution to the other. However, the plan failed, mainly because of lack of agreement between local government (through the CDVEC) and central government over control of the new body. The government went ahead to set up a completely new institution, the NIHE. Although courses were not transferred, it went on to develop its own programmes in several of the areas already existing in the CDVEC colleges, including journalism and the wider media/communications field. In the early days, there were great tensions and rivalry between the two bodies. It was at its strongest at the higher levels of management but did permeate down to include lecturers and even students (White, 2001; Duff et al., 2000). NIHE was given university status in 1989 and changed its name to Dublin City University (DCU).

DCU up-graded its journalism course to a masters degree in 1990. At that stage, the courses in DIT and DCU were, it could be said, in line with what the government had intended with the higher level professional course being delivered in the new institution and DIT continuing the lower level work. However, this situation was to change in the next few years.



DIT developed a postgraduate diploma in journalism in the early 1990s which was converted to a masters degree in 1997. In the mid nineties also, both colleges established four year undergraduate courses in journalism. This again was following the trend in Britain and elsewhere in Europe where it was argued, for example, at meetings of the EJTA (European Journalism Training Association) that the one year masters courses were not a sufficient response to the need for graduate journalists. The constraints of a one-year course greatly limited what could be covered in the curriculum whereas a more thorough education in all aspects of journalism could be offered in the longer undergraduate programmes. Also, the aspirations of those graduating with masters degrees were seen not to match many of the job opportunities available in the industry. They were perceived to not always be happy to work in the local and regional press and to work as generalists rather than as specialists in the field studied for their primary degrees. The two degree programmes developed were relatively similar, both drawing on general theoretical work in media communications alongside the different elements of journalism practice. Languages were also included in both programmes.

The course in NUIG was established as a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Communications in 1988, according to its director (O'Sullivan, 2003). Despite its title, it was a one-year course in professional journalism. Its distinctiveness lay in being offered through both Irish and English, thus supporting the Irish language media many of which are based close by in Galway and the Connemara Gaeltacht (Irish speaking district). In 2002, NUIG extended its English language course to an MA in Journalism. The Irish language course remains a diploma under the old title – Árd Dioplóma i gCumarsáid Fheimeach – and has developed into a more general course in media practices. Galway is currently the only centre for professional journalism education outside Dublin.

Griffith College was established in 1974. It was one of a number of private colleges set up for commercial purposes which, especially between 1980 and 2000, took advantage of the shortage of third level places in the public education system in Ireland (White, 2000). It concentrates mainly on business and law apart from journalism. In the mid-nineties, it took over the journalism course originally established by Newman College in the 1980s. Newman College was a private

college run by the Catholic organisation Opus Dei. Due to financial difficulties, it closed a relatively short time after the journalism course was started. Griffith College (2004) has expanded the original two-year certificate programme and in 2004 offered a three-year degree in journalism, a three-year diploma and a one-year graduate diploma. Its courses are validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), whereas DCU, DIT and NUIG have the authority to validate courses and make their own awards.

### **2.2.3 Other programmes**

Elsewhere in higher education, in the universities and institutes of technology, and in further education colleges, there are courses that include elements of journalism. Two other universities have recently developed programmes with some modules in journalism. The National University of Ireland at Maynooth introduced a BA in Media Studies in September 2002. It suggests journalism as a career option for graduates. However, although the course content includes some practical courses in media production, journalism per se does not figure in the curriculum (NUI Maynooth, 2004). The University of Limerick (2004) has a BA degree in English and New Media the content of which is purely academic, yet journalism is again listed as a possible career opportunity for graduates. Mary Immaculate College (2004), affiliated to the University of Limerick, offers Media Communications as a subject on its BA degree. This degree is intended as a liberal arts programme, the prospectus quoting Aristotle's definition of the aim of liberal education as the education and studies 'that exist for their own sake'. The media communications section somewhat contradicts this as the programme includes 'a theoretical and practical approach to journalism, both print and electronic media'. These centres may go on to develop courses in professional journalism, Mary Immaculate College in particular is seemingly on this path. Currently, they do not offer such courses; nor do they have journalist lecturers on their staff or recognition from the NUJ.

Among the institutes of technology, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT, 2003) has since 1998 run a degree programme, BA Gnó agus Cumarsáid (Business and Communications) which includes a module in Irish language journalism. Cork Institute of Technology (CIT, 2003) has been running a part-time certificate in printing for some time that includes some training in journalism skills. Dun

Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology has developed a course in radio broadcasting that attracts a National Certificate in Humanities (Radio Broadcasting) from HETAC (2003). Recognition from the NUJ has been sought for this course but has not so far been granted.

It is worth noting that, notwithstanding their initial interest in the 1900s, the traditional universities have not become involved in journalism education with the exception of the minor engagement of NUIG and Maynooth. The University of Limerick is a new university, similar to DCU. Founded as NIHE Limerick in 1970, it became a university in 1989 and has an explicit orientation towards applied, technological education. NUIG has a particular national role with regard to the Irish language and an orientation to the needs of the west of the country which explains its courses. Maynooth, the smallest of the universities, has most need to attract students. Its development of media courses may be linked to the popularity of such courses with students. It also has on campus a successful non-profit-making media production company, Kairos Communications, on whose resources it can draw. The three largest and arguably most eminent universities, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and University College Cork, do not offer journalism programmes despite the overall tendency for their programmes to become more vocationally oriented (White, 2001). The universities are under pressure from government and other sources such as the OECD and the EU, to use higher education as a means of assisting in the economic development of the country. Therefore, many new programmes have been developed but in areas such as information technology, business and biotechnology. Areas of vocational education that are socially rather than economically relevant have not gained attention to the same extent.

At the further education level, FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) awards a certificate in print journalism for which there were 164 successful candidates in 2001. The main centres where this course is offered are in Dublin and Cork. One college of further education in Dublin, Coláiste Dhúlaigh, has gained recognition from the NUJ, mainly through the argument that because of its location, this college gives an opportunity to the more disadvantaged students to become journalists. (The argument is disputed because the majority of the students

do not come from the immediate vicinity of the college). FETAC's (2003) certificates in related areas such as radio production and media production include optional modules in, respectively, research skills for journalists and print journalism. In the 1990s, these courses and indeed the whole further education sector developed in response to the overall shortage of third level places in Ireland at that time.

#### **2.2.4 The involvement of the NUJ**

From the start, the employers and the NUJ were involved in journalism education, but the latter was always the more vocal and influential. Yet the position of the NUJ is now greatly changed from what it was in the two decades from the early sixties to the early eighties. Then, it had a great measure of control over the one course in Rathmines. Its perception of its role at that time can be clearly seen in a 1981 report from the NUJ Dublin branch which gives a detailed critique of the course and proposed that the branch take steps:

*to control the input and output of the course in a way that reflects the realistic job opportunities, protects the interests of members in the industry and safeguards professional standards. (NUJ, 1981: 2)*

The NUJ was stronger in Ireland than in Britain during this time, essentially operating a closed shop for entry to the profession (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). It then started to lose its grip on educational developments. The DCU course established in 1982 was contrary to its policy regarding the level of education and the age of entrants to the profession. It gave recognition to this course, however, once it was successfully up and running. The course in Galway was given recognition without any controversy because the issue of postgraduate qualifications had already been decided with regard to DCU and there was strong support from the regional press for the course. Newman College also had its advocates in the NUJ; it too was given recognition. This recognition transferred to Griffith College with the course and has been expanded by Griffith College to its current three courses. The connections with Newman College and now Griffith College were not universally accepted, because of the religious ethos in Newman and because of the private, commercial ethos in Griffith College. The practical advantages of NUJ recognition for these courses is that students are entitled to

temporary union cards and employers normally give preference to graduates from recognised courses.

In 1989, a committee representing the main industry partners was set up to review the situation regarding training because of concern at the expansion in courses and because, in Stephenson and Mory's words, Rathmines was no longer the cornerstone. Employers and union were represented on the committee. DCU and DIT preferred not to participate but agreed to co-operate in any way they could. The report in its draft form (Journalism Training Committee, 1989) made far-reaching proposals for a comprehensive approach to journalism education. These included the setting up of an institute for journalists similar to those of other professions and the development of a multi-level approach to education, with certificate, diploma, degree, postgraduate conversion courses and masters courses for experienced journalists. It speaks of the need for the study of journalism as an academic discipline, the lack of which has entailed:

*the failure to engage in the type of rigorous study and examination of the role and nature of journalism, the role of the media in national life and the development of ethical standards and procedures in journalism. (p. 17)*

This lack also, it was felt:

*contributed to the relative paucity of serious media study and comparative and critical analysis of journalism output and media standards in general. (p. 17)*

The chairperson of this committee was the late Christina Murphy, then also education editor of *The Irish Times*. The report was a reflection of her strong interest and views on journalism education. As a member of the management at her newspaper, she was in fact the NNI representative on the committee. Her subsequent ill health was one of the main reasons why the report and the work of the committee never progressed. The other was that the Irish section of the NUJ gained more independence from the London headquarters in the nineties. It acquired its own executive council and turned its attention to issues of more

immediate day to day relevance to its members. Education had been one of the few areas within its remit before then.

In recent years, the only concern of the union regarding education has been to do with the recognition of courses. Its earlier view of its controlling role in journalism education in order to control entry to the profession has long gone. According to Michael Foley (2003), a member of the NUJ executive and of the 1989 committee on education, the former education committee has fallen into disuse and more recently the union executive has been making the decisions on course recognition. There is disquiet about how the decisions are made as there is no firm policy or set criteria. Recent requests for recognition have not been processed in order to allow time for discussion and reflection.

The NUJ's position is not quite as strong in the industry as it was. It has had difficulty establishing its role with some more recently established media organisations such as the commercial television channel TV3, some local radio stations, the newspaper *Ireland on Sunday*. In education, DCU's and DIT's course development in the nineties took place independently of the NUJ. In accordance with their quality assurance procedures, the colleges include input from the industry for the development and review of their journalism courses as they do for all professional courses. This input however, does not come through the NUJ but through industry experts identified and chosen by the colleges themselves. The situation is thus different from professional education in other fields in the country where professional bodies have formal links with courses and accredit them, in, for example, accountancy, engineering, and the medical sciences.

It is also different from the UK where industry accreditation and recognition of courses is more firmly established. There are three accreditation bodies for journalism education, for the print industry (NCTJ: National Council for the Training of Journalists), for the magazine industry (PTC: the Periodicals Training Council) and the broadcast industry (BJTC: the Broadcast Journalism Training Council). The NUJ then gives recognition to courses with accreditation. However, there is dissatisfaction within higher education in the UK with the accreditation process (Taylor, 2002). Issues include the perceived lack of understanding of

higher education systems and processes on some accreditation panels, the lack of academic representation on such panels, the old style separation into three separate bodies for different media which does not match the growing media convergence and cross media careers of most journalists. The Association for Journalism Education (AJE), representing the main higher education institutions has been discussing alternative proposals for accreditation.

## **2.3 The current situation**

### **2.3.1 The primary centres of journalism education**

At present, DCU and DIT are recognised as the primary centres for journalism education. They both run highly sought after courses at undergraduate and masters level, courses that are aimed at the teaching of professional practice as well as more theoretical approaches to journalism. Both also are involved in research and have students taking research degrees up to doctorate level. Whereas DIT has the longer tradition, DCU has at this stage the higher status and a somewhat larger activity. As a university, it has established a chair of journalism, the only one in the country. Apart from the professorship, there are six full-time members of staff in professional journalism with an overall complement of 29 whole-time staff in the media area. In terms of student numbers, there were 26 students on the MA in Journalism in 2003 and 147 students on the BA in Journalism (DCU, 2004). DIT has three full-time lecturers in journalism and a total of 30 lecturers in media/communications. In 2003, it had 17 MA students and 130 undergraduate students in journalism (DIT, 2004).

In both colleges, journalism is not a stand-alone department but part of a larger school; a School of Communications in DCU and a School of Media in DIT. The school in DIT is subdivided into two departments, communications and journalism, and media technologies. The other programmes in these schools cover most aspects of media theory and practice, including broadcasting, film, public relations, multi-media, photography, cultural theory and critical studies. DIT is considered to be more oriented towards professional education and to be the front-runner in areas of media production; its tradition in vocational education has fostered this. DCU is generally seen to lead in journalism. This can be seen in the somewhat higher

journalism student numbers and in the somewhat higher academic level required for entry to the undergraduate course. Its greater complement of full-time journalism staff makes a difference both in terms of delivering courses, in maintaining a public image and in carrying out research and development work.

DCU has a higher academic profile and has had a greater research activity. In terms of research students, in 2003, the School of Communications (DCU, 2004) had 20 PhD students and 11 students of masters by research. From its beginnings as NIHE Dublin, DCU always had a remit for research and as a university has had the resources to provide for the research activities of its staff. Until the *Dublin Institute of Technology Act* in 1992, DIT had no explicit remit for research and no resources either. Since then, it has made considerable progress in developing a research ethos and increasing its research activity. The School of Media had 15 PhD and 9 MPhil students in 2003 (DIT, 2004).

In more general terms, because of the historical origins of DCU, the two institutions have a similar applied, vocational focus, with mandates to provide for the economic and social needs of the country (See *National Institute for Higher Education Dublin Act*, 1980 and *Dublin Institute of Technology Act*, 1992). However, DCU has university status. DIT has not, although it has full degree awarding powers. It is an Institute of Technology. It applied to become a university in 1998 mainly in order to gain the greater autonomy from government control that universities enjoy, but was unsuccessful (White, 2001). DIT is the largest higher education institution in Ireland. Its origins date back to a number of technical institutions in Dublin first founded in the nineteenth century. It offers programmes from apprenticeship to doctoral level. DCU is a much smaller institution, with approximately 7,000 students compared with 21,000 at DIT.

NUIG has the status of a traditional university in Irish terms, compared with DCU and DIT. It was founded in the nineteenth century and is now perceived as having a liberal educational ethos. The scale of its activity with 17 students on its English language course and 15 on its Irish language programme (O'Sullivan, 2003), means that it is a minor player in journalism education.



Griffith College, as detailed previously, offers a range of courses in journalism. As a private college, it is somewhat outside the mainstream. Private colleges form a very small section of higher education in Ireland, providing an alternative to those who fail to obtain places in the public system and who can afford them. Entry requirements for admission to its courses are far lower than in DCU and DIT. For example, the points from the school Leaving Certificate examinations required for admission to the degree courses at the three institutions in September 2004 were: DCU, 465; DIT, 420; and Griffith College, 280 (CAO, 2004). Its graduate diploma is open to all graduates whereas the minimum entry requirement for the masters' programmes in DIT and DCU is an honours 2:2 degree. Its ordinary degree course accepts all qualified applicants so there is no competition for admission, which is unusual even for FE courses in the media area. The number of student places available are comparatively high: 60 places on the degree programme; 60 places on its ordinary degree programme which are not always filled, and 30 students on its graduate programme (Meehan, 2003). Its full-time staff number 15. It has little involvement in media related courses other than journalism and is not involved in research. It can be argued that it is using journalism education in the same way as many UK universities are accused of doing, to attract large numbers of students. The other disciplines Griffith College has chosen to develop, business and law, are likewise those that are popular with students, that are inexpensive to run and where supply in the public education sector does not match demand. Its total student population is 3,000. Griffith College is running a successful teaching programme in journalism in its own way. In the future, it will be interesting to see whether it and the other successful private colleges will develop beyond their present teaching roles or whether they will fade away as the demographic and economic situation in the country becomes less favourable to them. Their focus is already changing to attracting foreign rather than Irish or other EU students.

### **2.3.2 Journalists and journalism education**

I have focussed on courses in journalism education in this section. Yet it is important to note that only a minority of Irish journalists have taken such courses. There is no standard educational requirement for entry to journalism, with the result that journalists exhibit a wide spectrum of educational levels and qualifications. Corcoran and Kelly Browne (1998) in their profiling of Irish

journalists found that 61% of their sample had primary or advanced college degrees, 19% had completed the Leaving Certificate only and 1.8% had left school at 16 or less. A mere 25% had studied journalism at college and a further 20% had completed a formal journalism apprenticeship. Corcoran and Kelly Browne's survey was confined to journalists in the national print and broadcasting press where educational levels are likely to be higher than in the regional and local press. Their findings support Kiberd's view (1997) when he speaks of 'the haphazard nature of recruitment to the profession of journalism'. The overall confusion on the issue can be further highlighted by quoting Collins, a former editor of the *Irish News*, who describes journalism as 'essentially a non-academic trade' (Kenny, 1994).

Such findings and quotations are indicative of the confusion surrounding journalism education in general, not only in Ireland. Delano and Henningham's (1995) survey of the British press found a similar situation there. Only a minority of respondents – 22% – thought a degree necessary for entry to journalism, and as in Corcoran and Kelly Browne's survey in Ireland, British journalists were found to have the same wide range of educational levels and qualifications. At the NewsWorld Conference in Dublin in November 2002, the international group of journalists present frequently brought the opposing views of the journalist's status as 'professional' or as 'hack' into discussions. Such views indicate why it is difficult to establish the basis for journalism education, when there is no clear agreement on what a journalist is and what journalism education should be. The focus of the next two chapters is on these issues.

## Chapter 3

### What is Journalism?

*Burke said there were three estates in Parliament, but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a fourth Estate more important than they all.*

Thomas Carlyle (1905: 349)

#### 3.1 Introduction

The importance of journalism has long been recognised as Carlyle's well-known words attest. Freedom of the press is enshrined internationally in the European Convention on Human Rights (article 10) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 19). It is enshrined in the law of many countries, of which the First Amendment of the American Constitution is the most well known example (Rosen, 1999). In Ireland, freedom of expression of the press is guaranteed in the Constitution (*Bunreacht na h-Éireann*, article 40. 6. 1).

Given this long-standing recognition of the importance of journalism it is all the more surprising that there is no clear definition of either journalism or journalist in theory or practice. For the bodies concerned with the industry in Ireland (and the UK), neither the NUJ nor management bodies offer any definition. Splichal and Sparks (1994) found that none of the main international bodies concerned with journalism, such as UNESCO, the International Federation of Journalists and the International Organisation of Journalists) could provide a satisfactory definition either. Definitions that are used for particular purposes concentrate on listing what a journalist does, that is, gathering, writing and editing news. However, this can be seen as too inclusive. These skills are not exclusive to journalists but are used in a large range of media professions – advertising, public relations, forms of script-writing, communications writing of all kinds. Neither do these skills give any insight into why journalism is important and powerful. In order to gain an understanding of this, one can turn to examine not what a journalist does but the purpose or function that the journalist serves.

## **3.2 The role of the journalist**

### **3.2.1 The traditional role**

The traditional role ascribed to journalism from the eighteenth century is linked to the functioning of democracy in the political system, acting as watchdog on behalf of the citizens (Adam, 2001; Dahlgren, 1994; Singer, 2003). As Singer expresses it, the 'journalistic theory of democracy' is based on the notion that more information equals better-equipped citizens and therefore better participatory democracy. Dewey in the 1920s had seen journalism in this light, as an important element of the public sphere in order to inform and engage the public in the events of the day within a democracy (Rosen, 1999). Others understand the role in broader terms, linking it more generally to the good of society. For example De Burgh (2003) has stated that '... society ... depends upon the quality of its journalism for the efficiency of its institutions and for understanding in every sphere' whereas Adam's view is more general again, stating that journalism's role is to 'organise the daily intelligence of a community, state or universe and make it cohere'.

These quotations hint at the way in which the role can be different in different societies and it is well recognised that journalism is a product of the time and place in which it functions. In the US in the eighteenth century, journalists were not independent observers but took sides in the War of Independence (Rosen, 1999). Hunter (1982) wrote of the shift in journalism in nineteenth century Britain from reporting parliamentary speeches verbatim to questioning politicians on behalf of the people. In the eighteenth and much of nineteenth century Europe, journalism was an elite, literary oriented occupation, aimed at a small public of male, bourgeois intellectuals. In twentieth century Europe, the journalism found in different countries reflected the governments in place at particular times, eg, the strict control of journalism under Nazi and fascist governments in Germany, Italy Spain and Portugal (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 2003b; Mancini, 2003; Barrera and Vax, 2003; Pinto and Sousa, 2003). Hiebert and Gross (2003) have described journalism as not having a fact-based tradition but acting in the service of Marxist-Leninism during the communist era in Eastern Europe. In nineteenth century Ireland, journalists were involved as both commentators and activists in debates

about nationalism (Foley, 2004) and to this day, journalists in Ireland as in other small countries are seen as having a duty to help forge and reflect a sense of national identity (Corcoran, 2004; Report of the Newspaper Commission, 1996; Kenny, 1994). The setting up of the EU has led to another shift in journalism's role, in that the economic and political entity coming into existence provides another public sphere above the nation state for journalism to serve (Kopper, 2003).

McNair (2000a) views journalism in this light as reflecting the historical processes within which it developed, its values reflecting the society from which they have emerged. He describes the journalist as an 'authorised truth-teller' or a 'licensed relay of facts', with journalism presented as a truthful discourse about the real world. Presented in this way journalism acquires legitimacy and value in the cultural marketplace.

Despite shifts in how journalism is practised, McNair's 'truthful discourse' has been guaranteed, at least in the Anglo-American tradition, by the journalistic values of objectivity, neutrality, fairness and facticity. They equate with a positivist epistemology, with the Enlightenment ideas of rationality and universal truth, thus linking back to the concept of journalism in Carlyle's time (Hallin, 1992; Splichal and Sparks, 1994). It is only recently that these ideas are being questioned by more sociological understandings of journalism as a social construct which reflect better the fluctuations in its role and the questionable validity of values such as objectivity.

In practice, there have always been cases where the claimed objectivity and neutrality are ignored, for example, in all conflict situations of war or threat to states, or in reporting of certain sports events, especially at national level and in the reporting of other events where a consensus view is assumed, such as natural disasters and crime. In the Irish context, the clearest illustration of the difficulty if not impossibility of reporting objectively and neutrally has long been reporting on Northern Ireland (Feeney, 1997). Apart from the nature of events themselves, other factors militating against the values of neutrality and fairness are firstly, the inequality of access to the media which is eased for the privileged groups in society (Herman and Chomsky, 1994), in particular media owners (McChesney, 2003), and

secondly, the unrepresentativeness of journalists themselves, as they are from predominantly middle-class backgrounds and hold more liberal views than is the norm in society (Corcoran and Kelly Brown, 1998; Delano, 2002).

### **3.2.2 Journalism and democracy vs journalism as business**

The view of journalism as a form of public service serving the needs of democracy and the values associated with this view, are criticised as being ideals which do not reflect the reality of much if not most journalism. They fail to take account of the commercial world in which the press operates (Berger, 2000) which has led to a large section of journalism being given over to entertainment (Curran, 2000; Splichal and Sparks, 1994). Donnsbach (2004) amongst others claims that the rationale of the media is business, not organising the political process.

Both Hallin (2000) and McChesney (2003) claim the American press has been essentially commercial since the early 1800s. This tendency was however somewhat lessened in the nineteenth and early twentieth century by the political interests and personal commitments of the press owners of the time. Attempts to counter it included government regulation and moves to professionalise journalists, including the setting up of educational programmes in journalism. Likewise in the UK, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw attempts to professionalise and establish education for journalists (Hunter, 1982; Parry, 1988). Ireland, then part of the UK, was affected by these moves, although it should be noted that a commercial press had not developed, due to the economic conditions after the famine in the 1840s, and the intensity of political debate over nationalism (Foley, 2004). The establishment of journalism education was more successful in the US than in the UK. Journalism programmes were set up in American universities and have lasted to the present day, whereas in Britain and Ireland, despite much activity, journalism education failed to make much progress until the later decades of the twentieth century (Hunter, 1982; Parry, 1988).

### **3.3 Challenges to journalism**

#### **3.3.1 Consumerism**

In the twentieth century, the democratic role of journalism is said to have dominated from 1920 to the 1960s (McChesney, 2003) or 1970s (Curran, 2000), coinciding with high levels of more general civic engagement. It came to an end partly because of the political disillusion caused by Vietnam and Watergate in the US but also more generally because of the rise of neo-conservatism, of economic neo-liberalism which tipped the balance in favour of the commercial side of journalism in Western societies (Berger, 2000; McChesney, 2003). The media industry can now be seen as predominantly profit-driven, dominated by a small number of large conglomerates. The concern to minimise costs has led to cutbacks in resources for news production, and the requirement to maximise income has placed great emphasis on increasing circulation. The result has been a certain trivialisation of news, more focus on entertainment, more reliance on public relations sources for news content, and also, a certain reflection of the values of the owners in their newspapers as journalists fear to assert their independence (see for example, McChesney, 2003; McNair, 2000a.)

Journalists have not countered these commercial pressures well in their own industry, nor have they examined the more general exercise of power by commercial interests in society (Curran, 2000). Their traditional focus has been on politicians and parliament, with a failure to examine in the same way the exercise of power by other groups. McChesney, using the example of the failure of the US press to adequately coverage the corporate scandals in 2001 and 2002, claims that this failure reflected the 'core problem of entrusting the news to large, profit-motivated and self-interested business organisations'. The lack of press scrutiny of the corporate world can be ascribed to the fact that this is a world that operates outside democratic institutions, within the private rather than the public sphere and is thus less open to scrutiny (Curran, 2000).

This general marketisation of the media treats the reader or audience, not as a citizen, but as a consumer. The words of Mark Fowler, chairman of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) under Ronald Reagan that 'the public

interest is that which interests the public', are much used to justify questionable media content (Hallin, 2000). The media are treated as industries producing a consumer product like any other and the market is seen as the only basis for deciding what kind of product that should be. More specifically with regard to the press, Stephenson (1998) has claimed that the content of newspapers is now packaged in whatever way is most appealing to consumers, rather than being primarily aimed at communicating and commenting on news and current affairs. Hallin argues that such a view is reinforced by a jaundiced form of post-modern argument that equates the market with the popular, any criticism of which is dubbed elitist.

Holm is pessimistic of the influence of market forces that has led the media to use the mantra of giving consumers what they want, stating:

*[t]he gradual waning of the political discourse, the celebrity orientation, and the dominance of one-issue journalism are side-effects of the market forces of a liberalised media structure that produces journalism for an audience rather than journalism for a purpose. (2003: 133)*

He argues that journalism for a purpose is incompatible with the realities of a modern market-based system.

The perceived decline in the media and the trivialising of its content cannot be put down to commercialisation alone. Commercialization is interlinked with other changes, the apparent decline in participatory democracy in those countries where it is longest and best established, along with the rise of individualism, the development of new media technologies and globalisation.

### **3.3.2 Weakening of democracy?**

The claimed loss of interest in politics (Blumler, 1997), and decline in the level of civic engagement (Hallin, 2000) in the Western world can be seen in the fall in the numbers of voters, the decrease in membership of political parties (Rosen, 1993) and the weakening of interest in news and current affairs (Hargreaves and Thomas, 2002). The cynicism and lack of interest in politics has been mainly ascribed to the conduct of politics itself or to other general social trends such as the rise of



individualism (Lee, 1997), and the rise of the 'me' generation (Berger, 2000) which have fed into consumerism. However, Blumler offers an interesting analysis of the interaction of politics and the media in contributing to the general public cynicism and to the weakening of democracy. In his view, politicians and journalists have weakened political communication so that it has become 'more artificial, less nourishing, less trustworthy, more negative, and sometimes less relevant to the central tasks of government'. He argues that the decline in participation in politics, together with the rise in the power of the media has made the media's political role more pivotal and has encouraged them to adopt a more independent role, rather than simply acting as a conduit for politicians. Politicians have attempted to regain control by professionalising their interaction with the media. They have appointed specialist political consultants versed, as Blumler terms it, 'in the machinery of manipulative publicity'. Strategies have been developed to control the agenda through, for example, transforming electioneering into political marketing, controlling access to politicians, putting the best possible spin on emerging stories. Journalists' reaction to such strategies has led to their focussing on the process rather than the substance of the political message, treating it as a game, concentrating on personalities and in particular on politicians' mistakes rather than on politics as a sphere of political choices. Their general attitude is one of scepticism if not cynicism towards politics and politicians. The result is an adversarial relationship between politicians and journalists, with both sides taken up with the relationship with each other and, as Rosen (1993) has said, citizens' needs pushed to the margins. The public are not well supplied with information, are not encouraged to participate as active citizens. Lloyd's (2004) recent book on relations between the press and politics in Britain illustrates this pessimistic view.

A different position is taken by McNair (2000b) who argues that the modern media provide more information on politics than previously and have opened up political affairs to the public more than ever before by being more accessible, more expressive of public concerns and more watchful of the power elites. Corner and Pels (2003) go further in rejecting the claim of the fall of interest in politics and political journalism, pointing to the mobilisation of people around certain issues and certain political personalities. They see the emergence of a new style of politics and its relationship to the media where, in line with the consumerism, celebrity and

cynicism of the times, a politics driven by personality, marketing and new forms of activism is replacing traditional political structures and processes. From their perspective which marks a departure from rationalist concepts of politics and journalism, politics is not seen as getting worse but as simply being represented differently.

### **3.3.3 Information and communication technologies**

Apart from the long established debates within and between journalism's democratic and commercial roles, the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has brought new challenges to journalism, in particular the development of the internet, satellite communications and the convergence of the media through digital technology. These have increased the skills required for journalists, who can now expect and may be required to be multi-skilled, to work across the different media formats, that is, print, broadcasting and on-line news media, and to carry out many of the technical recording and editing functions previously carried out by technicians (Blanchard and Christ, 1993). The extra demand on skills is no longer a matter of controversy (see for example, Singer, 2003) but the more deeply based changes that the new technology has entailed are of concern. One such change is the advent of TV news channels broadcasting 24 hours a day. This has led to the constant need for news content and the pressure of working at great speed, with the subsequent dangers of less emphasis being paid to the significance of stories and to their verification and validity as required in traditional journalism (McChesney, 2003; Singer, 2003).

It is the internet, however, that poses the most fundamental challenge to journalism. It has done away with the distinction between mass and interpersonal communications (Blanchard and Christ, 1993). The journalist's traditional role as the gatekeeper of information is challenged as the public can directly access information from its source themselves (Trench and Quinn, 2003). Non-journalists can and do act as news-gatherers and news-writers on the web (Deuze, 2001c). On-line news services are not always provided by journalists but by web content providers, often with backgrounds in computer science, graphics, rather than journalism (Singer, 2003). The positive side to this is seen in bringing the reader or audience more to the fore, allowing them to by-pass the established press (Hallin,

2000). Those who adopt this attitude are of the view that journalists need to adapt by seeing themselves as cartographers or path-routers rather than gatekeepers, using a horizontal rather than a vertical model of journalism in their communication with the audience (Trench and Quinn, 2003). The possibilities for interactivity further enhance the audience's role by allowing the public to have a voice through, for example, polls and phone-ins as never before (Blumler (1997).

Nevertheless, there are others who see the internet and its on-line news services in a negative light. On-line journalism is not considered real journalism as it does not conform to the accepted industry norms (Deuze, 2001c). The concerns centre around the use of non-journalists working on these sites as referred to above (Deuze, 2001c; Singer, 2003), and the lack of a clear separation between editorial and commercial content (Deuze, 2001c). Singer comprehensively criticises on-line journalism as not complying with the established cognitive, normative and autonomous dimensions of the work of a journalist. The cognitive dimension, which she equates with the traditional newsgathering techniques for the sourcing, complex analysis and investigation of material cannot be equated with simply 'shovelling' content on to the web as on-line content providers may be inclined to do. The normative dimension, comprising ethics and commitment to public service, is seen as the great divide between online and other journalism and connects to the third dimension of autonomy. Journalists who adhere to the norms and values of their occupation insist on their own autonomy and respect the separation between editorial and commercial departments and functions. Web content providers do not have such codes of conduct and frequently fail to observe these accepted standards.

The technology issue reverts back to the divisions already mentioned in the debates between journalism as a public service and journalism as a commercial enterprise. It can be seen as further evidence of the commercialisation of the media and the subjugation of journalism to the profit making of the companies who control them (Kaplan, 2003). It is feared as a threat to the standards and norms of journalism with the danger of 'deprofessionalisation' (Singer, 2003). On the other hand, the advances of technology can be seen as simply requiring the application of the basic principles of journalism to a new environment with the bonus of invigorating the

hitherto neglected relationship between producers and users (Trench and Quinn, 2003). In this light, technology is seen as strengthening the democratic dimension of journalism with the focus now placed on the reader, audience or citizen.

### **3.3.4 Globalisation**

The globalisation of the media also has implications for the debates on the business/public service split in journalism. There are two aspects to globalisation which has, on the one hand, enabled the media to gather and disseminate news on a global basis and on the other, has led to the emergence of transnational media conglomerates which control a large section of media communications on a world-wide basis.

Curran (2000) is optimistic about globalisation, welcoming it as enabling the emergence of a global public sphere through bodies such as the UN, WTO and IMF. He sees it as facilitating the development of an international civic society, not, in his view a pipe dream, but a force that has long had influence, instancing its role in the abolition of slavery. However, he admits the more negative aspects of the global communications order, the inequalities in power and resources that distort the distribution of information. Others see globalisation only in terms of these inequalities, whether from the dominance of Western nations, in particular the US, or from the dominance of media conglomerations in private ownership, concentrating power in the hands of fewer and fewer organisations.

Concern for the imbalance in the distribution of information is not new. Corcoran (2002) and Sosale (2003) refer back to the older arguments about media imperialism (see for example, UNESCO, 1980 – the so-called McBride report) which are reappearing again under media globalisation. The information flow is predominantly in one direction, from the West. The voices and concerns of people in other areas of the world are hardly heard although Sosale recognises that alternative news outlets are providing some options and have decreased the total dependence on news from the large media conglomerates that was feared.

Globalisation is generally seen as leading to the spread of the US media model across the world with the implicit assumption that it is the natural and inevitable

world model (Reese, 2001). Corcoran (2002) is alarmed at this because of the potential influence of the heavily marketized US media which he characterises as 'shallow, trivial, voyeuristic, exploitative'. He fears their wider ideological influence from their emphasis on consumerism, individualism and neo-liberal economics, rather than on more social democratic options. In similar vein, Eisenberg (2001) highlights the lack of recognition of other cultures, including the sharp division between the values of individualism, enterprise and action in the West and community orientation and cohesion in the East. This issue reinforces the difficulties with some of the traditional journalistic values already referred to. In a globalised, multicultural world, exposure to other cultures challenges the accepted version of journalism's public service role, along with the notions of objectivity, neutrality and news values of western journalism (Deuze, 2001b).

Mary Robinson (2003), the former UN Commissioner for Human Rights has focussed on globalisation as having facilitated the accumulation of power by large conglomerates. She has warned that this has led to the transfer of power from the public to the private sphere as the economic activity of these private companies at a global level is not subject to the normal checks and balances available within the nation state. The answer in her view is the establishment of an accepted code of ethics, of values internationally. Robinson was speaking generally. It might seem that journalism's response to the challenges of globalisation should likewise lie in the establishment of an international standard or code of behaviour for journalism. Reese (2001) has advocated such a code. Splichal and Sparks (1994) found in their research on the attitudes of student journalists across 22 countries, that the stated values of journalism do not, in fact, differ greatly, which would seem to indicate a basis for the establishment of an agreed code. However, they acknowledge the problems in regulating such a code at national level which would make the task of doing so at international level even more difficult.

In the immediate context of this research, it should be noted that Ireland has been judged the most globalized country in terms of integration into the world political and economic system in 2001, 2002 and 2003 (Corcoran 2004; *Foreign Policy*, 2003). Horgan (2001) has claimed that globalisation is starting to affect all sectors

of the Irish media with subsequent concern over issues of control over channels of information, and the likely repercussions culturally and politically.

### **3.4 Response to challenges**

#### **3.4.1 Journalism and media/communications**

These various changes and challenges to journalism have led to some different reactions. One tendency has been to deny any distinctiveness to journalism and to see it as part of the wider area of media or communications. Others maintain journalism is a distinct occupation and seek to redefine its public service role in order to match the new reality in which it operates.

Those who view journalism as a business tend to view it as part of the media entertainment industry, with no sharp distinction from other media occupations. Likewise the development of web-based media has tended to conflate journalism with other forms of media content. Blanchard and Christ (1993), somewhat unusually amongst educators, argue that the new technologies have led to a convergence in the skills required for different areas of communication practice of which journalism is one, along with others such as public relations, advertising and television production. They call for education for a new profession of media communicator to match this convergence, bringing together all areas of practice into the one occupation. It should be noted that, despite what might be expected from their focus on technology and skills, the education they propose for this media communicator is to include critical analysis and understanding. They lament the lack of intellectual content in current journalism programmes in the US.

Curran (2000) similarly does not distinguish journalism from other forms of media practice, but his reasoning is very different. His starting point is that there is a need to reconceptualise the link between the media and democracy, that the concept of journalism as a 'free-market watchdog' within a democracy is anachronistic. He views the public sphere as Habermas first conceived it as small and elitist and he argues that the market is corrupt and can suppress the media as much as politicians can. Habermas' more recent, view of the public sphere has expanded to the local, regional and international as well as the national level (Habermas, 1992) and it is

now conceived as 'a network for communicating information and points of view' (Habermas, 1996). Curran has welcomed this. Within such a public sphere, he argues that media content other than journalism serves a democratic purpose. He contends that fiction and entertainment contribute through offering cognitive maps of reality, debating values and identities and raising issues such as race and gender, and especially through music, providing a platform for disempowered groups in society. He is not arguing that journalism's democratic role is superseded by media entertainment. On the contrary, the need for rational information and debate is seen as crucial in politics, but entertainment has a role to play in the wider democratic issues of the self-regulation and self-identification of society. Curran is not therefore, marking off journalism from the general media in his approach but providing a rationale for amalgamating it within the media generally. Journalism is seen as a necessary part of a media continuum that has overall a democratic remit.

It could be said that his view of the media is based very much on a European if not British perspective with its tradition of public service broadcasting (see, for example, Raboy, 1996). The research he quotes in support of his argument is European, indeed British (for example, Ericson et al., 1987; McGuigan, 1996). Corcoran's (2004) account of Irish public service television, including television news is from the same perspective. Broadcasting is central to this view of the media, with the print press getting little attention. Curran's proposed model for a future media landscape is based on a core public service television sector, surrounded by four specialist media sectors, three with a public service remit for different social groupings, together with a private enterprise sector which would treat the public as consumers. Such a model is attractive but hardly seems feasible in the current climate of media deregulation and privatisation in Europe, not to talk of elsewhere in the world. Not everyone shares Curran's positive view of public service broadcasting. Others claim its early promise as a vehicle for culture, education and information has in recent times been whittled away by its need to attract audiences. The result is that it, like commercial broadcasting, is becoming trivial and shallow (Raboy, 1996).

The amalgamation of journalism education with general media or communications education is a tendency that is stronger in Europe than elsewhere (Stephenson and

Mory, 1990). This may be due to the strong public service broadcasting tradition and, within education, the quite late development of journalism programmes when broadcast journalism was as important as print journalism. The US, in sharp contrast, has a weak public service broadcasting sector and a hundred-year-old tradition in journalism education that was set up in conjunction with the newspaper industry.

From this background, Carey (1996) is a prominent representative of those who insist on the specificity of the practice of journalism. He makes three clear points in this argument. Firstly, he states that journalism is distinct from other areas of practice such as advertising, communications, media studies, public relations or broadcasting. Secondly, as a practice it is distinct from media and communications, as the former are organisations or technologies where journalism takes place, the latter a social process for transferring meaning. Finally, journalism is inextricably linked with democracy and cannot exist in non-democratic societies. His view of communications is revealing in that he sees it as a science of social control, thus incompatible with journalism's requirement for freedom and democracy. The version of communications theory he refers to is that focussed on, in his words, 'the mathematical basis of signalling systems', applied across all systems, physical, biological and social. In Europe, on the other hand, the theoretical approaches more commonly used focus on language and meaning in human communication (Cobley, 1996) which match better with journalism. Carey's view of journalism ties in with the long established Enlightenment tradition found by others to be faulty, being restrictive and out-dated as discussed earlier in this chapter.

### **3.4.2 Reconceptualising journalism's role?**

Berger (2000), like Carey, treats journalism as distinct from the rest of the media but has attempted to remodel journalism's democratic role in line with current realities. He aims to reflect the different realisations of the role of journalism, and to adapt to the challenges it faces not only from commercialism but from globalisation, technology, and individualism. He has proposed four different versions of its democratic role to match the differing needs of particular societies – the liberal, social democratic, neo-liberal and participatory roles. The liberal role is the traditional watchdog role of the fourth estate, currently perceived to be under



threat from commercialism. The social democratic role turns more towards the citizens and their education and guidance as in the Reithian tradition. Neo-liberalism reflects the diversity and pluralism in the globalised world, where journalists offer a platform for debate between many voices. Participatory journalism is where the goal is the construction of a democratic community, whether in developing democracies in third world countries or in revitalising the citizens of countries where citizens are losing interest in politics so that they will become again active participants in their democracies. This latter can be seen in the movement towards 'public' or 'civic' journalism, led by Rosen (1999) in the US in the 1990s where journalists were no longer to be observers of politics but active participants in stimulating political interest and involvement. For developing countries, Megwa (2001), writing on the situation in South Africa, exemplifies those who advocate journalists helping to construct democracy rather than simply observing it.

The beginnings of a much more radical change in the concept can be seen in Ignatieff's proposal to develop a fully globalised, multicultural journalism (Ignatieff, 1984; 1997; Plaisance, 2002). He argues that an understanding of pluralism requires values and goals acceptable to all that will be based not on democracy, freedom and the journalist as detached observer but on human needs, on what is required, at the deepest level, to be human. He instances the avoidance of extreme suffering as a greater goal than freedom at the global level. The journalist, according to him, should be a moral witness upholding what it means to be human having as example the role of the Red Cross who act as moral sentinels between the human and inhuman without taking sides politically. His views find a certain echo in those of Robinson (2003) who stated that the greatest difficulty globally is absolute poverty, not the absence of democracy, and the first human right is dignity, not freedom. According to her, journalists are always taken aback at these statements as they are not what they expect to hear.

### **3.5 Journalism education**

With regard to journalism education, the discussion in this chapter will have highlighted its first difficulty, that there is considerable disagreement about what journalism is. Low level training can confine itself to the agreed skills required but

for more developed forms of education, there has to be some kind of understanding of the role of journalism around which the programme is developed and eventually delivered. The role is generally accepted to include both a public service remit and a commercial function, but with considerable disagreement over the form of public service and the relationship between public service and commercialism. There is a major split between those who maintain the distinctiveness of journalism as an occupation and those who amalgamate it in various ways with other forms of media/communications practice or theory. This question has been central to debates in journalism education over recent decades as will be seen in the discussion of models of journalism education in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

# Professional Journalism Education

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with professional journalism education, the second concept central to my thesis. It is important therefore to consider the concept of 'profession', the related concept of 'professionalisation' and how journalism accords with these concepts. This is followed by a discussion of professional education in general and how current provision in journalism education compares with it.

### 4.2 The concept of 'profession'

#### 4.2.1 What is a profession?

I have discussed the uncertainty over the concept of 'journalism'. The same is true of 'profession'. It too is a 'contested concept' (Hoyle and John, 1995) used with many different meanings (MacDonald, 1995, Freidson, 1994) which gives rise to confusion. In everyday language, for example, 'professional' is used both to indicate being a member of a 'profession', or carrying out work to a high standard but it is frequently unclear which meaning is intended in any particular instance.

Freidson attempts a more exact definition of 'profession', making a useful distinction between its use to denote any occupation that requires higher education and its use for those occupations that have 'particular institutional and ideological traits more or less in common'. The former usage would apply to a vast range of occupations given the general rise in educational requirements for different forms of work. The latter is more restrictive and sets professions apart from other occupations through their form of institutional organisation, which gives them autonomy and has allowed them to create 'exclusionary market shelters' for their work.

This concept of 'profession' is restricted in terms of place and time (Siegrist, 1994; Freidson, 1994; Burrage, 1994). It is most associated with Britain where royal

charters allowed professions to set up self-regulating bodies for particular occupations, including medicine, law, accountancy and engineering. The professions have been called a 'British disease' (Freidson, 1994). Professions in Ireland are for historic reasons based very much on the British model with professional groups enjoying considerable autonomy in regulating their affairs. On the other hand, in mainland Europe, the state rather than professional bodies has had a larger role in controlling the professions in terms of entry, registration and accountability. In the US, the original British model has been replaced by one where the universities play the larger role in regulating the professions and the precepts of the free market economy prevail.

The professions were first established in their present form in the nineteenth century during the period of industrialisation and reached their peak in the mid twentieth century. Now they are said to be in decline through processes of deprofessionalisation and proletarianisation (Hoyle and John, 1995; Freidson, 1994). Their traditional autonomy and associated sense of work commitment and service are being undermined. Increasing employment of professionals by large corporations with bureaucratised and hierarchical structures is cutting back on individual freedom of action. The professions are also losing their special status through the rise in educational levels throughout the population, the growing power of consumer movements and calls by liberal economists for deregulation of the professions. However, Freidson remains optimistic about the future, arguing for their continuance because of the importance of the work of professionals for society. Their specialised knowledge and service to others requires the shelter provided by professional status in order to develop commitment to the work itself and to the ethical standards necessary in dealing with their clients.

The sociological study of the professions was on going throughout the twentieth century. MacDonald (1995), Bines and Watson (1992) and Hoyle and John (1995) trace a common path to its development. In the functionalist approach, starting with Parsons whose early work dated from the 1930s, attempts were made to draw up a list of traits found within the established professions. This uncritical form of analysis common in the 1950s and 1960s which viewed the professions in their own terms as ethically positive, was replaced by more critical studies focussing on the

role of professions in society in terms of power (in the work of Freidson and Johnson) and class (in the work of Larson) in the symbolic interactionist and Marxist traditions respectively. The emphasis thus changed to considering the process through which a profession became established rather than attempting to define the concept. Professions are viewed as social constructs which particular groups of workers strive to establish through a process of exclusion. This closure allows them to establish a monopoly over the provision of services in a particular field and a privileged position in society, thus achieving social closure too.

Studies of the professions have come to focus on the process of professionalisation, the 'professional project' in MacDonald's term, defined as 'the circumstances in which people in an occupation attempt to turn it into a profession and themselves into professional people' (1995). As Freidson argues, this does not solve the problem of the difficulty with the concept of profession itself as it is not possible to speak about the process of professionalisation without having in mind some concept of profession towards which a group is working. His own definition of professionalisation contains a list of criteria on which the claim of professional status is based which are the same as the most common traits listed by those who attempted to define 'profession' in this way, that is, knowledge, service and autonomy:

*Professionalisation might be defined as a process by which an organised occupation usually but not always by virtue of making a claim to special esoteric competence and to concern for the quality of its work and benefits to society, obtain the exclusive right to perform a certain kind of work, control training for and access to it, and control the right of determining and evaluating the way the work is performed. (Freidson, 1994: 62)*

However, he claims that the study of the professions is deficient in that it still lacks an adequate theoretical foundation and that this foundation should be based on concepts of work, not society. As such, he argues for professions to be defined, within the general framework of division of labour, as a particular type of occupation where the workers have control over their work, that is, where the workers are organised into autonomous groups which organise and regulate the area

of work in question. They are thus distinct from trade unions in that the latter are concerned only with improving the economic and general working conditions of their members; and they are distinct from the older guild systems in that the latter organised craft occupations, based on skills, whereas professions deal with occupations based on knowledge (Freidson, 1994; see also Torstendahl, 1994).

The three qualities, knowledge, public service and autonomy, are those on which professions are normally judged: other traits first defined by Parsons can be linked to them (see Hoyle and John, 1995; Bines and Watson, 1992). For example, the type of specialised knowledge associated with the professions is the reason for the link with higher education, which provides the link with my research. Public service requires ethics and has led to the development of ethical codes and regulations, another marker of the professions. Autonomy is granted by the state and so requires a particular relationship with government as Becher (1994a) has examined in detail. Autonomy requires accountability from the professions and the way in which this is organised in different countries mirrors the general organisation of the professions in mainland Europe, the US and Britain (and Ireland) (Becher, 1994b).

While keeping in mind these difficulties with the current concept of profession and its non-generic, historic nature (Freidson, 1994), it is still important to my study as journalism is referred to as a profession by many, and similarly journalism education is labelled professional education. I intend considering the main traits or qualities associated with the concept of profession in order to then consider the process of professionalisation in relation to journalism. The latter is particularly useful given the lack of agreement on journalism's professional status, its designation by some as a profession or quasi profession and by others as simply a trade or craft.

#### **4.2.2 Knowledge**

Knowledge, according to MacDonald is the 'sine qua non' of the internal structure of the project of professionalisation:

*The origins of any profession lie in the existence of an area of knowledge which those who possess it are able to isolate from social knowledge generally and establish a special claim to. (1995: xiii)*

Freidson views such specialised knowledge as a naturally occurring and increasing necessity in our complex world. This contrasts with the view of those who say that the knowledge requirements for professions are exaggerated, and that many of the tasks undertaken by professionals can be carried out by those with less formal education (Hoyle and John, 1995).

MacDonald talks of the active participation of the would-be professional group in standardising and controlling the dissemination of their knowledge base in their project of professionalisation. He uses Foucault's theory of knowledge to argue that a powerful group in society constructs a body of knowledge that relates to their area of activity, and through their discourse controls the language and concepts through which this area is perceived.

Freidson makes the connection between the professional's specialist knowledge and the professional's autonomy. The professional has autonomy in his/her work situation as others do not have the competence to do the work. But specialist knowledge can also be seen as a way of establishing closure. Through the construction of a body of knowledge, professionals gain control over an area of life, thus barring access to those outside the profession and establishing a sheltered market.

The starting point is normally rational, scientific knowledge, knowledge that is systematised, codified and generalised (MacDonald, 1995). Its formal, abstract nature is contrasted with the concrete knowledge of the crafts. Hoyle and John more comprehensively define professional knowledge as scientific knowledge supported by a variety of theoretical modes and case descriptions of the knowledge applied to practice. However, there are many criticisms of the concept of professional knowledge. Freidson does not refer to knowledge alone but to specialist skills and the 'special esoteric competence' of the professional. Eraut (1994) advocates including knowledge, skills and attitudes in professional knowledge. MacDonald points out that scientific knowledge is not adequate to

account for the knowledge base of traditional professions such as law and the church where the base is moral rather than factual. Even in the case of medicine, it is said that the scientific dimension has been over-emphasised (Hoyle and John, 1995) with the neglect of the role of moral judgement (MacDonald, 1995). Hoyle and John discuss the lack of integration between scientific knowledge and practical knowledge and the different mentalities of the scientist and the practitioner; the one focussed on formal research-validated knowledge, the other on the action-related world of the practitioner. They refer to Freidson's (1970) work on the medical profession where he argued that practical knowledge is of greater importance in the practitioner's everyday work.

This introduces the major dichotomy in professional knowledge, discussed in most detail by Eraut (1994). He discusses how professional knowledge is sometimes aligned with a scientific or social science field, and at others, is established as the personal knowledge of working professionals. In other words he refers to this distinction as between 'knowledge what' and 'knowledge how', or, using Oakeshott's terms, between technical knowledge and practical knowledge. The codified, systematic and explicit nature of technical knowledge fits into the norm in higher education. However, it is not adequate to account for the way in which professionals work in practice to achieve their goals. Schön (1983) had criticised it for its positivist epistemology which is inadequate to account for 'the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring [sic] to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict'.

Professional practice requires the use of judgement to deal with situations that are unpredictable. It is thus argued that practical knowledge is what is required for professional education. The tradition of training in practice in many professions underlies this (Eraut, 1994), where practical knowledge is acquired through socialisation and practical experience, thus fitting in with the notions of communities of practice and situated learning espoused by Lave and Wenger (1991). However, such training provides no means of distinguishing good practice from bad, or of improving traditional practices which can go unquestioned. Argyris and Schön (1974) advocated 'reflective practice' to counter this, but as McIntyre (1994) points out, though this phrase has achieved common coinage, it is



used as little more than a cliché. The problem with practical knowledge is that it is tacit, implicit and has not been codified (Eraut, 1994). It is thus not open to criticism.

Acknowledging the need for a public theory of practice, Eraut attempts to define professional knowledge in order to assist those determining the knowledge base of professions. He includes propositional knowledge and process knowledge in his definition. The former is theoretical knowledge which will provide a critical perspective from which to judge the principles, routines and actions of a profession. This type of knowledge should not predominate but without it, the professional is not able to theorise about practice and so cannot easily move on from replicating established practice. Process knowledge is knowledge of what professions do, often contained in manuals, broken down into five main activities by Eraut, that is, acquiring information, skilled behaviour, deliberative process (planning, evaluating, problem-solving), giving information and metaprocesses (the thinking needed to direct one's own behaviour, including self-knowledge and self-management).

In his definition of professional knowledge, Eraut is attempting to go beyond the knowledge itself to include learning how to use knowledge. He had used Broudy's work on the different uses of knowledge to argue that the professional neither replicates nor applies knowledge, but interprets knowledge to match the particular circumstances of the practice. This is what distinguishes the professional from the craftsman or technician in his eyes.

### **4.2.3 Public service**

If the possession of specialised knowledge or competence has been commonly accepted as the mark of the professions, it has normally been accompanied if not superseded by the moral role ascribed to these occupations (Siegrist, 1994; Freidson, 1994). Professionals are seen as having a major social role to play, working for the good of others, so that their personal interests have to give way to the interests of others. Because of their special contribution to the state, the state gives them a certain status. To ensure their disinterested approach to their work, professions have codes of ethics which members are required to follow in their professional behaviour. The studies of professionals by the functionalists took an uncritical view of this public service aspect but the later scholars have taken a more

critical stance, and view professionals as profiting themselves from their special status more than their clients or the general public do (MacDonald, 1995; Hoyle and John, 1995).

However, their social role has been the strongest argument used by professionals to gain autonomy over their own work (Freidson, 1994). It is argued that they should be in a position where they can remain independent of pressure from any source, whether the state, other institutions or individuals to act in ways that contradict their social role. They need independence in order to work in the best interest of their clients (Hoyle and John, 1995), best achieved by developing a life-long commitment to their work which will be facilitated by their having autonomy (Freidson: 1994).

In general, professional ethics cover guidelines for ensuring the interests of the immediate client, for example, the student, the patient, the lawyer's client; for ensuring the common good, and for ensuring the good standing of the profession. However, it is not always a straightforward matter as there can be conflicting claims on a professional from different clients. For example, Hoyle and John have discussed the conflicts the teacher meets in relation to clients who include not only pupils but also parents, school management, the community and the state.

#### **4.2.4 Autonomy**

Autonomy is for Freidson (1994) the primary criteria for the professions and the guiding concept for theorising the professions. It is applied to the professional as an individual or to professionals as groups organised into professional bodies or associations.

For the individual, autonomy has been seen as relating to the professional's status as self-employed rather than an employed worker (Hoyle and John, 1995). It was supposed that the independence of working for oneself was a requirement to fulfilling one's commitment to one's clients, that working within an organisation would make this difficult and cause the professional to put the organisation's interest first. However, Freidson has pointed out that of the five traditional professions, medicine, law, the military, the clergy and university, the latter three were never self-employed and medics and lawyers are increasingly employed

within organisations, in hospitals or law firms or other corporations or directly by the state. Professionals have nevertheless been able to maintain their autonomy because their ethics and codes of behaviour are recognised and accepted by the state and act as a protection against pressures from the bureaucracies within which they work.

Within the British model, autonomy is inherently associated with the professional bodies. Siegrist (1994), using the term English rather than British, discusses how these bodies, given legal status by the state, independently regulate the profession and so ensure their autonomy. They control entry and registration to the profession, including the control of education, and regulate the profession through the code of ethics which they undertake to enforce. The professions have thus been allowed to regulate their own affairs in ways not open to other workers.

The autonomy of the professions is seen as the achievement of the process of closure, closure which is viewed positively as necessary protection against outside pressure or negatively, as protection for the power and privileges of a particular group (MacDonald, 1995; Becher, 1994b; Torstendahl, 1994). By achieving closure, a group is able to achieve for their services a labour market shelter as Freidson terms it, in order to have the independence needed to work in the best interest of their clients, and to develop a life-long commitment to their work. In a negative light, a profession can use the shelter to claim special economic and social benefits for its members.

However, professions are coming under increasing pressure. Perceived abuses of their autonomy and unwillingness to discipline their members, together with more general calls for more transparent accountability are putting pressure on their independence (Freidson, 1994). Professionals are being challenged in the courts and are threatened that state controls will be set up to oversee the behaviour of their members. The dominance of the free market ideology (Freidson, 1994; Svensson, 1994) is also putting pressure on the closed professions to open membership, and the rise in general educational levels and subsequent rise in consumer power is changing the relationship with the client. The professionals' claim to privileged status on account of their specialised knowledge and disinterested public service is

more difficult to maintain in societies with high levels of education and where public service commitment is more evident in the altruistic work accomplished by voluntary associations.

#### **4.2.5 The professional project**

The status and privileges, including economic power, which professional bodies achieve, are very sought after, and since the late 1800s, many groups have attempted to achieve this, including accountants, surveyors, and teachers. Some have succeeded, others only partially – the so-called semi-professions (Freidson, 1994), or the quasi or emergent professions (Hoyle and John, 1995). The latter may either not have been able to lay claim to a particular sphere of specialised competence or to the value of their work for the common good, or on the other hand, may not have had the capacity or willingness to organise themselves to pursue the goal of professionalisation, ‘the professional project’ (MacDonald, 1995) to its successful conclusion. It was Larson who highlighted the active participation of members of an occupation in establishing a profession. It does not happen because of a group’s knowledge or ethical standards alone but must be actively pursued (MacDonald, 1995; Freidson, 1994).

Hoyle and John, taking the criterion approach in their discussion of the struggle for the professionalisation of teaching, define it as a semi-profession that does not yet meet the criteria of a profession. I will similarly discuss journalism firstly in terms of these criteria and then attempt to shed some light on whether or how far the process of professionalisation has been pursued successfully by its practitioners.

### **4.3 Is journalism a profession?**

If journalism education is to be treated as a form of professional education and to learn from the education for other professions, it must firstly be ascertained how far journalism matches this account of professionalism generally; whether it has the core criteria of the professions, specialised knowledge/competence, service for the common good and autonomy in work. As Singer (2003) has asked, is the journalist a knowledgeable, ethical and autonomous professional in the exercise of his/her occupation? Have journalists sought to professionalise themselves, to gain the

status of a profession? It is generally agreed that they have not achieved complete professionalisation (see Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003a) but remain at best a semi or quasi profession.

#### **4.3.1 Knowledge/competence**

Some well-known cynical comments from the early twentieth century would deny that journalism requires any special knowledge or skills. H.L. Menken is credited with the following: 'journalism is a craft to be mastered in four days and abandoned at the first sign of a better job' (Delano, 2000); and Nick Tomalin's recipe for journalistic success was 'rat-like cunning, a plausible manner and a little literary ability' (Cole, 2002). More seriously, commentators nowadays sum up the essential, core competences for journalism as newsgathering and news writing (Singer, 2003). There is disagreement still about the level of these competences. Some see them as simply vocational skills and journalism as a craft (Stephenson, 1997). Others view the acquisition of technical skills, even when these include values, as insufficient as this does not allow for the questioning of the nature and goals of journalism (Splichal and Sparks, 1994) and the extension of the intellectual boundaries of journalism studies and practice (Hunter, 1977). The supporters of such a view tend to regard journalism as a profession, as an intellectual activity requiring knowledge, understanding, analytic and communicative ability. Yet, even if many would agree about the need to be informed, to be intelligent, to make fine judgements, there is no agreement on what knowledge is most relevant (Morrison and Tumber, 1988). Some such as Medsger (1996) simply assert the need for a trained mind; others, following Pulitzer (1904), specify a list of subjects including politics, law, economics and languages. Nor is there a developed theoretical base for journalism within which the skills are taught, if taught at a high level (Charon, 2003; Taylor, 2002; Stephenson, 1997; Cole, 2002). One must state nevertheless, that as an intellectual activity, there is no reason why journalism should not have constructed a formal knowledge base in the same way or perhaps with more justification than other established professions, if there had been an organised, coherent attempt to professionalise this occupation.

To refer back to the general discussion of professional knowledge, defining journalistic competence as comprising newsgathering and news writing means

defining it in terms of practical knowledge or 'knowledge how'. Yet if one accepts Eraut's concept of professional knowledge, this should include propositional as well as process knowledge in order to allow practitioners control and direct their professional activities. The lack of agreement about theory in journalism, its value and its content, reflects on the one hand, the disagreement over the professional status of journalism, and on the other, the more general lack of development of the role of theoretical versus practical knowledge in professional education.

#### **4.3.2 Public service**

As discussed in chapter three, although journalism is seen by some to be a business and merely a part of the entertainment industry, most accept its credentials as an occupation concerned with the common good. Its public service role is seen as its strongest claim to professionalism (Singer, 2003). Its contribution to democracy and its commitment to public service is widely acknowledged in all countries that aspire to democratic government (Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003a; Karan, 2001; Hynes, 2001; Megwa, 2001). Freedom of the press and the journalists' right to protection of sources is guaranteed through law, constitutions and human right declarations. Its public service role requires journalists to maintain certain ethical standards. These are enforced either externally through legislation or through statutory bodies such as the Broadcasting Standards Commission in the UK or internally through self-regulation as in the case of codes of practice of the NUJ and the IFJ. The latter is most favoured by journalists and is best established in the print industry, yet there is some scepticism about whether codes alone can be effective as there are no means to compulsorily enforce them.

McChesney (2003) defines professional journalism as that which is unbiased and neutral, and the professional journalist as one who sublimates his/her own values. Yet journalism experiences clashes between the needs of its public and the demands of its other clients, government and all other news sources, publishers and editors of news media, which can damage its public service role. Journalists do not deal with their primary clients – the readers – on a one to one basis; they can be distanced from their public and refer more to the expectations of colleagues and superiors as Breed (1995) showed in his analysis of newsroom socialisation. McChesney argues that journalists in their reporting follow 'the commercial aims of the owners

and advertisers as well as the political aims of the owning class' and the result is a weakening of journalism's role in democratic society.

### **4.3.3 Autonomy**

The legal and statutory acknowledgement of their role at least in the first world allows journalists considerable autonomy in their day-to-day work. This is reinforced by the traditional separation in media organisations between the editorial and commercial functions. With the increased influence of the business side of the press, the increase in entertainment style journalism focussed on celebrities and life-style issues and the development of web journalism, this division is under pressure. The autonomy given to journalists provides resistance against this pressure, just as it provides resistance against political pressure from politicians or the political interest of owners (Hallin, 2000). However, the autonomy is weakening (McChesney, 2003; Johansen et al., 2001), with journalists becoming subject to an explicit commercial regimentation. Their autonomy is also being compromised by the state through press regulation.

It should be noted that this autonomy is guaranteed by the state and extends only to the practice of individual journalists. Journalists do not have autonomy as a group. They have no control over the organisation of their occupation as other professions do. In Britain and Ireland, there are no professional bodies for journalists as there are for medicine or law, where entry, credentials, practices are regulated by the practitioners themselves. Journalists have special status by law in France (Charon, 2003) and Portugal (Pinto and Sousa, 2003) but do not have the right to regulate the occupation or profession. Italy comes closest to this with its guild of journalists, *Ordine dei Giornalisti*, of which all journalists must be members and which controlled journalism education until the recent reforms in higher education in Italy (Mancini, 2003).

### **4.3.4 Professionalisation of journalism**

Overall, journalism would seem to either have the criteria required for professionalisation or to be able to measure up to them with some commitment, willingness and organisation on the part of its practitioners. It would seem to have

been a suitable occupation to have pursued and attained professionalisation in the last century when so many other areas of working life were professionalised. However, it has nowhere fully achieved this (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). It does not comply with the criteria of a profession that has set entry requirements, a discrete body of knowledge and regulatory authority over its own members. Yet in the US in particular, there is strong support for journalism as a profession. Singer (2003) argues that the self-perception of journalists who consider themselves professionals is more important than the strict fulfilment of particular criteria and that its commitment to public service and practitioner expertise make it a profession. Reese (2001) narrows the basis for claims to professionalism to its social role alone. McChesney (2003) uses the term 'professional journalism' to mean journalism that is 'neutral and unbiased'. He also links the beginnings of 'professional journalism' to the start of journalism education in the US. For him, professional journalists require training to acquire the professional autonomy and judgement necessary for their work. Interestingly, it was as a defence against the commercialisation of the press at the end of the nineteenth century that led to this quasi 'professionalisation' in the US whereas, according to Delano (2000), the industrialisation of the press in the UK at the same time led to the unionisation of journalists and their subsequent categorisation as craftsmen or tradesmen. In Delano and Henningham's (1995) survey of British journalists in the 1990s, they found that only 51% regarded themselves as belonging to a profession.

As has been the case with other occupations, journalism's progress or lack of it towards professionalism has varied from country to country. It has followed the norm in that the main actors can be identified as the state in mainland Europe, the universities/market in the US and the professional associations in the UK and Ireland. As was seen in considering its role, the status of journalism is dependent on historic and social context. Yet there is claimed to be a common basic orientation, a shared professional culture and professional routines amongst journalists in different countries (Shudson, 2000).

In the US, where the normal route towards professionalism has been through higher education, journalism and journalism education in particular are more developed than elsewhere. University and graduate level education in journalism have been



available from the 1900s, and PhD programmes were set up in Wisconsin in 1927 (Weaver, 2003). However, there is still no educational or any other prerequisite for entry to the occupation. This is despite the fact that 86% of entrants in 1996 had qualifications in journalism. Weaver states that journalists in the US have rejected the formal trappings of professionalism yet commonly use the term to describe excellent work. This is common elsewhere and obviously begs the question of what criteria are used to assess the work when it is not theorised or standardised.

In countries in mainland Europe, the various authors who contribute to Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha (2003a) make clear that the state has been heavily involved for good and ill in journalism. Journalism education was set up by the state in countries such as Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, but the status of a profession was not granted with the possible exception of Italy with its fore-mentioned journalism guild. The relationship and dependence on the state was made very clear under the totalitarian regimes in the last century. Governments censored and repressed the press rather than granting them autonomy in, for example, Spain, Portugal, Germany and those countries occupied by the Nazis during World War 2. The return of democracy led to greater freedom for the press and the setting up of journalism education often for the first time. Throughout the twentieth century, the Catholic Church seems to have been the one organisation that went ahead and set up journalism education without waiting for the state to take the initiative in, for example the Netherlands, Austria, and Spain.

In the UK, moves were made towards establishing journalism as a profession in the normal British way by establishing a professional body. The Chartered Institute of Journalists (IOJ, 2003) was set up by royal charter in 1890. The NUJ split from the institute in 1907 and became the more powerful organisation, identifying itself as a trade union and content with the classification of journalism as a craft rather than a profession. Yet the institute has survived, testifying to the 'significant minority' who crave professional status (Delano, 2000). The struggles over the years between the NUJ and the IOJ testify to the lack of resolve over the status of journalism (Christian, 1976). As the process of professionalisation in Britain has been left to professional bodies, the failure of the institute to fully establish itself has resulted in journalists having none of the other trappings of professionalism

either. There is no legal status or definition of a journalist. Without a written constitution, there are no specific laws on freedom of the press. As in other countries, there is no educational requirement for entry to journalism (Stephenson and Mory, 1990).

The Irish situation reflects to some extent that in Britain. Normally, an autonomous professional body would guarantee professional status but none exists. However, as already indicated, freedom of the press and freedom of expression are guaranteed in the constitution. The NUJ, albeit a trade union, has de facto a greater influence than in the UK. All journalists belong to it although not all employers recognise it.

#### **4.3.5 Why was professionalisation not achieved?**

Journalism then is not a full profession anywhere. At times, when freedom of the press, journalistic practices and ethics have come under pressure, as at the end of the nineteenth century in the US (McChesney, 2003) or nowadays with the challenges from economic, technical and political change (Reese, 2001), professionalisation can be seen as a suitable response. It has not worked before and with the dilution in professionalisation generally, it is unlikely to work now. In seeking to address this, Delano (2000) asks, 'Why have journalists not been able or willing to exert the influence inside their professional world that they are able to wield outside it?'

Journalism is recognised as an occupation of importance to society and yet it exercises little formal control over itself. One of the reasons may be the industrialisation and commercialisation of the press. Journalists were employed in an industry and thus the majority was happy to be organised into a trade union in order to safeguard their own rights. The commercial imperative of the newspaper industry shaped their relationship with owners and made them wary of upsetting the status quo (Delano, 2000). It also meant that employers were not keen to encourage professionalisation as it would curb their freedom and control over journalists. Those employed in public service broadcasting are in a somewhat different position but are a minority, with pressures of their own from the authorities. In the US, even though resistance to commercialisation had led to the setting up of journalism programmes in university, nevertheless, the current position of journalism vis-à-vis

commercial pressure is even weaker (Hynes, 2001). This makes the employment of journalists somewhat different to the employment of other professionals who are likely to be employed either by fellow professionals or by not-for-profit corporations.

In Britain and Ireland, there are a sizeable number of journalists who are still happy with being classified as tradesmen or craftsmen (Delano and Henningham, 1995), as exemplified in the title of Andrew Marr's (2004) recent book, *My Trade: A Short History of British Journalism*. The government and the regional newspaper publishers in Britain have recently consolidated this position by accepting the craft/trade apprenticeship model of training through the NVQ system (Delano, 2000; Esser, 2003). Likewise in Ireland, journalism is included in the remit of FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) as well as HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council). In Finland, it is reported that both employers and unions resisted the setting up of journalism programmes at university and it was only the involvement of the state that allowed them to be established in the late 1970s (Salokangas, 2003).

Resistance to professionalisation from within and outside of journalism can also be imputed to more altruistic motives. Delano and Henningham talk of journalists' and managers' desire that it should remain an occupation open to all. Stephenson and Mory see the danger of journalism becoming a 'bourgeois career', which goes against the aspiration that the media in a democracy should reflect the concerns of all sections of society. Labelling journalism as a profession rather than a craft is seen to be elitist and fulfilling the desire of some for self-aggrandisement rather than serving the best needs of journalism. This argument reflects the general left-wing tendency which seems to be found among journalists (Reese, 2001; Barrera and Vax, 2003; Corcoran and Kelly Browne, 1998; Delano and Henningham, 1995). Becoming a profession is also seen as potentially limiting the freedom of journalists. If they are regulated and controlled, this freedom will be restricted (Singer, 2003). Journalists have an outsider role in society, or as Reese describes them, they are 'independent insiders' who should not be absorbed into the institutions of society.

Nevertheless, there are contradictions. In Delano and Hemmingham's (1995) survey in the UK, a majority are shown to consider themselves as professionals. Corcoran and Kelly-Browne (1998) describe Irish journalists as mainly a 'professionally motivated group'. They claim and are given special privileges in law, access to the powerful in all walks of life, have access to media space to communicate with the public at large, and yet are resistant to their work being studied or analysed by others (Morrison and Tumber, 1988). According to Singer, journalists see themselves as skilled, ethical, autonomous and estimable professionals, yet their standing with the public is low. In the U.S., for example, they have come thirteenth in a list of seventeen occupations in successive Harris (2003) polls.

With the challenges journalists face, professionalisation and/or better education is seen to be the answer (Reese, 2001; Hallin, 2000; Charon, 2003). Even if professionalisation were wholeheartedly desired, journalists may have missed their chance. The culture of professionalism within journalism is said to be in decline (Hallin, 2000) as the professions generally are in decline.

## **4.4 Professional education**

### **4.4.1 Professional education within higher education**

Higher education has become synonymous with professionalism. Its qualifications are now normally required for entry to the professions although other modalities of education and training exist such as internship, enrolment in a college outside the higher education system or qualifying examinations set by professional bodies (Eraut, 1994). The overt reason for the link with higher education comes from the need to acquire the specialised knowledge required for professions or, as Larson argues, from the need to assure both the collective social mobility and the market control associated with the professional project (Larson, 1977). The modern professions have thus developed systematic links with the universities, and through the universities have created a knowledge elite within their ranks 'who are devoted to research, experimental practice and theorising' (Freidson, 1994). In Larson's approach, association with the universities helps the status of any occupation seeking professionalisation, and university qualifications are used to control and

limit entry to the profession. Academic qualifications in this way are the credentials required for admittance to a particular profession, and are a means of exclusion, of closure.

The qualifications must be accredited, licensed by the relevant agent as meeting the requirements for entry, the licensing body being responsible to society for ensuring standards (Bines and Watson, 1992). In the UK and Ireland, the professional bodies and through them, the practitioners are the agents as they controlled the system for the training and certification of entrants to the professions prior to professional courses being offered in the universities. In France and the US, on the other hand, the state and the universities have respectively the greatest say. This explains why there are dual professional qualifications in Britain (and Ireland) for example for law where legal education is divided between the academic at universities and the distinct professional education for solicitors and barristers under the practitioners' organisations. The involvement and control of the professional bodies in education is said to explain why the universities in Britain were slower than elsewhere in getting interested in professional education (Burrage, 1994).

If the professions are content that the universities should provide educational programmes for them, how do these professional programmes conform to the overall mission of the universities? At a general level, the notion that the universities should offer students education for a particular occupation rather than education for its own sake has a long and disputed history. The debate between academic and vocational education, between liberal versus instrumental learning has been one of the most fundamental issues in higher education over hundreds of years. It has led to distinctions between institutions – old universities versus new universities, universities versus polytechnics or colleges, between degree versus non-degree courses, but at a more basic level, between theories of education and its overall aim and purpose. On the whole, more prestige has attached to academic education, with vocational education being seen as second best, and yet, law and medicine, the most prestigious and sought after and amongst the longest established areas of higher education are essentially vocational (French, 2001).

The obligation of educating skilled workers for the good of society has been established for a long time in American universities (Rothblatt, 1997). In recent decades, vocational education has become dominant in Europe also where the EU, following the same policy as the OECD, has pushed for education to play a major role in economic and social development (see Skilbeck, 2001). The recent White Paper in Britain, *The Future of Higher Education* (DFES, 2003) illustrates the adoption of higher education as an important element in economic development. In Ireland, since the 1960s, government policy has been pushing higher education in this direction (French, 2002). In the light of this, Eraut (1994) has pointed out the benefits to universities of being involved in professional education as it allows them to 'argue that they do prepare students for employment and make a positive contribution to society'. In Ireland, as in Britain, it was firstly the non-university sector and the newer institutions that accepted this approach. The established universities were slower to adapt (White, 2001).

Professional programmes, along with other programmes that prepare students for work in occupations, are thus accepted in universities but there are tensions between the expectations of academics and professionals based on their different perspectives on knowledge (Eraut, 1994). Practitioners want to impart received knowledge to new entrants to their profession and prefer applied knowledge of practical relevance. Academics favour more abstract knowledge, general principles and innovation in course content and assessment (Becher, 1994b). Becher and Trowler's (2001) work on the values and epistemologies found in different academic disciplines illuminates the divide between academic and professional educators. Despite official policy favouring vocational education, professional disciplines on the whole are perceived to have low status in higher education compared with more academic disciplines where specialist rather than interdisciplinary work, typical of professional education, is favoured, as is research rather than teaching (Bines and Watson, 1992).

#### **4.4.2 The curriculum of professional education**

Of great relevance to my study is the curriculum found within professional education. If there is a particular curricular model common to the professions, it would provide a template for use in journalism also. There are commonly

acknowledged to be not one but three models. These can be referred to as the apprenticeship model, the scientific or knowledge-based model and the practice-based model. Relationships can be drawn between these models, the power struggles of the various actors and their different perceptions of knowledge.

The apprenticeship model concentrates on 'the mastery of practical routines' and is characterised by a tight and instrumental focus on professional requirements and competences which are regarded as unproblematic (Bines, 1992). It is found mainly in on-the-job training, on short courses with the professionals in charge where experienced professionals inculcate students into the accepted knowledge and routines of the particular occupation. The early form of professional education in Britain and Ireland followed this model.

The second scientific or knowledge-based model, is where scientific, rational knowledge is at the centre. The core is based on established academic disciplines such as the natural and social sciences; such knowledge is then applied to the practice of the particular profession; and thirdly, there is an element of practice through work experience. This model ties in best with university norms and academic values and is accepted by many professions. MacDonald (1995) argues that the emphasis in this form of professional education on abstract knowledge, knowledge that in his words is 'generalising and self-expanding', is what is required for professional education. The work of professionals is not routine or predictable and requires judgement rather than set techniques. The model has been criticised for the lack of integration of scientific knowledge and professional practice and for an over-emphasis on scientific knowledge rather than practical knowledge (Bines, 1994; Hoyle and John, 1995). Eraut (1994), Freidson (1970) and Schön (1983; 1987) each judged this issue to be due to a lack of understanding of professional practice. Hoyle and John also criticised the partial nature of scientific knowledge. In regard to medicine for example, it leaves out values concerning prevention, access to provision, access to resources and appropriateness of treatment, all of which are vital to professional practice.

The third practice-based model for professional education is obviously focussed on the practicum. The practicum is the core around which other disciplines are

'integrated, contextualised and utilised' (Bines, 1992). Professional knowledge and action are given precedence and the professional educator rather than academic is given the central role. Schön's notion of critical, reflective practice fits into this model by linking professional and academic knowledge. Yet, as Bines indicates, this integration is always difficult and time-consuming, and, more fundamentally, the core, the practicum is the least developed element of most courses. Astley (1992) likewise warns of the dangers of replacing one orthodoxy with another in this model and of seeing practice as unproblematic. He highlights the epistemological difficulty in 'reflective practice'. Professions tend to require their members to practice within a certain range of practice styles, yet critical reflection advocates the questioning and challenging of these.

The difficulties in these models of professional education reflect the difficulty surrounding the concept of professional knowledge as discussed earlier in this chapter. The fuller development of the concept, whether along the lines mapped out by Eraut or any other, would seem necessary to the future development of professional education. In the meanwhile, the current emphasis on practice can lead to reverting to a training model rather than an improved model of professional education.

Changes made by the British government in the 1990s to the education of teachers and the education of social workers have been seen in this light. Taking account of the criticisms of the scientific, academic model, practice was put at the centre of training, and reference made to the established pattern in medicine and law where part of the training occurs in hospitals and law firms. However, the changes have been seen as an attack on these occupations, a deprofessionalisation rather than an improvement in professional education (Hoyle and John, 1995; Taylor, 1994; Hendel, 1994). The Irish government has recently intervened in professional education too, announcing in summer 2003 major changes to medical courses. These are to become postgraduate programmes, partly because of concern at the over-emphasis on the academic, scientific knowledge for medicine and the neglect of aptitude for the humanistic, caring concern for patients. In other words, such a scientific-based model has also been found inadequate and the development of a



more practice-based model is desired, but with a rise rather than a lowering in the level of education in this case.

Such instances of the two governments' intervention show their increasing involvement with the professions. The application of quality assurance procedures across all higher education, including bench-marking, is a more general case of how their traditional hands-off approach to professional education is changing as has been their participation in attempts to develop pan-European professions (EEC, 1988). The European model of the professions with the state as the major actor may replace the British model where the professional bodies play the main role.

Given the problems over professions in general and over journalism's status in particular, it is worth considering general curriculum models for undergraduate courses as developed by Barnett, Parry and Coate (Barnett et al., 2001). They propose a model that not only suits all types of courses but also encompasses the dynamic nature of a curriculum. The dynamism or possibility for change is seen as reflecting a balance between the 'shifting epistemologies' of different interest groups. This is very relevant to my study of the competing discourses of journalism education. Barnett et al. understand curricula as embracing three domains, knowledge, action (or practice) and self (self-identity, reflection), the domains may be integrated or separate. The weighting of the three varies across different curricula. Typically, science and technological curricula are dominated by knowledge; in the humanities and arts, knowledge is also important but is integrated with self; in professional fields, the action domain is often more weighted than the other two, and there tends to be a high degree of integration.

Bernstein (1975) described such integrated curricula found in professional fields as having weak classification and weak framing. In other words the boundaries between subjects are weak and lecturers (and students) have control over the content and structure of the knowledge transmitted. Bernstein emphasised the need for the ideology or overall aim behind such curricula to be explicit and accepted by all involved if they are not to become problematic, a statement that is very apt with regard to journalism.

## **4.5 Professional journalism education**

Professional journalism education has developed according to the general norms of professional education in different countries, but there is not a standardised system in place anywhere, as is to be expected given journalism's uncertain professional status and role.

### **4.5.1 Journalism in higher education**

In the US, journalism has been established in the universities since the 1900s (Weaver, 2003; Johansen et al, 2001). In mainland European countries, the state has had a large share in establishing journalism education, in Denmark (Holm, 2003) and the Netherlands (Meerbach, 2003), for example, and more recently in Spain (Barrera and Vax, 2003) and Portugal (Pinto and Sousa, 2003) following their return to democracy in the 1970s. In line with the usual practice for professional education in some European countries, journalism education was often established in specialised journalism schools, foremost among them the CFJ (Centre de Formation de Journalistes) in Paris (Charon, 2003), and the Danish School of Journalism in Aarhus (Holm, 2003). In Britain, journalism education and training were for a considerable period left in the hands of the industry (Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Esser, 2003). Until 1965 training was based on apprenticeship. Short courses of up to one year's duration were then introduced, validated by the NCTJ. This body had been set up in 1952 with representatives of both unions and employers but firstly concentrated on on-the-job training. It did not seek to link up with the universities to provide graduate level education. Although it accredits some courses taught in British universities, it only requires skills based training and also accredits many short, vocational courses outside the higher education system. The same is true of the other accreditation bodies for the different media.

However, journalism education cannot be fully equated with the norms of professional education. Firstly, access to journalism is free in all countries in Europe and North America (Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003c). A specific journalism qualification is not required. Nor is a degree required for entry, even though it has become the norm for new entrants in most countries, although in Germany (Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003b) and Austria (Dorer, 2003) graduates

are still in the minority at 45% and 32% respectively. In-house training is still the main form of training in Germany. Sub-degree and further education courses are found in many countries, for example, in community colleges in Canada and the US (Johansen and Dornan, 2003, Johansen et al, 2001), further education in Britain and Ireland, IUTs (Instituts Universitaires de Technologie) in France. Interestingly, it would seem that during the communist era, some Eastern European countries did require a degree in journalism in order to practice as a journalist but this has since changed (Hiebert and Gross, 2003).

Even if the journalism profession/industry has not always sought to establish its education in universities or higher education more generally, at this stage, journalism degrees and postgraduate degrees are everywhere available. This may be linked to the general raising of educational levels and academic drift rather than indicating professionalisation for journalism. It is also alleged that universities in some countries with falling populations of young people, including Britain, have developed programmes to boost their student numbers as such courses are highly attractive to students (see, for example, Phillips, 2002). The involvement of the Catholic Church in establishing journalism in several of its universities (Stephenson and Mory, and for example, Dorer, 2003, Meerbach, 2003, Barrera and Vax, 2003) can be interpreted as the desire to influence journalism rather than professionalise it.

This confusing picture is not clarified by looking at the accreditation of courses. Such accreditation exists in some places but loses significance when entry to journalism is not regulated. In the US, the ACEJMC (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications) only recognises a minority – one fourth – of university journalism courses (Becker, 2003; Weaver, 2003). There is no accrediting body in Canada (Johansen et al, 2001). In France a combined employer-union body accredits eight courses, although as many students attend non-accredited as accredited courses (Charon, 2003). In Britain the situation is perhaps the most confused: there are three accrediting bodies, reduced from four (Esser, 2003), for print, broadcasting and magazine journalism. Dissatisfaction with this system, from journalists who need and want to be able to work across the different media and from educators who are dissatisfied with the accreditation

processes of these bodies, has led to moves for change (Taylor, 2002). Many courses currently do not seek accreditation. As discussed earlier, in Ireland, the NUJ recognises some courses in an informal type of accreditation.

The overall picture is thus diffuse. Journalism programmes vary in terms of who controls them, practitioners, academics, or the state. They are located in universities and other higher education institutes, in further education institutes, and in-house in media organisations. The level ranges from sub-degree to postgraduate, and the duration from short courses of a few months in in-house training to five years in, for example, the journalism school in Aarhus. The accreditation of courses is patchy and of some limited value, as access to journalism is open.

Given that journalism education has existed in the US since the 1900s, and in Europe since various later dates in the twentieth century, there would seem to have been enough time for professional education to be fully established and standardised, but it has not happened. To a large extent it is likely that this is because of the weakness of the move towards professionalisation within journalism and the general decline in the professions. The increase in various forms of higher education for journalism can be linked to the general increase in vocational education programmes in the universities. But it also reflects the close connection between journalism and journalism education with the more general social and political context. As has been mentioned, in the US the spur to setting up the original journalism programmes was concern at the commercial pressure on journalism from media corporations (McChesney, 2003). This concern has re-appeared as an issue in journalism education since – in the 1930s, after World War 2 and currently (Hallin, 2000). Journalism education is seen as the way to ensure an understanding of the civic role of journalism and of the ethics proper to its practice. The political context, on the other hand, stifled the development of journalism education in Spain and Portugal during the fascist regimes in those countries in the mid-twentieth century. In countries governed by Nazis or Communist regimes, journalism education was controlled to bolster those forms of government. In Eastern Europe, since 1990, the US and the EU have targeted journalism education for intervention as countries move towards more western style democracy. Both have sought to influence its development and shape it in their

somewhat different ways, the US with its more market driven orientation, the EU more oriented towards public service (Hiebert and Gross, 2003).

Of more immediate relevance to Britain and Ireland, there have been tentative steps funded by the EU to find a common framework for journalism and journalism education within Europe. Journalism is seen to have a role in establishing a common European public sphere in order to assist in the democratisation of the European Union (Bauer et al, 2000; Kopper, 2003). Journalism education was not included in the 1988 EEC directive initiating the standardisation of professional education as that directive was restricted to 'regulated professional activity' only, that is, the recognised professions, thus excluding journalism. However, the Bologna agreement (European Commission, 1999) which applies to all higher education programmes, should bring some standardisation to journalism degrees at least in terms of duration and European-wide recognition of awards.

The usual tensions between academics and professionals are evident in journalism education (Parry, 1988; Delano, 2002) but exacerbated by the fact that not all journalists want higher education for journalists. There are some variations from country to country but essentially practitioners want courses to be focussed on practical skills; the academics are more interested in 'fostering the civic engagement of students so that they contribute effectively to democratic society' (Johansen et al., 2001). Practitioners want a basic understanding of a wide number of subjects to be included in programmes; academics consider this superficial and favour a narrower range of subjects, studied in depth (Johansen et al., 2001; Stephenson and Mory, 1990). There are disputes over numbers of students, over the qualifications of professional lecturers and over the place of research in journalism departments (Stephenson and Mory, 1990; Barerra and Vaz, 2003).

The difficulty of fitting journalism into an academic template is ascribed by those like Stephenson (1997) who view journalism as a craft, to the fact that it is not an academic subject with an accumulated body of theory and knowledge but is simply a set of vocational skills. Others as we have seen, disagree with this view and see the difficulties as stemming from the lack of development of journalism theory, necessary for journalism itself as well as for its place in the university.

#### 4.5.2 Models of professional education in journalism

Finally, it remains to consider how models of journalism education compare with the three models of professional education previously outlined, or with the more general undergraduate model of Barnett et al. The three professional models, it will be recalled were the apprenticeship model, the scientific- or knowledge-based model and the practice-based model.

The apprenticeship model accounts unproblematically for the various in-house and on-the-job training models such as in Germany, Portugal and Britain where it was the old model prior to the setting up of formal full-time courses (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). The NCTJ/NVQ use a 'modern apprenticeship' model (Esser, 2003; Miller, 2002). The shorter formal journalism courses at sub-degree level and even at postgraduate level are also primarily skills based. Because of time limitations, and perhaps the lack of an accepted body of theory, the theoretical or academic elements are also necessarily limited in the postgraduate courses. It is essentially the undergraduate degrees and their equivalents at journalism schools that allow the time:

*to think richly about education as well as training – about the formation of journalists as a whole rather than their apprenticeship into specific, albeit fundamental skills. (Adam, 2001: 318)*

The models of undergraduate journalism education that are at the centre of my research, that is, the so-called professional model and the integrated model should then be compared with the more general models of professional undergraduate courses. As briefly indicated in the introduction, within journalism, the professional model is where journalism is taught as a separate subject and the rest of the degree is made up of unrelated subjects from the humanities or social sciences. The integrated model is where journalism is combined with elements of communications theory into what is frequently called a communications degree.

To take the professional model first. It has been more characteristic of US programmes where journalism makes up 25% of the course credits under their modular system, as is the standard required for accreditation by the ACEJMC

(Weaver, 2003). But it is also found in some British universities where journalism is part of a double honours degree. In most cases, the universities also offer an integrated course, with a few exceptions such as City University, Sheffield Hallam and the University of Ulster. In the double honours degree, students are usually allowed to choose from a wide range of humanities or social sciences subjects, and journalism practice is taught with no integration or relation between the elements of the course. The two possible rationales for this model are that as journalism is a craft, it should be taught separately from the intellectual elements of the course, or, more convincingly, that journalism does not require any specific intellectual knowledge, but does require the ability to think (Medsger, 1996). Therefore, from the traditional point of view, any academic education will be sufficient to cultivate and train the mind.

This model of undergraduate journalism degree is close to the postgraduate model where the journalist is seen to need general education together with professional skills. In postgraduate courses, the general education is acquired prior to the acquisition of professional skills. The short postgraduate course has been favoured by many as the best type of professional education for journalists (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). The long established and influential course set up by Pulitzer in Columbia University in 1912 was of this type, a one-year course in professional journalism. The postgraduate diplomas and masters degrees that came into vogue in Europe from the 1970s were based on it. In Britain, for example, the first postgraduate course was established in Cardiff in 1970, the second in City University in 1976 (Esser, 2003). Canadian journalism education in general draws on the Columbia model (Johansen and Dornan, 2003). The CFJ in Paris, though admitting students after the first cycle of university education in France, that is, after two years rather than at degree level, was based on a similar principle, that the students should obtain their general education first, and then their professional education.

Such programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate level are difficult to equate with either the knowledge-based or practice-based model of professional education, as they do not attempt to find a systematic body of knowledge to apply and/or integrate with practice. Undergraduate courses of this type in the US have been

criticised by Splichal and Sparks (1994) as providing 'relatively low level and untheoretical journalism courses'. The better courses do attempt to teach journalism as considered, reflective practice rather than as a set of technical skills, but the overall design of these courses does not fit into the norm of professional education. To some extent they fit in more easily with traditional academic structures with sharp definition between disciplines (Bernstein, 1975). The danger has been, especially in the US, that such journalism courses do not integrate into academic life. Journalism departments are not always research focussed and do not have a developed theoretical base with the result that journalism departments have been closed down (Johansen et al, 2001). In Columbia itself, there was a delay in appointing a dean of journalism in summer 2002 because the university required the school of journalism to rethink its entire mission (Cunningham, 2002).

This professional model of journalism education is often favoured by journalists because the journalism element is in the hands of professionals, without the interference of theoreticians (Medsker, 1996). The word 'professional' in this context does not refer to the model of education. It would seem to refer instead to the teaching of journalism practice in these courses and to the relative autonomy of journalist practitioners in developing and delivering the courses. The 'professional model' therefore fits in with the view of journalism as an autonomous profession.

What is termed the 'integrated model' within journalism education takes many forms. It ranges from communications degrees with little or no elements of journalism practice to journalism degrees that are centred on professional practice with integrated modules in, for example, media history, media theory and media analysis (Stephenson and Mory, 1990). The former are found throughout the US and Canada but Stephenson and Mory (1990) have referred to this model on the whole as the European model. It is found in universities rather than the journalism schools in Europe, especially in Scandinavia, Spain and Portugal (see Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003a) and may reflect the traditional academic role of European universities compared with the more openly social and vocational role of universities in the US. Within these courses, some are dismissed by journalists as not being journalism courses in any true meaning of the word as they are primarily theoretical programmes that pay no more than lip service to practice. Such courses



do not compare with any model of professional education; they are simply academic degrees.

At the other end of the scale are journalism degrees in journalism schools such as Aarhus and at some universities such as Dortmund, Sheffield and Bournemouth, where undergraduate journalism programmes are autonomous and do include theory, including communications or media theory, and related disciplines in an integrated programme (Meerbach, 2003; Cole, 2002). They would seem to be aiming towards one or other of the normal models of professional education, some matching the knowledge-based, others, the practice-based model.

Some communications degrees are quite similar to these in that they incorporate the teaching of practical journalism within theory based courses. The theory-based elements may be taught under the umbrella of communications rather than journalism theory. The combination of theoretical and practical courses can be equated with the knowledge-based model, but not the practice-based model as practice is given a prominent but not the central role. Practitioners do not normally control such courses; they work in partnership with their academic colleagues or can feel the latter have the upper hand.

In the journalism degrees on the other hand, professional journalism educators often have a major role. Compared with some of their colleagues who support the 'professional model', these professionals do recognise the need for theoretically based courses, for journalism to become integrated into academia, and would seem to have chosen to follow the norms of professional education. Both these courses and the more communications based courses would seem to be an attempt to deal with the situation where the theory is not yet established and in the meanwhile, more general media theory is being used. Lonnrath (1997), in reporting on interviews she had carried out with journalism educators, found little critical thinking in the teaching of journalism practice on most courses.

Journalists have vociferously opposed the integrated model of journalism education, especially where communications or media theory is dominant (Medsger, 1996). They see them as dominated by communications specialists

rather than practitioners and are suspicious of media theory (see Cole, 2002). This attitude is widespread and is not only found in the West. It has, for example, been commented on in countries such as Slovenia (Vercic, 2001) and India (Karan, 2001). The undergraduate journalism programmes may seem to be the way forward if journalism theory is developed. However, any trend in that direction is juxtaposed by another trend that is seeing the expansion of journalism and journalism education into a wider professional area. As Winston has said:

*Journalism education can run from advertising, excluding its more information-less marketing aspects, to text-based or visual imaginative communication, as long as that communication makes some claim to the real. (1997: 18)*

In the US in particular, universities have, under pressure from the industry included PR and advertising in journalism programmes (Hynes, 2001). Blanchard and Christ (1993) had gone so far as to call for a new professionalism to incorporate all media occupations under the one form of education. Secondly, with much of journalism being more focussed on entertainment rather than public service, which Meerbach (2003) has termed 'journalism for an audience rather than journalism for a purpose', there are calls for journalism to adapt accordingly. Bierhoff and Schmidt (1997) acknowledge this and advocate at least two models of journalism education: one that continues to produce the classical journalist focussed on its public purpose, the other to educate the various information-organisers the media require. Thirdly, communications skills are in increasing demand in the information economy/society and these are similar to the basic journalistic skills of information gathering, information processing and presentation. There is a call for journalism to be incorporated into a broader occupational classification of communications specialists (Becker, 2003). Singer's (2003) analysis of the work of on-line journalists equates it with that of communication workers rather than traditional professional journalists. Such trends may be anathema to journalists and confirm their worst fears about communications and its adherents. However, it is the weak professional status and the lack of an agreed theoretical base for journalism that allow these matters to arise. Journalists do not control their 'profession', nor do they always control the professional education associated with

it. They themselves have no clear concept of what journalism is in order to argue against those who make no real distinction between it and other areas of the media.

It can be seen then, that the two main forms of journalism education do not coincide with the two common models of undergraduate professional education. The so-called 'professional' model is dissimilar from the usual model of professional education and the 'integrated' model covers a wide variety of different curriculum types. They can perhaps best be described by Barnett et al.'s framework of concepts for analysing the undergraduate curriculum. The flexibility of this model was developed to account for change within the curriculum but it is also suited to undergraduate courses for an occupation such as journalism which is relatively ill-defined and where educational courses have many different forms. Its three domains of knowledge, action and self allow for different emphasis in the content of different programmes, depending on whether the focus is on knowledge, practice or reflection. The domains may be integrated or not so that linkage between subject areas is likewise flexible. In Bernstein's (1975) terms, journalism courses are sometimes weakly and sometimes strongly classified; that is, their subject boundaries are clearly defined in some courses and integrated in others. The use of this model can help to illustrate the differences between courses rather than producing any one fixed template common to all.

Journalism education is said to be in crisis; for example, in the US with particular reference to the situation in Columbia (Cunningham, 2002), in the UK (Cole, 2002; Esser, 2003), in France (Charon, 2003), and in Spain (Barrera and Vaz, 2003). There is a confused medley of systems for pre-entry training to journalism in many countries, none of which is mandatory. This is understandable given the problems of defining the concepts involved. The general problems of conceptualising 'profession', 'professional knowledge' and 'professional education' add to the difficulties within journalism itself, given the lack of agreement on its status and on its role as seen in the previous chapter. It is therefore to be expected that curricula in journalism will evidence strains between competing discourses on these issues.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology and Method**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of my research is to investigate how journalists should be educated by examining the various meanings, beliefs and values people attach to the two main concepts of 'journalism' and 'education' central to the curriculum design and philosophy of journalism education. The question is to be approached through investigating the language used in documents and interviews, analysing these texts through a form of discourse analysis. This chapter focuses on the methodology and methods used in the study. It discusses critical discourse analysis (CDA), in particular the version of discourse analysis associated with Norman Fairclough as the method of choice to research this question.

The chapter is in two sections, covering methodology and method. Firstly, from the different forms of discourse analysis available, an argument is made for the use of CDA. There follows an analysis of its theoretical basis in structuralism and post-structuralism, and how the concepts of power and conflict are dealt with in the theory. The framework for the analysis is then given, based on the three dimensions of text, discourse and social practice and using systemic linguistics as the linguistic theory connecting the language to discourse and social practices. In detailing the methods used for the research, the selection of the two cases studied is first discussed, the undergraduate programmes in DCU and DIT. This is followed by an account of the method of analysis used for the data. The section ends with a consideration of the criteria under which the research might be evaluated.

#### **5.2 Forms of analysis**

##### **5.2.1 Linguistic analysis**

As the research is centred on language, it may have seemed firstly, that a method of linguistic analysis would offer the most suitable approach. Although mainstream linguistics has on the whole been more concerned with studying the formal abstract

structure of language rather than language use, there have always been scholars who advocated a critically oriented approach to the study of language in society, for example, Bolinger in the US (see Bolinger, 1984) and the so-called critical linguists in Britain (see Fowler et al., 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979). However Bolinger, while strongly supporting the use of linguistics in defending the public interest, did not develop any particular method or theoretical approach to this form of study. The critical linguists used a variety of linguistic models in their analyses, linked their work to Whorf's (1979) somewhat disputed theory of linguistic relativism, but lacked a coherent social theory with which to link language use to social effects.

Remaining within the realm of linguistics alone was not therefore going to provide an adequate approach to the research. Indeed, the critical linguists for the most part have since moved to CDA and the two terms are even used interchangeably (Wodak, 2001). The change gives recognition to the realisation that language cannot exist without social meaning and that there must be a strong relation between linguistic and social structure (Titscher et al, 2000). In purely linguistic terms, the change has been assisted by turning from focussing on Saussure's notion of *langue*, the language system to *parole*, language in use.

Alongside this change coming from linguistics, there has also been a general shift of interest towards language in critical theories of modern social life (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). As Chouliaraki and Fairclough have said:

*...language is so central to contemporary social life, and to the calculations of and struggles over power, so that no one these days can develop the grasp of their social circumstances which is essential if they are to have any control over them, without a critical awareness of how language figures within them. (1999: 9-10)*

### **5.2.2 Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis, in its many forms, including CDA has evolved as a research method which focuses on language as the key element in studying social phenomena. The term 'discourse' is used in a range of different ways within these methods (Mills, 1997) which can give rise to confusion. Foucault (1972), whose

work is central to most discourse analysis used 'discourse' in three different ways: as the general domain of all statements, as an individualizable group of statements, and as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.

Work in discourse analysis likewise operates at the different levels that correspond with these meanings: at the level of abstract theory where discourse operates as a non-count noun, at intermediate level associated with a particular area of activity, for example, the language of racism, the language of consumerism, and thirdly as rule-governed behaviour which produces particular utterances and texts (Mills, 1997). In linguistic oriented analyses, two further usages of the word should be mentioned, to indicate language use as opposed to language structure (Brown and Yule, 1983) or to refer to the structure of language above sentence level (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The most frequent definition given to discourse in CDA is that of 'language as social practice' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Discourse analysts tend to concentrate either on the theoretical understandings of discourse or the practical analysis of discourse. For example, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) on the one hand and conversational analysts on the other; the former not getting into detailed empirical studies but concentrating on the more general, abstract forms of discourse, the latter carrying out detailed study of linguistic use in conversation but not relating their work to social and political structures. CDA and DPS (the discourse psychologists such as Wetherell and Potter, also termed social psychologists (Mills, 1997)) take in both, amalgamating the abstract mapping of the discourses that circulate at a particular moment and place with the empirical study of actual practice (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

### **5.2.3 Critical discourse analysis**

I have chosen to use CDA for my study. CDA has been able to maintain close linguistic analysis as advocated by the critical linguists and Bolinger. It has also been able to ally language use and social processes and to incorporate a theoretical approach with the method, incorporating ideas from critical and cultural theory. For my purposes, ideas from the work of Foucault, Pecheux, Volosinov and Bakhtin are most relevant. It is thus said to be a complete approach in itself,

including both a theory and method for the analysis of discourse. It is a recent development, essentially starting from the 1990s (Titschler et al, 2000).

CDA itself has been defined as 'the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Semiotic aspects, such graphics, photographs and elements of textual design are included by some of those working within CDA, (for example, Kress and van Leeuvan, 1990; Hodge and Kress, 1986) but I do not envisage going beyond the linguistic. The focus is not upon language or the use of language per se, but upon the linguistic elements that contribute to social and cultural processes and structures. The analysis of texts on their own is therefore not sufficient but must be accompanied by an analysis of the social processes and structures within which the text is produced and read (Wodak, 2001). CDA analyses discourse at a moment in social practice (Fairclough, 2001), this moment being representative of both the structure of the practice and the action of the practice. Practices are defined as habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places, in which people apply resources, whether material or symbolic, to act together in the world (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

The relation between the structure and the action of the practice is seen as dialectical, and as the means by which change may be introduced. This approach to discourse analysis is suitable for the topic of my research because it is a form of research that 'specifically considers institutional, political, gender and media discourses ... which testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict' (Wodak, 2001). As has been seen in the preceding chapters, there are different and competing discourses on journalism education. These discourses are sited within education, but linked to the press and the wider institutions of state and beyond through their influence on education.

Another reason for my choice of CDA is that it is geared towards research that is of practical relevance (Wodak, 2001), the critique emanating from CDA is not just academic, but is a part of social life and social struggles (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). CDA is problem based: by illuminating a problem in social life it aims to contribute resources which can be drawn on in tackling and overcoming

the problem. (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It does not claim to lead to complete knowledge of an issue but to give a broader understanding (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). The aim of my research ties in neatly with this: it is dealing with the practical problem of the lack of agreement over journalism education and is seeking to help find a way forward, not by finding the correct answer, but by leading to a fuller understanding of the issue, to allow progress to be made in more informed decision-making in relation to journalism programmes and journalism as an academic discipline. Not claiming that research will find a definitive answer to a research question also ties in with the theoretical base of CDA in structuralism and post-structuralism.

The use of the word 'critical' in its name links into this practical aim of CDA. It is not only critical in the sense of being self-reflective, as is the general meaning within all 'critical studies'. It is also critical in having a social aim, of being critically committed to social change (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). CDA researchers have frequently taken a politically engaged standpoint in their research, a left-wing approach in their work in areas such as racism, consumerism, politics (for example, Van Dijk, 1991; Wodak, 2001; Fairclough, 1995a, 1995b). However, with the further development of the theory, the move from a Marxist to a more integrated social constructionist view point and no doubt in reaction to the negative criticism that this overt political standpoint provoked, there have been more recent modifications to the 'critical' position of CDA. It no longer privileges scientists to bring about social change but sees them contributing their scientific knowledge to democratic debates about what is true (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

#### **5.2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis within Discourse analysis**

All discourse analysis shares a common view of the role of discourse in defining reality. Reality is viewed as only accessible through the discourse and so, in order to understand reality, one must analyse the discourse to comprehend what texts really mean. Discourse is not analysed in order to judge whether its statements are right or wrong, true or false but to explore the different representations of reality in discourse and to identify the social consequences of these differences (Phillips and



Joergensen (2002). Phillips and Joergensen have identified the following four key premises that are found across the different versions of discourse analysis:

- A critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge. Reality is accessible through categories of our language, not objective truth.
- Views and knowledge of the world are historically and culturally specific to a given time and place. They are contingent, and could always have been different.
- There is a link between knowledge and social processes. Our understanding and knowledge of the world are created and maintained 'through social interaction in which we construct common truths and compete what is true and false'.
- Furthermore, there is a link between knowledge and social action. Different understandings of the world lead to different social actions, and therefore the social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences.

What differentiates CDA from most versions of discourse analysis is that it is, firstly, a complete approach including both a theory and a method. It provides a comprehensive method and framework for analysis and anchors its claims about discourses in close analysis of texts (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). In comparison, Laclau and Mouffe, while presenting a number of useful concepts in their theory, do not have a fully worked-out method of their own (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). DPS, on the other hand, focuses on the structure of interaction, on everyday language and talk, but uses a rather outmoded form of linguistic analysis (Mills, 1997) building on conversational analysis and ethnomethodology (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). The emphasis is on the social construction of attitudes, social groups and identities in DPS, which is not central to my concerns. Compared with the older forms of critical linguistics, CDA weaves together different texts, different discourses and different genres, rather than studying a text in isolation. Compared with other versions of linguistic and textual analysis, it brings together social science and linguistics within a single theoretical and

analytical framework. The analysis it provides is not simply descriptive but explanatory and critical.

However, CDA itself is not a single unitary method or even approach. The three main strands can be identified with Fairclough, van Dijk and Wodak who work together as a group but do not use a completely common approach. The main differences lie in the fact that Fairclough uses systemic functional linguistics as the linguistic theory at the basis of his analytical method whereas van Dijk and Wodak take a more socio-cognitive approach and make use of models of text planning, influenced by the Germanic tradition of textual analysis (Titscher et al, 2000). Fairclough's model is not only the most easily accessible but is also the most complete of the different versions of CDA (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

## **5.3 Theoretical foundations**

### **5.3.1 Structuralism**

As is to be expected, the general philosophy underlying CDA, as an approach focused on language, is interpretative. Saussure's definition of language as a system of signs, defined only in relation to one another, laid the foundation of structuralism. Studies of discourse are generally structuralist if not post-structuralist in their approach. From structuralism is taken the notion that reality is only knowable through language, that language constitutes society. It is through studying the language that one can get to know and understand the world. However, Fairclough's position is not so clear-cut. He maintained that non-discursive elements exist alongside discursive elements; that social practice is made up of language but also physical, sociological and psychological elements (Fairclough, 2000), and in his form of analysis, he insists on the need to study the non-linguistic as well as the linguistic structures and processes where necessary (Fairclough, 2001).

This has been a criticism of his theory with the maintenance of this distinction between discursive and non-discursive elements (Fairclough, 2003; Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). It reflects the influence of Marxism in his work (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), his reluctance to accept a completely relativist world. His concern

is with seeking to provide practical help to social problems and in order to find ways of moving forward, one must make judgements. His and Chouliaraki's writing on theory appeared to offer a way forward on this (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). A distinction is made between epistemic relativism which they accept and judgemental relativism which they reject. From the philosophical point of view, they are structuralists, with a social constructionist view of language but from the moral point of view, they insist that in everyday practice some discourses are better than others and that this can be seen in how they well they provide a framework for collective action (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

Phillips and Joergensen further illuminate the discursive/ non-discursive divide in Fairclough by referring to the world outside of discourse as sedimented discourse, discourse that is no longer open to change, quite similar to the idea found in more extreme social constructionist approaches such as that of Laclau and Mouffe. They assert that much of the time, our social practices, our discourses appear so natural to us that they lose their contingency, they are seen as objective. But there is always the possibility that objective discourses can become unstable again when alternative understandings of the world are activated. Objectivity thus in discourse analysis is the seemingly fixed and unchangeable world, the taken-for-granted world that discourse analysis seeks to critique. Or, in other words, society does not exist as a fixed entity but we act as if it does.

### **5.3.2 Post-structuralism**

Whereas structuralism provided a satisfactory basis for those working on the study of discourse to research the structure and rules for its use in everyday language, for example, the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) on classroom interaction, it is not adequate for the more applied work of those interested in questions of discourse related to social change, social conflict, social problems:

*[It] lacks a social orientation in failing to consider how relations of power have shaped discourse practices, and in failing to situate classroom discourse historically in processes of social struggle and change. (Fairclough, 1992: 15)*

This includes Fairclough's strand of critical discourse analysis and the discursive psychology of Wetherell and Potter. Post-structuralism contributes to these theories because it allows for change, for difference, for movement within the structures. For post-structuralists, meaning is always a process, not generated and guaranteed by an underlying structure. From Derrida's concept of difference, meaning is deferred, never fully present, always both absent and present. The meaning of a word as given in a dictionary reveals this constant deferment: it is only when a word is located in a discourse and read in a specific context that there is a temporary halt to the process. However, traces always remain from other discourses and other contexts (Story, 1998). It is these traces which are of particular interest for analysis when there is a clash of ideas and opinions around a topic, and which tie in with notion of intertextuality discussed later.

Structuralism leads to a relativism that is fixed and stable. The systems are self-contained and regulated. However, it provides no way of explaining how change comes into the systems. The post-structuralists' view of the world on the other hand, seeing it as fundamentally unstable and fluid, is one where no discourse is closed but is constantly being transformed. Useful images to illustrate the difference between structuralists' and post-structuralists' views of the systems are given by Phillips and Joergensen, the fishing net for structuralism with each unit representing a knot, the internet for post-structuralism because it allows for elements to fall off, join in, change place. In other words, it is a dynamic as opposed to a static system. To revert to Saussure's terminology, if structuralism concentrated on the study of the langue, the structure of a system of language, post-structuralism brings together parole, the actual use of language, with langue, to indicate how language is constantly changing through use, that structures are always temporary and not necessarily consistent. Synchronic and diachronic systems come together and the change in systems is brought about through actual language use.

The approach I am taking is thus fundamentally that of social constructionism. It combines the relativist view of language from structuralism as a system of rule-governed structures with the post-structuralist insights on the inherent instability of these systems, leaving them open to change, to pressure from opposing systems.

Notions of power, dominance and conflict have been incorporated into CDA to account for why change and opposing systems develop.

### 5.3.3 Conflict, power and discourse.

*The starting point of discourse theory is that no discourse can be fully established, it is always in conflict with other discourses that define reality differently and set other guidelines for social action. (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002: 47)*

As this quotation indicates, the situation of differing discourses in journalism education is typical of problems relating to discourse generally. Wodak (2001: 1) has claimed that discourses 'testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict' and sees CDA as being concerned with analysing ... 'structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language'.

Mills has related this to educational programmes:

*[W]hat is studied in schools and universities is the result of struggles over whose version of events is sanctioned. Knowledge is often the product of the subjugation of objects, or perhaps it can be seen as the process through which objects are constituted as subjugated. (1997: 21)*

For example, college libraries provide much material on women, little on men. More specifically, in relation to academic disciplines Mills states that the notion of the discipline is what determines what can be said and regarded as factual or true within a given domain. Each discipline determines what methods, form of propositions and arguments, and domain of objects will be considered true. The problem in journalism is the lack of this notion of what the discipline is, with no resolution between competing discourses that would even temporarily lead to closure and allow journalism to develop its full potential as an academic discipline, with an accepted framework for programmes of teaching and research.

It is claimed that the establishment of an accepted discourse is accomplished through power. It is through the power relations within a society that certain

discourses are perceived to be acceptable, and others not acceptable. Foucault's notion of power equating with knowledge (for example, Foucault, 1999) has influenced most discourse analysts and in the present study, the difficulty can be explained by the lack of dominant power by any of the groups involved in defining journalism education. Within journalism itself, there is the struggle between those who view it as a profession and those who view it as a craft, between the public service versus the commercial purpose of journalism, and within education, the differing discourses around the split between academic and vocational education, and within professional education. However, Foucault's concept of power was consensual, not a negative or repressive force, nor a possession to be owned by some (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). To explain overtly conflictual struggles – as can occur within journalism education – in terms of power struggles between opposing groups, it is best to turn to the understanding of power which Fairclough, along with other critical discourse analysts, has taken from Pecheux (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999). Pecheux stressed the conflictual nature of discourse, and how any one discourse stands in conflict with other discourses (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Mills, 1997).

Pecheux' work links back to that of Volosinov and Bakhtin writing in the 1920s and 1930s. All three share a Marxist perspective on conflict and opposition amongst discourses. Volosinov is regarded as the first to put forward a linguistic theory of ideology, that language is the material of ideology and all language use is ideological. Language was thus an arena of class struggle (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and discourse is dialectical in character (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Bakhtin (1999) further developed the general concept. He emphasised the dialogic properties of texts, the idea that any text is a link in a chain of texts, reacting to, drawing in and transforming other texts – which Kristeva has more recently termed 'intertextuality' (Faircough and Wodak, 1997).

This intertextual perspective on discourse, seeing one text echoing and partially replaying the forms, meanings and values of another (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999) offers a fruitful way for me to approach the analysis of key texts. The texts may represent initially a small amount of data to be analysed, but from this perspective, the text is like an iceberg. What is visible is only a small portion of the

total picture. A single text contains layers of other texts and its full analysis can provide considerable knowledge and understanding of a situation, especially when, as in CDA, it is related to its social, economic, cultural and political context as appropriate. In Bakhtin's words:

*each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication.* (1999: 129)

If intertextuality is used to denote the interrelation between texts, a parallel term, interdiscursivity, is used to denote the intersections of different types and forms of discourses within a text. Wodak (2001) has described the text as a site of struggle, showing traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending for dominance. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) have used the notion of 'trace' in their analysis of two letters between a professor and a police chief concerning alleged mistreatment by the police of a third party. These texts had previously been analysed by another analyst. By focussing on the interdiscursive nature of the letters, the mixture of genres and discourses they contained, the authors were able to provide a demonstrably more satisfactory description and explanation of the letters. The term used to refer to the presence of many different discourses within a text is 'hybridity'. Chouliaraki and Fairclough claim that the hybrid text is the norm in late modernity because of the constant change and instability of the times.

The two terms I have just discussed, power and hybridity are the ones I find most relevant to my work from the many and complex concepts used within the theory discourse analysis. They are also the two to which Chouliaraki and Fairclough give special mention as having particular significance for CDA.

Related to the notion of hybridity is Fairclough's term 'order of discourse', used to signify all the discourses which strive to establish themselves in the same domain. It includes therefore the competing discourses around the same topic. The order of discourse delimits what can be said, constitutes the resources available but which can be changed by using discourses in new ways or by importing discourses from other orders of discourse. The latter was clearly shown by Fairclough (1993) in his

work on the marketisation of university discourse, where he examined changes in the form of discourse used in advertising academic posts.

A useful concept that could be incorporated from Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) version of discourse analysis is that of 'floating signifiers' which indicates signs – in this context, words – over which different discourses struggle. They are signs whose meaning is not fixed but which have multiple potential meanings. Within a particular discourse these signs are nodal points which crystallise the ongoing struggle between different discourses. 'Democracy' and 'freedom' are prime examples of such signs, which are used with many different meanings. The concept of 'floating signifiers' is useful to label key signifiers in a discourse (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

The moment of discursive practice, the discursive event is thus, on the one hand, important in being the opportunity for change to be introduced into a discourse. But also it offers a good opportunity for conflicts, oppositions in the discourse to be open to examination because the event and the order of discourse are in a dialectical relationship at this moment (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

## **5.4 The analysis**

### **5.4.1 Three dimensions of analysis**

Within CDA, the communicative event is seen as having three dimensions, the text, the discursive practice and the wider social practice to which the event belongs (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). A complete analysis will cover the linguistic analysis of the text, the processes relating to the production and consumption of the text, and the wider social practice in which the communicative event occurs. The particular emphasis in any analysis depends on the research questions being asked. Phillips and Joergensen have pointed out the difficulty in this model of separating discursive and non-discursive elements. However the problem I am concerned with is more or less solely discursive, as is the case with discursive practices in education generally compared with, for example, practices in industry (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Discourse may define a problem as it does in my study but



nevertheless, the discourse used does have material consequences in determining what kinds of programmes of journalism education will be offered, to what type of student and in what type of institution.

#### **5.4.2 Text, discourse practice and social practice**

The text in CDA is analysed more comprehensively than in other methods of discourse analysis. This is the essence of CDA, that it anchors its analytic claims about discourses in close analysis of texts (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). In Fairclough's version, Halliday's systemic functional linguistics has been adopted as the linguistic model to be followed whereas in other forms of discourse analysis, a hotch-potch of linguistic items is often applied, with no theoretical notions and no theory of grammar (Wodak, 2001). Systemic linguistics is more suitable than other linguistic theories as it is the only major linguistic theory that can provide a link between the language used and social practice. It does so through being based on the functions of language rather than on the structures of language as is the case with other theories (Halliday, 1970; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Wodak, 2001).

Halliday proposes three linguistic functions: the ideational function, to do with constructing the world, the relational function, to do with enacting relations between the text's participants, and the textual function which constitutes coherence and cohesion in texts. These three functions reflect Jakobson's (1960) work on language functions, typifying the functional tradition in linguistics in Europe which was overshadowed by the American led focus on language structure dominant for most of the twentieth century. Systemic linguistics involves analysing these functions at the different levels of language. At word level, this means discerning what patterns of categorisation and classification are used; what if any evaluative, emotive meaning indicates about attitudes and beliefs. Similarly at the syntactic level, the analysis traces the particular structures used, especially transitivity and modality, and the theme/rheme, providing the given and new information in the sentence. Finally, the supra-sentential or, in linguistic terms, the discourse level of textual organisation involves cohesion and, in spoken texts, turn-taking. These linguistic functions of Halliday's are close to the functions of discourse, that is to constitute social identities, social relationships and systems of

knowledge and belief – though the emphasis can be on one rather than the others in different cases (Fairclough, 1993).

I concentrate to a great extent on systems of knowledge and belief in analysing the concepts of journalism education, but at the same time, the texts represent and create identities for institutions, for academics, for journalist professionals, and students. The interpersonal relationships are essentially between the producers and consumers of the texts. The published material on journalism education constitutes public texts, in that the producers and consumers are relatively anonymous and so the interpersonal relationships tend to be impersonal.

The discursive practice – the production and consumption of the texts, and the different discourses on which the text draws – is often analysed at the same time as the text and the two are intermingled. The production of the text is of concern to me but not the consumption because I am concerned with the formulation of policy on journalism education, and the difficulties in so doing. The official texts I am analysing are typically the result of teamwork, of collaboration and tie in with Foucault and Barthes' notion of the 'death of the author' (Mills, 1997). Texts from this perspective can be termed unauthored works that originate from a number of other texts and are not the original work of any one author. Collaboration in the production of official texts is only available to certain people, to an elite; the contribution of some rather than others depends on power relations. The discourses within the texts are analysed as elements of discursive events from within the main order of discourse and possibly influenced by external orders of discourse, and so the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity already referred to come into play.

At the level of social practice, the analysis is contextualised within the wider social context (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). To what kind of network of discourses does the discursive practice belong? How are the discourses distributed across the texts? To what kinds of institutional and economic conditions is the discursive practice linked? How the discourses combine and how they are used depend on social organisation and the concept of power is of central importance at this level. The struggle to control discursive practices and to gain dominance over the order of

discourse is understood by Fairclough in terms of Gramsci's term, hegemony (Titscher et al., 2000). Closure is never fully achieved. The social is always 'an unfinished project' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), open to change, and conflicting discourses are a very clear indication of this.

The normal starting point is to analyse typical texts (Meyer, 2001) using a small sample (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). This approach has been criticised as not providing a valid corpus of data from which to draw conclusions. If the texts chosen are key texts however, they can be taken to have a status which makes them valid in themselves. Also it is the practice to start with certain key texts, and then depending on the results of the analysis, to reach out to other texts from them. The data collection and data analysis is thus done simultaneously (Meyer 2001). This is the general procedure I follow.

The three dimensions to CDA, text, discourse and social practice, offer respectively a description, an interpretation and finally an explanation of a given situation, a given problem. The aim of CDA is to provide an explanatory critique by linking small scale analyses with larger scale social processes. There has been the difficulty that a critique always implies that one representation of the world is better than another, which conflicts with constructionist, relativist view of world. In the latter, all discourses are equally valid, all are historically and culturally specific and thus contingent. Yet at grounded concrete level, there is no alternative but to put forward one at the expense of others. In specific circumstances, it can be argued that some are better than others. Phillips and Joergensen (2002) argue that scientific critiques are inherently better because of their scientificity. They are explicit, which gives them a different value than others. Therefore, scientists are contributing something new to public debate, to democratic debate with 'a truth that can be discussed, in order to further our visions for a better society'.

### **5.4.3 Reflexivity**

As an essentially interpretative research methodology, CDA has to face the usual criticism of the lack of objectivity of qualitative research. In so far as all discourse analysis has a constructivist approach to the social world, the role of the researcher in the production of the research findings must be considered. It is not enough to

attempt to distance oneself from the research but because one cannot get outside the discourse, one must be reflexive and make explicit one's position in it.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough mention reflexivity but make less of it than other discourse analysts. CDA is more explicit than most discourse analysis in its methods. The form of close linguistic analysis used is empirical and open to scientific scrutiny in a way that other methods of discourse analysis such as DSP are not. Phillips and Joergensen contrast the conventional scientific methods in the production of empirical materials in CDA with the analyses of Wetherell and Potter whom they criticise for not providing sufficient documentation to support their interpretations.

Nevertheless, criticism about bias being brought into the research has been made by those who cast doubt on the validity of the readings of the text in CDA. Schegloff (1998) as a conversational analyst has accused CDA of introducing issues of power and dominance into analysis when they are not demonstrably present in the texts. Widdowson (1995) has criticised CDA for bringing prejudices from prior ideological commitment to the readings and then selecting readings to support this ideological standpoint. These criticisms would be difficult to refute from the early work in critical linguistics which was overtly political in motivation. In more recent CDA however, these criticisms can be put down to a difference in philosophical viewpoint as Wodak (2001) does in taking the normal epistemological position in CDA that research can never be free of a priori knowledge. Chouliaraki and Fairclough had earlier replied somewhat more expansively to this criticism by stating that texts are not completely open to any interpretation; there are constraints on the meanings to be drawn from them. Nevertheless, there will be the possibility of different understandings of the text based on different viewpoints and different combinations of properties of the text. The understanding or explanation being drawn from the text must be argued for on the basis of the empirical material and the theoretical framework. It should thus be open to enquiry and open to refutation.

## **5.5 Research methods**

It remains to outline the methods used in carrying out this critical discourse analysis of journalism education. The selection of data is discussed, followed by an account of the method of analysis. It is argued that the sample is justified, both in terms of its (small) size and in terms of the nature of the texts to be used. A discussion of criteria for evaluating research in discourse analysis follows and the section concludes with consideration of ethical issues in so far as they related to this work.

### **5.5.1 A study of two cases**

The overall aim of the research was to study the research questions in the context of undergraduate journalism education in Ireland. Undergraduate journalism education is confined to two higher education institutes in the Irish public education sector, DCU and DIT. A third institute, Griffith College belongs to the small private sector and because of the very different circumstances in which it operates, it was decided to confine the study to what have long been recognised as the two main centres.

The study can be described as being based on two case studies. The study of journalism education in DIT and DCU can be described as the examination of bounded systems, limited in terms of time and space (Bassegy, 1999). It can at the same time be seen as instances of a class as the uncertainty surrounding journalism education is widely acknowledged in Europe and the US. In Stake's terms (1998), my reasons for studying these particular cases are primarily intrinsic, because of their relevance to my own work, but there are strong instrumental reasons also because of the more general theoretical issues of journalism and education involved.

Yin (1994) advocated case studies as the preferred strategy when 'how' and 'why' questions are posed, where the investigator has little control over events and where the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context. My question fits these criteria: it is asking 'how'; it is focussed on a widespread issue within journalism education beyond my control and is a contemporary phenomenon of immediate relevance to me and to others involved in this area. The research fits into what Bassegy has described as theoretical research: its object is to try to

understand what is happening rather than to make judgements or try to bring about change. These can be classed as educational case studies as they are concerned with the understanding of educational action:

*They are concerned to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of evidence. (Bassey, 1999: 28)*

Bassey picks up on this idea of professional discourse, which obviously ties in with my methodological approach, defining it as the 'maelstrom of ideas, facts and judgements about education'. The role of research is to inform this discourse:

*It should be something that teachers and policy-makers look for, read about, argue over, reflect on and then either reject and forget or file away in their memory to adapt and adopt later. (1999: 51)*

### **5.5.2 Data selection, analysis and sample size**

The primary data used are the documents from DCU and DIT which outline the undergraduate courses on offer, that is the course descriptions in the published information booklets. These documents function as the key texts. They are analysed intensively as the analysis reveals the different discourses which lie behind the texts and which reveal the concepts of journalism and journalism education on which the respective courses are built. In other words, these texts are the icebergs that reveal the orders of discourse within the debate. They are hybrid texts that have been produced by a complex quality assurance process and are typically the result of reflection, discussion, review and appraisal of the journalism programmes by the course team involved. As such they reflect concepts of journalism and journalism education held by the team.

In order to probe the discourses within these texts, the interdiscursivity or intersection of the various discourses that occur, a second level of analysis is performed on texts which can illuminate the key documents. These are of two types: the self-study documents, part of quality assurance in each of the two institutions and which contain the rationale behind the courses, and the full course descriptions. In this way, the intertextual chain reveals the different discourses –

the interdiscursivity – underlying the policies of the educational programmes of the two institutions.

A third strand to the intertextual chain is examined by relating the discourses brought to light by these analyses to the more general discourses of journalism and education in the wider context in which the two programmes were developed in Ireland and internationally. This entailed the use of documents relating to journalism and to higher education from the two institutions, from journalism bodies representing workers and management, from academic/educational organisations, from government and from relevant international bodies.

The analysis thus is at three levels, covering what Fairclough termed the three dimensions of the communicative event. These are the text, discourse practice and wider social practice, respectively examined through linguistic analysis of the text, the production of the text, and contextualisation within the wider social world as discussed in relation to methodology.

The linguistic analysis of the two key texts takes the form of a systemic linguistic analysis (Halliday, 1970) of lexis, syntax and discourse (in the linguistic sense) of the three functions of systems of knowledge and belief, social identities and social relationships (Fairclough, 1993). This linguistic analysis is comprehensive, comparable in some ways to a traditional grammatical analysis and parsing of the entire texts. What do the lexical classification, systems of transitivity and modality reveal about the concepts of journalism, education and journalism education in these texts? The choice of words, of sentence type, the use of passivisation, of metaphors reveal the basic concepts on which the journalism programmes are built; they bring to light the particular discourses used in relation to journalism and education in the two institutions. As stated in the discussion of the methodology, the emphasis in the research findings is on the function of discourse in relation to systems of knowledge and belief; of the other two discourse functions, there is some treatment of the social identity of the participants, and very little on social relationships, tying in with what is most relevant to the research questions.

The interdiscursivity uncovered in the key texts is traced to the second level texts, the self-study documents and full course descriptions. In turn, the discourses revealed in these texts are traced to the more general context through my third level of analysis relating to the discourses of journalism and education within the country and internationally. The analysis at these secondary levels focuses on tracing the different types and forms of discourses uncovered in the key documents and as such is not a comprehensive analysis of the entire texts.

The data analysed may seem to constitute a very small sample that would be termed insufficient in terms of other research. However, it does represent the entire sample of the main undergraduate journalism programmes in Ireland. In case studies, samples tend to be small (see Bassey, 1999) with the emphasis on collecting no more data than can be reasonably handled. Moreover, within discourse analysis sample sizes can be extremely small, because of the intensive analysis carried out. Phillips and Joergensen argue for justifying the use of a few or even a single text on the basis of the research questions asked and the methodology used. Both they and Wood and Kroger (2000) emphasise the time-consuming nature of the method of analysis in DA. As these authors also point out, the sample size is not so small when it is kept in mind that the subject of analysis is the entire language in the text of which there is a considerable amount.

The texts at the centre of my study can be justified as being key to the research topic. They are the sites that testify to thinking on journalism education in Ireland at a particular moment in time. The other texts, especially at the third level, were not initially determined as the selection of those texts depended on the analysis of the texts at the lower level(s) (Wood and Kroger, 2000). Issues or more particularly discourses could have come to light that needed to be traced in texts other than those initially selected.

### **5.5.3 Documents as research data.**

The key documents used had several advantages as research data. Firstly, they are naturally occurring texts as is most desirable in discourse analysis (see Phillips and Joergensen, 2002; Silverman, 2001). The problem of the intervention or interference by the researcher does not apply. Secondly, these are public



documents which means there was no problem about access. The documents are freely available to all. The documents can be considered to be authentic, credible and representative and meaningful for the research being undertaken. The production of these documents is also relatively easy to establish, as they are the results of established and required quality assurance procedures in the relevant institutions. Wellington's (2000) questions to be posed in analysing documents (who is the author, who is the audience, where was it produced and when, what were the social, political and cultural conditions in which it was produced, why were they written?) are easily answered and open to authentication. They score highly on both the axes he proposes for the typology of documents, that of openness and accessibility and that of authority and authorship, for example, public versus private documents, official versus personal documents.

For the texts in the first chain of intertextuality, the situation was potentially more problematic. I proposed seeking the self-study documents that would have been produced to justify the course documents from which the course outlines came. These documents are part of the internal quality assurance procedures of the two colleges. They are authoritative documents and provide authentic, official, naturally occurring data but are not publicly available. I had to negotiate access to such documents from DCU.

If access had not been granted, the alternative texts would have come from interviews with key informants which would likewise have served the purpose of illuminating the base texts. Indeed they would have had the advantage of allowing me to probe the issues in an interactive way, 'to reach parts which other methods do not' (Wellington, 2000). The key informants would have been senior members of the teaching staff on the two programmes. However, with regard to authenticity and authority, interviews do not measure up as well as the written texts. They are not naturally occurring but are constructed as part of the research process. The data is open to bias from the interviewer or interviewee. The data from interviews would inevitably have represented the views of the individuals rather than the official views from the colleges alone. It is worth noting that CDA normally uses pre-existing texts rather than interviews as its general tendency is to apply

conventional scientific methods in the analysis of empirical material (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002).

In the event, I had no difficulty in acquiring the documents I sought. Access was greatly eased by my position in DIT and my acquaintance with the relevant authorities in DCU. The self study and course documents were available to me as of right in my own institution but it was necessary to check with the relevant senior member of staff that I was authorised to use them for this research. In DCU, access to the course documents was sought from the Head of the School of Communications and was approved. The research statement submitted to DCU outlining the study is attached in Appendix 1.

#### **5.5.4 Criteria for evaluation**

Did these methods ensure that the research is credible and worthwhile? Did they fulfil the two mandatory requirements for all research (Silverman, 2001): that it has been demonstrated why the researcher should be believed and that the research problem tackled has theoretical and/or practical significance?

The traditional criteria for making such judgements are those of reliability and validity, but with the methodology and methods used, these criteria do not apply unproblematically. From the methodological point of view, reliability and validity tie in with a positivist view of the world where a single objective truth is available. It does not make sense to aim for reliability, the repeatability of a research fact or finding, and validity, the matching of the research fact or findings with the real world (Bassey, 1999), in a socially constructed world where there is not one truth but different truths, different concepts and meanings, all of which can be valid and correct (Silverman, 2001; Cohen et al, 2000).

My particular project, even though qualitative in nature and based on a relativist epistemology, is not so far removed from traditional scientific research as other forms of qualitative and discourse analysis research can be. As previously mentioned, Phillips and Joergensen (2002) assert that CDA generally uses normal scientific methods. My data, confined to written public documents, can fulfil the traditional criteria without problem. They are fixed, reliable, authoritative

documents, unfiltered by the researcher, easily available to others. Similarly, the analysis of the data fits in with normal scientific criteria. I used standard linguistic categories and procedures and carried out a comprehensive, systematic analysis of the key documents together with a partial analysis of other documents based on the findings from the first analysis.

However, evaluating the study's interpretation of the analysis and its conclusions in terms of reliability and validity of results does not make sense when, as here, one is working within an interpretative framework. One can justifiably come up with different results, with different interpretations of the same data depending on the researchers and other participants involved. Whereas this is anathema in quantitative research and has been used to question the value of qualitative research, it is seen by those who support qualitative research as truly reflecting social life, its richness and variety. Not only is it impossible to judge this study on the basis of validity and reliability. It can be argued that it is not desirable to do so as the traditional criteria are not adequate for evaluating qualitative research and therefore alternative criteria should be used.

The criteria of authenticity and transparency are usually advocated for warranting the data and analysis in qualitative research (eg. Wellington, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000). The use of authenticity marks a sharp difference with quantitative research's use of experiments, and emphasises the importance of examining naturally occurring data as far as possible. The documents for my research match this criterion with ease. Transparency is advocated to allow access to others to the basis of the research, the data and its analysis (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). In order to comply with this criterion, I have included in the appendices the core document used as key texts together with a list of all other documents used, with the intention of providing an audit trail of the research.

The validity and reliability of the analysis is ensured quantitatively by the triangulation of different data and/or methods. Silverman (2001) however argues that the use of triangulation is inappropriate in qualitative, context bound research. Even though I am using different kinds of data, they do not amount to triangulation in the normal sense. The three layers of data proposed are linked together hierarchically rather than being used as multiple data sources to ensure validity.

The intention is that they add to the depth and richness of the study. I am relying more on the systematicity and comprehensiveness of the process of analysis, criteria advocated by Silverman and Phillips and Joergensen respectively.

With regard to research findings, Wood and Kroger (2000) and Phillips and Joergensen propose that in discourse analysis these should be judged on the grounds of coherence, plausibility (to the community of scholars) and fruitfulness (producing new knowledge) rather than traditional validity. I would hope that my study measures up to these criteria.

This however is limited to an internal evaluation of the research only (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). For research to be judged worthwhile, it is required to have significance beyond the narrow boundaries of the particular context examined. Traditionally it is required to have external validity, to be generalisable in some form or other to the wider context. My research is quite self-contained. Despite its links with the international context, the findings are not in any true sense generalisable from this situation alone to all other cases of journalism education. This is typically the case with qualitative research where it is proposed that the criteria of comparability and translatability be used instead of generalisation in order to assess how the research can have wider significance beyond the actual study itself (Cohen et al, 2000). The study, through being scientific and explicit in its approach (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002) should enable discussion in a wider context.

Contribution to such discussion is seen in a moral light within CDA (Wood and Kroger, 2000). Research findings do not stand apart from power and politics. They are assessed on moral criteria, on how they contribute not only to science but more widely to democratic debate within society (Phillips and Joergensen, 2002). Given the role of journalism within democratic society, it could be argued that research into journalism education can contribute to this wider debate. However, it seems a large claim to make for this study. It will be sufficient if, through comparison and translatability to other contexts, it can contribute in some way to the general theoretical debate on journalism education on the one hand, and on the other, to

help inform ‘the judgements and decisions of policy-makers and practitioners’ (Bassey, 1999) within journalism education in Ireland.

### **5.5.5 Ethics**

Finally, it was required to carry out the research in an ethical manner. As mentioned in chapter one, because of the nature of the proposed study, the ethical issues that arose were quite limited. The key documents were already in the public sphere. In seeking access to the documents that were not public, it was necessary to ensure informed consent from those willing to co-operate (Wellington, 2000; Silverman, 2001). Even if I wished to, it would not have been possible to carry out the research in a covert manner within the small circle of journalism education in Ireland.

Informed consent in this instance did not arise from the issue of privacy as would have been the case if the research had to do with sensitive, personal subject matter. Also, the people I was approaching for co-operation had, through their own status and position, an understanding of the implications of assisting me with this study. In seeking co-operation from DCU, the issue was more to do with the professional competition which could have led to reluctance to provide me with the documents I was requesting. From the ethical point of view, it did require me to be completely open about the research, the reason for it, the process involved, the results and what will happen to them. For this reason, a statement outlining the research accompanied the formal request for access to their course documentation. Within DIT, although I had prior access to the data, I ascertained with the chair of the relevant research committee within the faculty, that no official permission was required for their use in this research.

The results of the research will be available to the ‘informants’ that is, DIT and DCU. This is desirable on ethical grounds and ‘as a matter of “research etiquette”’ (Crow, 2000). It can also help ensure that any illumination that my research may bring to the problem may inform professional discourse surrounding journalism education. This ties in with Bassey’s advocacy, already quoted in this paper, for educational case study to contribute to the maelstrom of ideas, facts and judgements which inform the work of practitioners and policy-makers (Bassey, 1999).

## 5.6 Summary

I have claimed justification for the use of CDA in my research because of its being a complete approach to the theory and practice of discourse analysis. It is also an approach geared towards addressing problems and the research question I have chosen is based on a practical problem in journalism education. It provides a basis for analysing conflicting discourses through the concepts of power and hybridity as discernible through the intertextuality and interdiscursivity of the texts. The linguistic orientation of CDA suits a study focussed on the meanings and concepts of language. It is not limited though to the linguistic domain: viewing language as a social practice allows linkage with the wider social context in which the problem occurs. Hopefully therefore, it provides an analysis of journalism education that will be relevant to the practice of journalism education.

The study is confined to two examples of undergraduate degree programmes, those at the two main journalism education centres in Ireland. The data to be used are documents associated with these programmes: firstly the outline course descriptions available to potential students; then the full course documents detailing the content of the courses and providing a rationale for the courses; finally documents from the various journalistic and educational sources which provided the context for the development of the courses.

The next three chapters present the analysis of these three levels of data, representing respectively, the core texts, discourse practice and social practice. Whereas the analysis is mainly concerned with the ideas or representation of journalism and journalism education, the other two elements found in texts, social relations and identities come into play, particularly at the third level of analysis. It is seen that the ideas on which the two courses are based are shaped by the identities of the institutions involved and their relationships with various professional, academic, state and international bodies.

## Chapter 6

### Level One Analysis: Core Texts

#### 6.1 Introduction.

The core texts for the analysis are the course descriptions of the undergraduate degrees in journalism from DIT and DCU, both of which are available in print and on-line versions. The texts are analysed in detail to probe the research questions, concentrating firstly on the concept of journalism and then the concept of journalism education so far as may be deduced from the two documents. The texts are those that applied for entry in 2004. They are reproduced in full in Appendix 2.

There are some differences between the course outlines. DIT provides more information, giving a year by year account of course content. DCU refers to its web pages for further details. The course outlines in Appendix 2 are represented in the following templates, with paragraph headings in bold as in the text:

DCU	DIT
Title	<b>Title, CAO Code, type of degree</b>
<b>CAO Code</b> , Points required for entry last year, duration, type of degree	<b>Programme description</b>
Minimum requirements	<b>Programme outline</b>
GCE Requirements	<b>Year 1</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
[General statement on course]	<b>Year 3</b>
Course Structure	<b>Year 4</b>
<b>Course Overview</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Career Prospects</b>	<b>Location</b>
(web address given for course modules past graduates, full list of degrees)	<b>Entry Requirements</b>
	<b>Award</b>
	<b>Career Opportunities</b>
	<b>Further Information</b>

CAO refers to the Central Admissions Office, the national office in Ireland for the processing of applications for entry to courses in higher education.

At this first level of analysis, the emphasis is on the ideas or representation of journalism and journalism education. But firstly in more general terms, it is worth commenting briefly on the general nature of these texts, to indicate their purpose, social relations and communications technology, following Fairclough (2003).

Texts of this genre are primarily informational, providing details on the courses for prospective students, but there is also a certain promotional aspect to them, to attract students. This is more obvious in the DCU text which, in terms of social relations, uses a personal, direct style at times, compared with the impersonal formality of DIT. The texts are uni-directional mediated documents, available in print and on-line forms. However, the DCU on-line version makes use of links to allow access to additional information, thus offering a more user-friendly service. In this way, the DCU texts fits in with Fairclough's (2004) analysis of the prevalence of marketisation and casualisation in all modern discourse, markers of the theme of new capitalism whereas DIT maintains a more traditional style.

## **6.2 The concept of journalism**

The analysis of the texts for the concepts of journalism that they contain seeks to investigate the first four research questions outlined in the first chapter. These are:

- What is journalism?
- What is the core function of the work of a journalist?
- What does a journalist need to learn in order to carry out this function?
- What theory of journalism is available/should be developed to underpin the professional teaching of this discipline?

All the questions have to do with two basic issues: whether journalism is a distinct activity of its own or just one element of the wider field of media, and whether journalism is regarded as a profession or simply a craft. These two issues can be seen to relate directly to the first question. Answers to the remaining questions



concerning function, specialised knowledge and theory are linked to the responses to these two issues as they in turn depend on whether journalism is distinct and whether it is a profession. The function of a journalist emerges from the understanding of the role of journalism expressed explicitly or implicitly in the texts. What the journalist needs to know can be surmised from the knowledge, skills and understanding included in the course curricula. Finally, the theory underpinning the courses needs to be considered to see what it includes and where it is drawn from, in the light of the lack of an agreed theoretical base for journalism.

### **6.2.1 Journalism or media?**

'Journalism' and cognate terms such as 'journalist', 'journalistic' occur many times throughout the two texts as is to be expected. The more general term 'media' appears also, three times in each text. However, this initial similarity in the lexical classification of the concept does not stand up when one looks more closely at the contexts in which the terms appear, their positioning and the collocations of which they are part.

In the DCU text, 'media' appears in the first sentence:

*Journalism provides a broad general education both in the major subjects covered in the media and discipline of journalism.*

Media also appears in the course overview where it is stated that the course is designed to meet 'the needs of the media industry'; and thirdly, under career prospects where, having listed the various journalistic type jobs open to graduates, it also says that graduates will be equipped 'for employment in media and a variety of other areas'. It can thus be said that media is the hyponym or dominant term, journalism the secondary term with regard to this first section of the DCU course.

In the DIT text on the other hand, the first sentence refers only to journalism:

*This four-year honours degree programme is aimed at students who wish to pursue journalism as a career and who wish to have the added benefit of being able to work through a second language.*

This continues throughout the first section, 'media' appearing quite far down the text, in the description of the language stream of the programme and the specific content of two modules in the year by year description of the course. The initial impression therefore is that the DCU course integrates journalism closely into the general media area whereas in DIT, the references to the 'media' are more peripheral, the course is more centrally focussed on journalism alone.

The DCU text openly states that not all students will 'necessarily become full-time journalists'. Likewise it talks of 'a wide range of career options' for graduates and in the last sentence elaborates on this by stating:

*Graduates will have a level of education and skills which will equip them for employment in media and a variety of other areas (e.g. the information sector, the public service, community development).*

There are also however contradictory indications from both texts. Much of the DCU text does focus on journalism when discussing the career prospects offered by the course and when outlining the course structure. The three elements of the course structure are described in relation to journalism only: the content of journalism, the context within which it is practised and practical skills. Considerable detail is given about the work of a journalist, the difficulty of obtaining employment as a journalist, and the different sorts of work available within journalism.

The programme outline of the DIT course and its career opportunities section also raise some questions. The course is structured into three areas of study, the first two unproblematically journalistic, journalism practice and critical studies which gives 'a critical framework to journalism'. The third element, language, is different: it will 'enhance the student's opportunity to pursue a career as a professional journalist and/or pursue other career options'. In this stream, students also study the media as opposed to journalism in the countries where the language is spoken. The place of language on the DIT course will be discussed later in regard to the course content but here it is raised to indicate that not all aspects of the DIT course bear on journalism alone.

In its careers section, DIT adheres more strictly to the opportunities in journalism for graduates of its course as opposed to media and communication industries. However, in the second sentence of the text, the course is defined as providing ‘transferable skills relevant to employment in journalism and related fields’. The ‘related fields’ are not defined. There is a further deviation from targeting journalism as the career option when the language stream is described as enhancing the pursuit of a career in journalism or the pursuit ‘of other career options’. This phrase indicates no link whatsoever with the main thrust of the course, thus suggesting graduates may opt for entirely different careers.

It should also be noted regarding opportunities after completing the course, that DIT three times refers to the possibility of pursuing further study, DCU does not. This may be linked to the different status of the two institutions as outlined in chapter two. DCU as a university takes for granted the possibility of progression to higher degrees. DIT, on the other hand, as a relative newcomer to research degrees, has more of a vocational tradition and therefore stresses the academic openings available. This point can be picked up again at the third level of analysis when looking at the discourse practices within the two institutions.

### **6.2.2 Journalism a profession?**

As with ‘journalism’, the terms ‘profession’ and ‘professional’ appear in both texts. More can be revealed by pinpointing the position and the context in which the terms are used.

In the DIT text, the first occurrence is early, in the second sentence:

*It offers a programme of professional education and training ....*

Describing the course in this way carries the assumption that journalism is a profession. This is confirmed by the later appearances of the term further down the text where the course is described as being organised ‘to simulate a working day in a professional journalism environment’; the course will enable students to ‘pursue a career as a professional journalist’.

It is striking that the first reference in the DCU text is to journalism as a discipline, to repeat:

*Journalism provides a broad general education, both in the major subjects covered in the media and the discipline of journalism itself.*

This is followed by a reference in the second sentence to 'journalism and its practice' as opposed to journalism as a professional practice. The impression therefore is that the syllabus is developed around the notion of a discipline rather than a profession of journalism. Nevertheless, the term professional does appear in the second paragraph where there is mention of the 'key professional skills' to be acquired and most strikingly in the warning that journalism is an 'exceptionally competitive profession'. As in discussion on 'journalism', the DCU text therefore shows signs of disagreement or lack of clarity over the status of journalism compared with the DIT text which in a more clear-cut manner presents journalism as a profession.

### **6.2.3 Public service, specialist knowledge and autonomy**

Given its emphasis on journalism as a profession, it is to be expected that the DIT text would refer to the public service function of journalism. This is the case. Its statement on the attributes of course graduates includes having a 'sophisticated understanding of the importance of journalism in society'. The emphasis on the role of journalism in society can also be seen in its critical studies stream which refers to the study of journalism 'in its wider social and historical context'. This is expanded on in the year by year outline of the programme which lists modules such as 'politics', and 'democracy and journalism'. In the earlier part of the text, there are also some pointers acknowledging the current challenges to journalism's social role in the inclusion of references to the impact of new technologies, to 'a rapidly changing world'. There is a hint at the inclusion of multiculturalism in the languages stream which aims to give the students 'the ability to move freely between cultures'.

DCU's text has no overt mention of journalism's role as actor in society, in democracy. It is not clear that the public service aspect of journalism is covered

which may reflect DCU's lesser emphasis on the professional status of journalism. It may do so, as the learning outcomes of the course (in the third sentence) do include 'an understanding of the general context in which journalism is practised (historical, cultural, legal)'. However, a context that is historical, cultural and legal is not as clearly linked to public service as DIT's definition of the context as social as well as historical.

In the DIT text, although there is no discussion of the course content in the general description of the course, the subjects taught are listed in the year by year outline and include both skills and theoretical knowledge. The skills include newsgathering and news writing skills for a variety of journalistic genres and for the different media platforms, and news production skills including layout, editing and design for print and broadcast journalism. The knowledge-based subjects encompass elements relating to the content of journalism practice such as economics and politics, and those relating to the theory of journalism. Thus, the elements of practice and theory covered fulfil the requirement of specialist knowledge to be expected on a professional course. The inclusion of a module on ethics indicates that the autonomous regulation by journalists of their professional lives is featured in the programme, thus covering the third criteria of a profession, autonomy.

DCU's text as a whole lays more emphasis on the skills and routines of working journalists rather than their social role. The third sentence states:

*You will learn practical skills in print, broadcasting and new communications technologies as well as an understanding of the general context in which journalism is practised (historical, cultural, legal).*

The following sentence refers to 'specific subjects' and 'key professional skills'; but more prominence is given to providing 'a broad general education' which is not consistent with the notion of a profession. The text is less detailed than that of DIT: for the list of subjects taught, one must use the on-line links on the web-site. In the outline itself, there is no mention of an ethical component.

The theoretical modules listed for the DCU course, however, refer to the media more generally rather than focussing on journalism alone. The course outline itself is ambiguous in this regard as the first sentence reference to the 'major subjects covered in the media contrasts with the reference in the next sentence to 'specific topics related to journalism and its practice'. The list of modules given on-line is very clear: most of the theoretical modules are to do with the media generally: for example, media technology, reading media, history and structure of the media, culture and modernism. In contrast the DIT course focuses on theoretical modules in journalism alone, for example, the first year modules on journalism history and the sociology of the news, in second year, ethics and standards in journalism, and the third year study of 'the relationship between politics, democracy and the media in Ireland'.

The more detailed analysis of the course content of the two programmes in the next chapter will assess whether this initial assessment of the courses holds up. Is there really a difference in the view of journalism being taught in the two institutions? Does the DCU model ally journalism with the wider media field rather than as a distinct area of its own? Does the professional status of journalism come through in all aspects of the DIT course, and not so in DCU? With regard to the function of journalism neither of these initial texts refer to journalism as entertainment or to the business dimension of journalism. This is contrary to what one might expect from the issues and views in the literature on journalism and will be probed further at the next level of analysis.

### **6.3 The concept of journalism education**

This section examines the concept of journalism education implicit in the description of these courses. It relates to the second set of research questions outlined in my first chapter:

- What form of education is most suitable to provide [the learning needed for journalism]? Academic or professional?
- What other university subjects can contribute to journalism education?

- What is the articulation between these subjects and the core subject of journalism?

### **6.3.1 Academic or vocational?**

Through their aims and structures, the courses are analysed in relation to the two broad categories of academic or vocational education, to the various models of professional education and finally they are discussed in the light of the division within journalism education between the professional and integrated models.

To return to the first sentence in the DCU text, it reads:

*Journalism provides a broad general education, both in the major subjects covered in the media and the discipline of journalism itself.*

The first sentence in the second paragraph repeats this wording – the degree is designed ‘to provide a broad general education’. The last sentence in the second paragraph refers to ‘academic attainment at school, which will not necessarily lead to a career in journalism’. Thus it is stated clearly from the start and repeated elsewhere that the DCU course is an academic programme. This is bolstered by the first sentence reference to journalism as a discipline. A somewhat different impression is given under ‘course overview’ with the statement:

*The course is designed to provide a qualification that meets the needs of the media industry in Ireland and the demands of students for a dynamic programme combining academic and practical elements of journalism and related disciplines.*

However, the implication is that if the course is to be considered vocational, that is to a great extent the student’s choice; that this happens after graduation; it is not intrinsic to the course. This can be seen, for example, in the phrases ‘graduates who choose to become journalists’ and ‘students intending to become journalists’. The main outcome of the course from the university’s point of view would seem to be academic; an instrumental outcome that is available to the students in that the subjects and skills are ‘appropriate for graduates who choose to become journalists,’ is secondary.

The DIT text is in sharp contrast to this, the first two sentences of which read:

*This four year honours degree programme is aimed at students who wish to pursue journalism as a career and who wish to have the added benefit of being able to work through a second language. It offers a programme of professional education and training that will enable students to achieve their full potential and to acquire a range of transferable skills relevant to employment in journalism and related fields.*

The programme therefore is clearly vocational. The definition of its aim in the first sentence is wholly concerned with the career opportunities stemming from the programme, and in the second sentence, the type of education being offered is defined as 'professional education and training'. The more general educational or academic aim of self-development is included as students will be enabled to 'achieve their full potential' but the sentence then reverts to the vocational aspect as they will also be provided with 'a range of skills relevant to employment in journalism and related fields'. The only other reference to academic study mentioned is in the reference to the possibility for postgraduate study in the third sentence and repeated under 'career opportunities'. The overall aim is thus very clear: the course is for students who wish to pursue journalism as a career and who wish to have the added benefit of being able to work through a second language.

There is then quite a difference in emphasis between the two courses on this first point, the one more academic, the other more vocational. The history of journalism education in both institutions as outlined in an earlier chapter supports this. In the further levels of analysis, the difference in the forms of education in the two institutions will be traced through the self-study documents on which the courses are based, the mission statements of the two schools, of the two institutions and the respective statutory acts under which they are established.

### **6.3.2 What model of professional education do the texts outline?**

It may seem somewhat forced to try to match DCU's course to any of the normal models of professional education, given the overall academic slant indicated for the programme. It could be surmised that the course content and structure would follow the general statements discussed above. In the first sentence the content is



defined as comprising major subjects in the media and the discipline of journalism. The next sentence defines these more closely as 'specific topics related to journalism and its practice' which seems to move away somewhat from the broad educational basis. There is further and more clear-cut evidence of breaking from a purely academic approach in the third sentence:

*You will gain practical skills in print, broadcasting and new communications technology as well as an understanding of the general context in which journalism is practised (historical, cultural, legal).*

A later statement, the first sentence in the second paragraph under 'course structure', reverts to the claim that the course provides 'a broad general education' but continues, 'along with a number of specific subjects and key professional skills' perhaps indicating tension in the course between the academic and the professional intent.

In the third paragraph, the 'course overview' defines the structure of the course as comprising three elements:

1. the content of journalism (politics, economics and social issues),
2. the legal and cultural context within which it is practised, and
3. practical skills.

The first two elements can be seen as providing the scientific subjects which are relevant and necessary for a journalist to acquire. Those to do with the content of journalism provide a basis for understanding the main areas on which the journalist will be required to report, analyse and comment. The subjects relating to the legal and cultural context may provide an understanding of the general role of the journalist, to whom an understanding of the law is of great importance, as is an understanding of the norms, values and routines of journalism practice. The third element, practical skills, is placed last.

This structure indicates a professional course and would seem to be comparable to the knowledge-based model. As discussed in chapter four, this is where scientific, rational knowledge is at the core of the programme. The core is based on established academic disciplines such as the natural and social sciences; secondly

such knowledge is applied to the practice of the particular professions and thirdly there is an element of practice. Scientific subjects are given most importance and there is no integration between theory and practice. At the second level of analysis, it will however be necessary to look more closely at the modules themselves to see whether the modules are taught to provide a broad general education or to provide the professional context of practice.

However, the DCU programme does not describe itself as a course in professional education but as providing a broad general education. Therefore rather than analysing it in terms of models of professional education, a preferable strategy might be to map it with the three elements of the general undergraduate curriculum defined by Barnett et al. (2001) – knowledge, action, self. The DCU course would then be categorised as largely knowledge-based, with some action in the form of professional skills, and one slight mention of self in so far as the students will gain an understanding of the context in which journalism is practised. The lack of overt integration in the curriculum would help to categorise it as a collection code programme rather than an integrated code programme in Bernstein's (1975) terms, and thus of the type associated with an arts and humanities curriculum rather than a professional curriculum (Barnett et al., 2001).

In the DIT course outline, in contrast, there is (as already mentioned) some acknowledgement of more general educational aims but the fourth sentence strongly encapsulates the vocational nature of the course:

*Graduates will be multi-skilled, critically aware, and have a sophisticated understanding of the importance of journalism in society.*

Here, practice is central, but practice is associated with reflective knowledge of the use of skills and of the context in which they are used. The sentence resonates with the notion of the reflective practitioner, and with the integration of practice with associated theory.

As in the DCU model, there are three elements to the programme but the order and content of the elements differ. The elements in DIT are:

1. journalism practice,
2. critical studies and
3. language.

Practice here is placed in first position, not last. In terms of content, critical studies incorporate modules dealing with both the content and context of journalism, the former includes modules on economic, political and legal aspects, the latter includes modules on theoretical aspects of journalism. In the DCU course, these are two separate strands. The third element, language, is particular to DIT and is worthy of separate comment.

The language element is incorporated into the title of the course, that is, 'Journalism with a language', not simply 'Journalism'. In the first section of the text, the course description, the intended outcomes of the language stream for the students are given as follows:

*They will [...] have a high level of fluency in a second language, be able to work between different cultures and work professionally in the target language.*

In the programme outline, it is stated:

*The study of language aims to provide a rich and exciting educational experience that enhances the student's opportunity to pursue a career as a professional journalist and/or to pursue other career options.*

The text therefore gives a somewhat mixed message about the place of language on the course. It may be somewhat integrated into journalism but also has a distinct and separate function. From the second sentence in particular, it seems that language is included on the course on its own merits and not just for what it can bring to the practice of journalism.

It is noteworthy that the DIT text qualifies journalism practice as 'this core area'. The position of critical studies in the programme is defined thus:

*This area gives a critical framework to journalism ... developing the student's analytical, critical and theoretical skills as well as supporting an approach to practice.*

Thus the structure can be seen as close to the practice-based model where practice is the core around which other disciplines are 'integrated, contextualised and utilised'. However, the language strand does not fit in so well in categorising the DIT course with the practice-based model. The fact that it appears in the course title, and that it is described as enhancing the student's opportunity to pursue other career options, shows that it is not in the normal way an integrated part of a professional course.

In Barnett et al.'s (2001) model, the DIT course emphasises the action component with elements of self and knowledge as is clear from the requirement in the key sentence already quoted for graduates to be multi-skilled, critically aware and understanding of journalism's importance in society. The DIT programme description is of a highly integrated course with all subjects articulated around journalism practice, apart, once more, from some elements of the language stream. This characterises it, according to Barnett et al., as a professional course.

### **6.3.3 Models of journalism education**

An explanation for the language element of the DIT course and for the combination of the 'broad general education' aim of the DCU course with a course structure that reflects a professional curriculum, can be tentatively sought from the models of journalism education used within journalism education itself. The ways in which these differ from the more general models of professional education have been discussed in chapter four.

To recall, journalism educators, especially in the US, do not refer to the models of professional education used generally but instead, have their own two models which they call the 'professional model' and the 'integrated model' (Adam, 2001; Medsger, 1996; Reese, 1999; and Reese and Cohen, 2000). The professional model is the traditional model in the long history of journalism undergraduate degrees. The student takes a liberal arts degree, one quarter of the credits for the degree coming from courses in journalism and three quarters of the credits coming from

the student's choice from the range of subjects available. The integrated model on the other hand is close to what is normally called professional education, where the whole degree combines courses in the theory and practice of journalism, or, as is more frequently the case, the broader field of communications rather than journalism itself. The rationale for the so-called professional model is that journalists do not need any specific knowledge for their work: what they require is a trained mind. The study of any subject area will suffice as mental skills once learnt in one area can be applied to any area of knowledge.

DIT's course has elements of both these models. On the one hand, there is a great deal of integration between the theoretical elements and journalism practice as in the 'integrated model'. On the other, the position of the language stream is very similar to the so-called 'professional model' in the US where students take subjects that are taught completely independently of journalism itself. The language stream can be interpreted as providing the general intellectual training central to the professional model as will be investigated in the study of the course review documents. The DCU model in one way seems to fit quite well into the 'integrated model'. It appears at this stage of analysis to combine courses in the theory of the media with courses in journalism practice. However, DCU's aim of providing a broad general education fits in more with the preoccupations of those who advocate the 'professional model', where a journalist is required to be a well-educated graduate with certain professional skills.

The suggestion I am making is that the inconsistencies in the course outlines in terms of curriculum models lie in their reference to a number of different models of education. This will be tested by the analysis of the texts underlying these course outlines. The analysis of the course documents will show whether the course outlines are an accurate reflection of what the courses overall deliver. The analysis of the self-study documents will indicate the thinking behind the particular forms of curriculum developed and, hopefully, the influences which informed the choices made.

Looking ahead to the third level of analysis, there are some indicators of how the discourse practices of the two institutions have determined the relevant journalism

programmes. DCU's status as a university would equate with the more academic nature of its programme. As already mentioned, DIT's emphasis on the possibility of proceeding to further study after its degree, could represent a form of over-compensation for the lack of a research tradition in the non-university sector.

## Chapter 7

### Level Two Analysis: Discourse Practice

#### 7.1 Introduction

The documentation used for this second level of analysis, the analysis of the discourse practice, is that associated with the quality assurance procedures of DCU and DIT. In contrast to the situation in the UK, the non-standardisation of quality assurance in higher education institutions in Ireland means that there are differences in the systems used in different colleges. In particular, it should be noted that the DIT system concentrates on the review of individual programmes which are documented in considerable detail. DCU, on the other hand, focuses on school reviews: the documentation relating to any one course is therefore somewhat less.

The material from DIT is that submitted to the quality assurance panel for the course review in March, 2002. It comprises the self-study or critical review of the course in section A and the full details of the programme in section B. From DCU, there are two documents to be analysed. The first document is from 1992 when the course was initially set up. It remains relevant as the course in 2003-2004 had not changed in any fundamental way. It was revised somewhat in 1996 as part of a school review with the introduction of semesterisation and modularisation to DCU. This revision entailed some changes to the structure of the course, the addition, omission, revision and reordering of some modules, not the fundamentals underlying it (Trench, 2003). I used the details of the course content as posted on the DCU web-site for 2003-2004, rather than the course content from the 1996 document. There are inevitably some changes in modules from year to year with updating of material and changes in staffing. Using the course details from the web-site gave a more accurate reflection of the course in the year in question and was more comparable with the DIT material from 2002.

It should be borne in mind that the DIT course stems from a long tradition in journalism education for school-leavers. Its long-standing two year certificate

course was replaced in 1994 by the first version of the undergraduate degree. The 2002 document was reviewing an established course. DCU in contrast were setting up a course from scratch in 1992. Previously, they had offered a one year postgraduate course in journalism but had not had an undergraduate programme.

This chapter is concerned with examining what lies behind the course outlines analysed in the last chapter. It focuses firstly on the course content and examines the modules developed for the two courses. It then works backwards to establish the discourses that led to the outlines, the core texts, by analysing those sections of the documents that deal in more general terms with the form and content of the programmes and the rationale which determined them.

## **7.2 Analysis of course modules**

Details of the modules taught on the two programmes are given in Appendix 3. Both courses are of four years duration. As discussed in the previous chapter, both have three streams though the streams are not equivalent. DCU has a system of core and optional modules whereas DIT has not. Both include a semester abroad as either a compulsory element in the case of DIT or as an elective in DCU. Languages are available on both courses – Irish, French and German – though on an optional basis and as one module per semester in DCU compared with three mandatory modules in DIT. The summary analysis of the two courses which follows shows the detailed structure of the courses and the weighting given to the different strands.

### **7.2.1 DCU modules**

The DCU course is developed in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The four years have a total of 240 credits, 60 for each year, 30 for each semester, with each module attracting five or ten credits. The analysis is based on a total number of 210 credits, omitting the credits for the first semester in the fourth year. It is not possible to determine the content studied during that semester as it may be spent at a college abroad or studying options from a wide range of different modules in DCU.



The three elements or strands listed in the course outline are: the content of journalism (politics, economics and social issues), the legal and cultural context within which journalism is practised, and practical skills. When the modules are classified into these strands the weighting is as follows:

- Practice: between 95 and 130 credits
- Context: between 15 and 80 credits
- Content: between 15 and 75.

The lower figure in each case refers to the core modules which must be taken; the upper figure includes the optional modules available across the four years. On a yearly basis, the breakdown is:

<b>Year 1</b>	45 core modules: 20 practice, 15 context, 10 content. 15 options: 15 content, 15 context.
<b>Year 2</b>	30 core: 25 practice, 5 content. 30 options: 10 context, 30 content.
<b>Year 3</b>	30 core options: 30 practice. 30 options: 20 context, 15 content, 15 practice.
<b>Year 4</b>	30 core options: 10 practice, 20 dissertation. 30 credits for the semester abroad or for those who remain, for modules available within the School of Communication and the School of Law and Government.

### **Practice 95–130 credits**

The practice strand, by far the largest of the three, includes such core skills subjects as news reporting, feature writing, newspaper editing, radio and TV journalism. It also includes core modules in ethics and media law, which according to the module descriptors are geared towards the applied use of such subjects in journalism practice. The practice strand includes the 'INTRA' programme, a work experience programme of up to eight weeks in fourth year which counts for five credits. There are modules in shorthand for the two third year semesters which in 2003

were not assigned credits, but on the 2004 programme it is indicated they will attract five credits for the year long course.

Students may avail of up to fifteen extra credits for practice through choosing third year options in advanced broadcast journalism, design, and online journalism. Another 20 credits in practice can be added by taking the option of completing a piece of journalistic work in place of the academic dissertation in year four. The dissertation is defined as an extended piece of academic or journalistic work. In the case of the latter, it can be for any medium, takes the form of a five part investigative series, or the design and layout of a newspaper magazine or journal. Such a journalistic project must be accompanied by a critical analysis of the conception, process and product involved.

**Context:** 15–80 credits

Context courses are those that deal with ‘the legal and cultural context in which journalism is practised’ and represent the theory-based modules of the course. The minimum fifteen credits are obtained from the mandatory core modules, ‘Reading Media’ and ‘Media, Culture and Society’. This element of the course may be considerably increased by availing of up to 45 credits in optional theoretical modules covering a wide range of theoretical areas including globalisation, audiences and cross-cultural communication. Students who undertake the traditional academic dissertation will be adding another 20 credits to this element of their programme.

**Content:** 15–75 credits.

As with the context modules, there are fifteen core credits in the content stream from ‘Social and Economic Perspectives’ and ‘Introduction to the Irish Political System’. Further optional modules are available in politics, economics, law and languages. These subjects are traditionally seen as part of the general knowledge required by journalists. For example, a knowledge of the political, economic and legal systems of the country was required under the old skills only courses of the NCTJ. Competence in languages is likewise widely acknowledged to be of benefit to journalists in their work.

### **7.2.2 DIT modules**

The DIT course is also four years in duration and organised into semesters and modules. The credit system, however, is somewhat confusing: modules do not conform to the norm of five credits or multiples thereof. The analysis will therefore focus on the three strands, journalism practice, critical studies and languages, each of which is equal to one third of the total programme. The structure is relatively simple and similar across the different years of the course, except for year three where the second semester is to be spent abroad. The only options are in the language stream where students choose between Irish, French, German and Spanish. Otherwise all modules are compulsory. The flowchart of the course listing all modules is reproduced in Appendix 3. It can be summarised thus:

#### **Years 1, 2, and 4**

Journalism practice: 20 credits

Critical studies: 20 credits

Language: 20 credits

#### **Year 3**

Semester abroad: 30 credits

Journalism practice: 10 credits

Critical studies: 10 credits

Language: 10 credits

#### **Journalism practice**

Journalism practice comprises courses in the different journalistic genres (for example, news writing, investigative reporting, feature writing), and the production methods, including editing and design, for the various journalistic media (print, broadcasting, on-line). Shorthand is fully incorporated into the course. Two modules are more a critique than an exercise in practice: the module 'Explorations in Journalism' comprises the study of influential journalism texts and exemplars of good practice; the fourth year module 'Global Issues of Journalism' focuses on journalism in the modern world and in particular on foreign news coverage. The journalism strand in the last semester in the fourth year is wholly project based.

As in the DCU programme, the dissertation may be presented as ‘an extended piece of journalism’. There is a difference though in that the content and methodology for the research undertaken appear to be defined according to academic norms:

*The aim is to produce work that relates to and is unique to journalism studies, in that it is written with the rigour and scholarship of good academic work but is directed at an interested and serious readership that is not necessarily academic.*

### **Critical studies**

As noted previously, critical studies includes elements of what would be termed content and context in the DCU model. It breaks down as follows:

<b>Year 1</b>	3 modules context, 1 module content
<b>Year 2</b>	4 modules content
<b>Year 3</b>	2 modules context
<b>Year 4</b>	2 modules content, plus dissertation weighted at 12 credits of the 20 credits.

The ‘context’ aims to give a critical framework to journalism, to develop the students’ analytic, critical and theoretical skills. Seven modules plus the dissertation can be assigned to context. The modules cover history x 2, ethics, sociology of news, political communications and the documentary. The ‘content’ modules, those that the course outline describes as ‘supporting an approach to practice’, focus on politics, economics, law and refer to Ireland, Europe and the international context.

It is worth noting that the classification differs from that of DCU in that ethics and media law are part of critical studies, not practice. The module descriptors for these two subjects seem more abstract and theoretical than the equivalent practice-based modules in DCU. At the same time, ‘Explorations in Journalism’ and ‘Global Issues in Journalism’, categorised as journalism practice, could have been classified as critical studies as they analyse and critique practice rather than provide training.

## **Languages**

The language options have three modules in each semester in years one and two. These are in language, literature, and cultural/media studies. In third and fourth year, there are two modules per semester. One is focussed on language skills, including journalistic work in print or radio. The second module is concerned with literature in the third year and takes the form of a short academic research project in the fourth year. The final semester in the fourth year is given over to independent work on projects/research. There is an elective module in English literature in the third year.

The semester abroad is to be spent in a journalism school. Students are to take a mixture of theoretical and practical courses, and the exchange is expected to contribute to all strands of the programme. Somewhat different arrangements are outlined for students of Irish. It is specified that they may go abroad but they must also spend time in an Irish-speaking environment in Ireland.

Work experience is not formally part of the DIT programme but it is stated that students in fourth year will be assisted to find such placements if desired.

## **7.3 Concept of journalism**

### **7.3.1 Journalism or media?**

#### *DCU*

Do the DCU modules show journalism being treated as a distinct field or as part of media/communications? The credits for the modules divide as follows: journalism 85–120 credits; media 25–85. However, a closer look at the course content reveals a more complex situation.

The largest element of the programme, the practice stream is almost entirely oriented towards journalism alone. The exception is the ten credit first year module in media technology which is open to all media students, and is concerned with electronic research skills, and HTML and web production and design. Otherwise, the practice-based modules are geared specifically to journalism and are reserved for journalism students.

However, with regard to practice, it should be noted that the work experience programme is not necessarily restricted to working in journalism. It is stated:

*The INTRA placements will be arranged ... in a wide range of media organisations, including newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, information and press offices and new media.*

This corresponds with outlets for future jobs as described under career opportunities in the course outline, and allows for the use of journalism skills in non-journalism work. With regard to the context, these modules which lay the theoretical foundation for the overall course are overwhelmingly related to the media and based on media, communications or cultural theory rather than to journalism. This is seen not only in the module titles but also in their content. For example, 'Reading Media' has as its aim:

*to develop core foundational skills of reading and interpreting across a wide range of media, including film, TV, photography, as well as print and new media.*

Similarly the second year module 'Global Communication' aims to understand global structures and forces that are fashioning multinational media systems with no specific reference to journalism. The two exceptions are the modules 'Current Affairs' and 'Literature and Journalism' which are more specifically journalistic.

The general media orientation of the modules is emphasised by the fact that they are not designed for journalism students alone. Some are available on the three undergraduate degrees in the School of Communications, communication studies, journalism and multimedia, others to the communications and journalism degrees only, for example, 'Current Affairs', 'History of Ideas', 'Culture and Modernism'. The one module that is seemingly confined to the journalism degree alone is 'Global Communication' despite its general media orientation.

It would have seemed likely that, given the nature of these contextual modules, the dissertation would confirm the media oriented slant of the overall programme. However, the option of submitting work in journalism to meet the requirement for a

dissertation changes this, and indicates possible tensions involved in developing the rationale for the programme. The semester abroad, on the other hand, intended 'to give students the opportunity of educational and journalistic experience in a foreign country' may be spent 'at a school of journalism or communications'. Students complete either a piece of journalistic work or a research project while abroad. The modules relating to the content element would not figure in a general media course. They are, on the whole, to do with the areas of knowledge needed to work as a journalist. Languages may be the exception as it is possible to argue that they contribute equally well to more general media occupations.

It is obvious, though, that overall the course inextricably links journalism to the wider media/communications field. The theoretical dimension is almost entirely from communications rather than journalism alone; the work experience, and the semester abroad are not confined to journalistic activities or studies. This analysis thus confirms the initial findings from the core texts, that, although the practical elements are distinct, DCU integrates journalism into the general media area.

### *DIT*

Is journalism seen as distinct or as part of media communications in DIT? The answer is not in doubt. The DIT programme is unquestionably oriented to journalism as a distinct field, thus confirming the findings from the course outline.

The modules in practice are strictly journalistic, and in many cases are not merely concerned with the acquisition of skills but with the production of newspapers, radio and television programmes. Contrary to the DCU course, these modules cannot be interpreted as providing journalistic skills to be used in contexts other than journalism. The confining of the semester abroad to journalism schools likewise boosts the orientation to journalism. There is no general media theory in the theoretical component of the course. All the contextual modules are to do with journalism alone, with the possible exception of 'Picturing Reality: Studies in Documentary' as factual broadcast programmes in any classification tend to cross between journalism and media. It is a module that is common to the degrees in journalism and media arts. There are references to the media in the title of the

module 'Media Law' and in some modules across the languages strand. The content of 'Media Law' belies this, and reverts to journalism. In languages, the content is more mixed, including both journalism and some general broadcasting and film.

### **7.3.2 Journalism as a profession?**

#### *DCU*

DCU makes no explicit reference in the course content to journalism as a profession in either the module titles or content. However there are some indications that this is implied. For example, the function of journalism features in the first year module 'Introduction to Journalism' where the journalist's role in society is discussed along with journalistic practices and ethics. In the general discussion on journalism in an earlier chapter, reference was made to the challenges it is currently experiencing from a variety of forces such as globalisation, multiculturalism, new technology, and post-modernism. These areas are amply covered in the course especially through the theoretical options available but, as already indicated, they relate to the media generally rather than journalism alone. Ethics, also a marker of professional status, is studied more intensively in the second year. It appears to be the practical application of ethics that is stressed as the module aims:

*to encourage ethical conduct in journalism by examining the moral dilemmas posed by concepts of truth, objectivity, freedom, democracy and privacy. To prepare students for the reality of the workplace and to acquaint them with the NUJ's Code of Conduct for Journalists.*

The business function of journalism appears in a minor way under ethics and in a negative light as the concern is with 'maintaining ethical standards within media organisations dedicated to the pursuit of profit and power'.

With regard to the specialist knowledge and skills that are associated with a profession, the many practice-based modules in journalism are essentially specialised. They are skills-based but the learning outcomes often include knowledge and understanding of the areas of practice as well as the acquisition of skills. Such an indication of reflective learning is what one would expect in a



professional course. However, the fact that the context-oriented modules relate to media generally weakens this, as does the overwhelming use of general media theory rather than specific journalism theory.

The closer examination of the course modules thus confirms what was found in the core text. The professional status of journalism is given some recognition on the DCU programme but this recognition appears slight. It is not an important factor in the programme.

### *DIT*

Explicit references to journalism as a profession are made from time to time in the module descriptors for DIT. A strong illustration of this is found in the major journalism project in fourth year. The aim of the module is that students produce 'work of the highest standards integrating their professional and theoretical education ...'. The objectives state:

*The students will have demonstrated a critical and reflective knowledge of modern journalism and applied this to a journalism project which will be produced to the highest professional standards.*

With regard to the criteria used to claim professional status, journalism's role in society is given a great deal of attention in the two history modules which trace the development of journalism in Ireland and internationally. It also features in the second ethics module in year four but is given its strongest expression in the module on political communications in the third year. This subject 'explores the relationship between politics, democracy and the media' thus seemingly reflecting journalism's traditional watchdog role.

The present challenges to journalism from globalisation, multiculturalism, etc are only partially covered in the course. Political, economic and developmental aspects of globalisation appear to be covered but not social and cultural aspects. Multiculturalism was referred to in the course outline with reference to the languages, but the multiculturalism involved is confined to the cultures of the languages studied. It does not look comprehensively at the subject in regard to the media. The skills associated with new media technology are included. Its impact is

alluded to in connection with globalisation, but in a very minor way. Individualism, consumerism and post-modernism do not figure explicitly in the course.

The business function of journalism and/or the media is nowhere mentioned overtly. It may come into the courses in the sociology of the news, ethics and globalisation which refer in a general way to constraints and influences on the news. For example, the sociology module deals with the structures and processes that shape the news.

Specialist skills and knowledge are fully evident in the course modules. The two strands, journalism practice and critical studies, relate closely to the routines and practices of the journalist rather than providing general knowledge of the area. Even the language streams which, in the course outline, seemed oriented to providing a more general education, cover material that to a great extent is directly relevant to journalists. They are described as providing knowledge and understanding of other cultures and societies useful for working journalists and as providing journalism skills in the target language.

A quite small proportion of the course is devoted to theory, seven modules in total, which cover a relatively narrow range of issues and concepts. This seems to reflect the course's strict adherence to journalism and its acceptance of journalism as a profession.

## **7.4 Concept of journalism education**

### **7.4.1 Academic or vocational?**

#### *DCU*

It was proposed in the analysis of the course outline that the DCU course was essentially an academic course. It seemed to emphasise knowledge, with little focus on practice, and no integration between the different elements or strands. How far does a reading of the course content support this analysis?

Firstly, it is most striking that, contrary to what one would expect, practice has a very large role in the course. It is impossible to complete the course without attaining a large number of credits from practice-based modules. 95 of the 125 credits for the mandatory core modules are in journalism practice. It is possible to attain over half of the total credits from practice. A 'broad general education' with an academic bias may perhaps be attained by following a particular pathway through the course but it is not the most obvious pathway. Secondly, the possibility of fulfilling the dissertation requirement with journalistic work is not in keeping with a course that is more academic than vocational. On the contrary, this marks the course as essentially geared towards the workplace.

### *DIT*

The DIT course outline's definition of the programme as providing 'professional education and training' is confirmed by the examination of the programme content. The course is unquestionably vocational. The modules are overwhelmingly oriented towards the practice of journalism, not only the modules concerned with practice, but also the critical studies modules whether concerned with theory which is then used to reflect on the practice or with the content, providing knowledge of the areas needed by journalists in their everyday work. For example, the second year module 'Business, Finance and the Economy' is described as giving the students 'a professional, critical and reflective knowledge and understanding of business journalism':

*It is designed to make students competent to cover business news and be aware of the openings and opportunities for business and finance news and features. It is also a recognition of the importance of business and finance journalism and of the need to ensure that this area of Irish life is constantly under journalistic scrutiny.*

The assessment methods used in many of these modules illustrate the integration with practice. They are frequently journalistic type exercises rather than more traditional essays and examinations. The dissertation, as already discussed, is the culmination of this.

There are two critical studies modules which differ from this general trend, 'Sociology of the News' and 'Picturing Reality: Studies of the Documentary'. These modules are more strictly academic in nature. The other exception is the language stream where some modules, especially in the early years, are no different from language modules on any other degree.

#### **7.4.2 Knowledge-based or practice-based?**

##### *DCU*

With regard to the models of professional education, the dominance of practice in the DCU degree creates some difficulty in maintaining that the course is knowledge-based. Scientific knowledge is not as central as it appeared from the core texts. However, the absence of integration between the three elements of the programme is confirmed, which continue to mark it is such. Practice may be dominant but there are hardly any links between it and the modules to do with either the context or content of journalism. This is apparent from the module descriptors, and also from the fact that the modules are open to students on other undergraduate degrees. The contextual modules are open to students on the other programmes within the School of Communications. The content modules are delivered by other schools, the School of Law and Government, the DCU Business School and SALIS (School of Languages and Intercultural Studies). They are available to students across a wide range of programme; for example, 'Introduction to Law' is listed in eleven degree programmes.

##### *DIT*

Analysis of the course modules confirms the practice-based nature of the DIT programme and its action-based nature. Practice is at the centre. There is a very real integration between the critical studies stream and journalism practice. This is facilitated by the fact that the modules are not shared with students from other programmes. They are available to journalism students only. The language stream, despite the first impression given in the course outline, becomes more and more integrated into journalism from first to fourth year. This is particularly true of Irish, where students are most likely to have opportunities to work afterwards in Irish language journalism.

However, the course can also be said to show the weakness of the practice-based approach. To enable students to reflect on journalism practice they need a grasp of concepts which will allow them to do so. As already discussed, the lack of an agreed theoretical base to journalism (Charon, 2003; Taylor, 2002; Stephenson, 1997; Cole, 2002) together with the under-development of a general theory of professional practice (Bines, 1992) makes this difficult. DIT confines theory to history, ethics, news and current affairs, and the connection between journalism and politics. The impression given is of a rather traditional view of journalism with its emphasis on the relationship with parliamentary politics. There would not appear to be much discussion of the challenges to this role, of the need to forge a new vision of journalism for the twenty-first century. The DCU programme along with many other journalism programmes, uses media theory to compensate for the present state of development of more specific journalism theory. Theoretical approaches are available to such areas as, for example, policy and regulation of the media, reading the media, multiculturalism, technology and philosophy. These approaches may be media oriented but have strong links with journalism and can provide students with concepts, insights and thus a greater understanding of the practice of their chosen occupation.

#### **7.4.3 The Barnett, Parry and Coate model**

##### *DCU*

The number of options available to the students on the DCU course makes it possible to give different weightings to the three elements in Barnett et al.'s model. Overall, the analysis of the course content moves it close to an action-based model. Those who select all the knowledge modules available will have approximately 55% knowledge and 45% action. At the other extreme, those who concentrate on journalism practice will have approximately 38% knowledge and 62% action. The third element 'self' is apparent in some of the modules such as ethics and some of the skills areas which include a reflective understanding of journalism practice, but it appears to play a relatively minor role in the course overall. Even the ethics module appears to be as much concerned with work place practices as with critical reflection.

Where students select a predominantly action oriented course, their studies are similar to professional programmes. However, Barnett et al. see integration as typical of such programmes and, as we have seen, there is very little integration between the different modules and different elements of the DCU course. The subjects are strongly classified with each subject area maintaining its own boundaries as is typical of academic disciplines and academic programmes.

### *DIT*

The DIT course, from this examination of the content, is confirmed as one where practice is central, where reflection is embedded in practice and where there is integration across the modules and the three strands of the programme. However, if one looks at the credits given to the different strands and allocates them to Barnett et al.'s three elements, it appears that practice or action accounts for only one third of these. The other two thirds are given to critical studies and languages which are predominantly knowledge elements, although journalism practice is integrated into some of the language modules. 'Self' is woven through the three strands.

Therefore, there would appear to be less action in this course than in that of DCU. The balance of the three elements may not be what Barnett et al. expect in a professional programme but the drive towards integration fits their model well. Another factor that helps define DIT's course as professional is the central role played by journalism practice. It seems to be the over-riding principal on which the programme has been developed. The relative weight of practice or action in terms of credits does not necessarily capture this.

## **7.4.4 Models of journalism education**

### *DCU*

This second level analysis confirms that the DCU course falls between the two models used in journalism education, the professional and the integrated model. It follows the professional model in that practice has a large role and is strictly journalistic practice; also the fact that the practice stands alone, independent from the other elements of the course. The large number of content modules available reflects the professional model too. On the other hand, the fact that the theory is general media theory makes it impossible to categorise it according to this

American style model. If theory is the foundation, the framework for reflecting and operationalizing practice, the DCU programme is closer to the integrated model.

### *DIT*

If the initial analysis of the DIT course as vocational and practice-based stands up in the analysis of the course modules, this closer examination of the course content identifies some differences from its initial positioning in regard to the models of journalism education. The influence of the 'professional model' is seen to be less than appeared in the first level of analysis because the integration is greater. The programme does not divide into professional and general education elements. The language stream is more applied to journalism than is indicated in the course outline. Whereas there are modules on general aspects of literature and culture, several of these are focussed on the media, and there are other modules that are totally journalistic, for example, magazine and radio production in the second language. What remains from the 'professional model' perhaps, is the determination to mark off journalism as separate and distinct from media and communications.

The DIT course modules confirm to a very large extent the initial findings from the study of the course outlines. As has been seen, there is some uncertainty about the model of journalism education followed, but otherwise, the analyses match closely. There are greater differences in the DCU programme. The modules are more vocational, skills and action oriented than it seemed from the course outline. The analysis of the more general sections of the course documentation will continue to probe the same issues, the tensions and contradictions as well as the similarities that have become evident. It will hopefully help to reveal the intentions behind the structure and content of the courses by seeking the rationale that lies behind them.

## **7.5 Analysis of course rationale**

### **7.5.1 DCU documents**

The 1992 DCU document laid the foundation for the establishment of what was then a new undergraduate degree. The introduction to the document argues for the expansion of DCU's journalism activity into the undergraduate level, building on

the success of the postgraduate programme. This introduction, together with the aims and objectives and course structure, is relevant to this part of the analysis. The second document from 1996 revisits the aims and objectives and looks again at the course structure, the study of which provides further evidence of the reasoning behind the programme.

There is no overt discussion of the debates surrounding journalism education in these documents. They are of an older date than the DIT document when there was little public or published debate on journalism education in these islands. Also, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the quality assurance system in DCU is not conducive to lengthy documents on any particular programme.

### **7.5.2 DIT document**

In contrast, the DIT document was prepared to review the degree that had been developed in the 1990s. The rationale for the revisions to the course is contained in section A of the course document. There is a five page discussion on 'The Development of Journalism Education' the controversies of which were much debated by 2002. The reason for this discussion is clearly indicated. The earlier degree was a communications type degree with the theoretical components drawn from communications theory. The course review document was arguing for a change from this position, for journalism to be set up as a separate subject area. Therefore the document made explicit the arguments for this quite major shift in positioning, with a detailed discussion on journalism and journalism education.

This section eases my task of investigating the concepts of journalism and journalism education that underpin the course developed. A more summarised and pragmatic account of the reasons for the revisions to the course appeared in a section headed 'Recommendations arising from the re-appraisal'. Also of interest are the stated aims and objectives of the course as spelt out in this full course document where they are given in more detail than in the outlines already considered.



## 7.6 Concept of journalism

### 7.6.1 Journalism or media?

DCU

The 1992 DCU document starts by arguing for the setting up of a degree level course in journalism. It states:

*The concept of journalism as an academic discipline in its own right, well established elsewhere, is increasingly accepted in Britain and Ireland. (p. 2)*

It advocates that DCU should commit to being a 'Centre of Excellence' for journalism education in Ireland. On the other hand, when arguing the need for the course, employers are referred to in terms of the media, for example, in the clauses 'personnel managers on a number of national media organisations' and 'the media find on-the-job training too impractical or expensive to provide'. The aims firstly refer to 'providing a broadly based education in a range of disciplines consonant with career objectives and individual talents': they then indicate the intention to equip students 'with a detailed and analytical knowledge of the media industry in Ireland' before mentioning journalism. The objectives are more journalistic but do refer to graduates being able for further study 'in journalism and related disciplines', and having a range of employment options. Both terms, 'media' and 'journalism' are used in outlining the course structure: the course is a response 'to the needs of the media industry in Ireland': the three elements of the programme on the other hand, are the content of journalism, its context and journalistic skills.

The 1996 document similarly wavers between referring to journalism alone and to the wider media context. In the introduction to the section on aims and objectives, it states that the course provides 'a broad understanding of the place and practice of journalism in national and international settings'. Yet it claims:

*Those students who choose not to become journalists will be prepared for careers in a wide range of other areas and for graduate research in disciplines related to social sciences, communication science, media research, information technology and technology. (p. 2)*

The first aim is then stated in terms very clearly focussed on journalism:

*Providing a comprehensive understanding of the role and responsibility of the journalist in society, the media industry, the academic disciplines and professional practices which underpin journalism. (p. 2)*

However, the second aim talks of transferable skills; the third aim is concerned with interpersonal and project management skills which seems more related to the non-journalistic careers which had been outlined.

### *DIT*

The major focus of the discussion section on journalism education in the DIT document is on its opposition to the positioning of journalism within communications, stating that this has been purely expedient, to gain academic respectability, but that journalism is 'qualitatively different or distinct from other areas of communications'. The argument is based on journalism's public service function, its defined role in democracy which 'involves or should involve a public trust'. Medsger (1996) and Carey (2000), strong advocates of the distinctiveness of journalism, are quoted approvingly. The changes being brought in are exemplified by the replacement of the original course title, B.Sc. in Communications (Journalism) with B.A. in Journalism with a Language.

The distinguishing of journalism from other media areas is also obvious in the statement of course aims and objectives. The six aims listed make no reference to the media. The media feature only in the last of the eight objectives which focuses on the ability of graduates to understand and critique the cultural and social context in which the media operate. However, the document, in a somewhat contradictory fashion, also refers to the massive growth of the information industries and the opportunities available to those with journalistic skills, in for example, PR and corporate communications.

Thus DCU, as had seemed apparent from the analyses so far, is generally maintaining the line that journalism is part of media. DIT, on the other hand, takes the opposite position, even if identification of journalism with the media creeps in from time to time.

## 7.6.2 Journalism as a profession?

### DCU

The 1992 document first uses the term 'profession' in the introductory section when referring to 'the growing harmonisation of professional qualifications in journalism under the aegis of EJTA'. But in next paragraph, journalism is referred to as an 'academic discipline in its own right', not a profession, this striking phrase being repeated in the course outline as we have seen. The end of this section, on possible future developments in journalism in DCU, is concerned only with short courses that are purely skills based, not professional.

In the aims and objectives, journalism is referred to as a profession only. The fourth aim talks of 'the practice of journalism as a profession': in the objectives the phrases 'professionally equipped', 'professionally competent' and 'professional and ethical responsibilities of journalists' are used. The aims and objectives in the 1996 document, however, refer to journalism as a 'practice', 'professional practice' and 'discipline', thus shifting away again from the straightforward recognition of journalism as a profession.

The documents do not straightforwardly make reference to the normal traits of professional status either. The public service function of journalism is referred to in both DCU documents. In 1992, the phrases 'the role and responsibilities of the journalist in society' and 'the professional and ethical responsibilities of journalists' are included, but not given priority in the course aims and objectives. The greater concern is with providing a broadly based education, knowledge of the media industry and competence in skills. This is changed in the 1996 document. The first sentence of aims states:

*The programme is designed to produce graduates who have a broad understanding of the place and practice of journalism in national and international settings. (p. 2)*

The first aim, as quoted before, is given as:

*Providing a comprehensive understanding of the role and responsibility of the journalist in society; the media industry, the*

*academic disciplines and professional practices which underpin journalism.* (p. 2)

The challenges and problems facing journalism do not figure much in these short documents as might be expected. Nevertheless, the aims in 1992 refer to the skills associated with new technology. In 1996 these issues can be taken as incorporated in the aim:

*Preparing students to apply their theoretical awareness in an analytical and critical way to situations arising in the world of journalism.* (p. 2)

Ethics figured in the objectives from 1992, which included:

*to produce graduates who have a substantial knowledge and appreciation of the professional and ethical responsibilities of journalists.* (p. 4)

It is not explicitly mentioned in this early section of the 1996 document but appears in the course modules as described above.

When it comes to the type of knowledge and skills covered in the programme, it is significant that both DCU documents refer several times to the knowledge being broadly based not specialist alone. In 1992, the aims first use the phrase 'broadly based education in a range of disciplines'. They then refer to more specialised knowledge and skills: knowledge of the media industry, of the role and responsibilities of the journalist; skill on a continental European language; journalism skills, especially those associated with new media technology. The objectives likewise list skills in a range of different journalistic genres and media platforms; and knowledge and appreciation of professional and ethical responsibilities of journalists. They also include the acquisition of more general 'analytical and conceptualisation skills', a level of general education and skills for 'a range of educational and employment possibilities'. The elements of the course are defined on the other hand in terms of the skills and disciplines associated with journalism, with the exception of the languages which are to bring an 'important inter-disciplinary dimension' to the programme.

The 1996 document similarly talks of 'a broadly-based education' and lists the same general skills. However, these statements are on the whole, contextualised within journalism. It might be recalled that the first sentence in the section on aims describes the programme as producing graduates who have a broad understanding of the place and practice of journalism in national and international settings. The actual aims of the programme include the same areas of journalistic knowledge as in the earlier document along with more general skills. In the description of the course structure in this document, two of the three elements are here defined as core areas, and they deal with specialist content in 'professional practice and academic disciplines which underpin the study of journalism'. The third element is described as containing options, described as:

*a wide range of academic and professional subjects, enabling [students] to choose those which reflect their own strengths, interests and career options. (p. 3)*

The notion of a broad general education thus reappears here once more.

As has been noted in the study of the course modules, theory is given a significant place on the DCU course as is required on a professional programme. The nature of the theoretical studies involved is alluded to in the introduction to the first document. It quotes the Journalism Training Committee's (1989) recommendation that a degree course in journalism should be set up in DCU because of the expertise it has 'through its journalism training course and its communications degree course'. It also refers to European initiatives in journalism education in which it is involved, and to the fact that a journalism degree would contribute to the growing harmonisation of journalism education under the aegis of EJTA. It will be remembered that the European norm is for journalism to incorporate or be incorporated into communications courses (Stephenson and Mory, 1990).

Therefore, it seems clear that from initiating the programme, DCU viewed communications theory as providing the academic basis on which to build the journalism programme. This tied in with its overall tendency not to separate journalism from other media areas, and it reflects the lack of a strong assertion of journalism as a profession. Thus, the analysis from the course outline and the

course modules is maintained, indicating that DCU does not make a clear claim of professional status for journalism.

### *DIT*

The DIT discussion on 'The Development of Journalism Education' deals with the status of journalism although to a lesser degree than the journalism vs media/communications debate. Its attitude as to whether journalism is or is not a profession is somewhat equivocal. It rehearses the arguments that journalism should not necessarily become a degree entry profession. It points up the ambiguity between journalists invoking the notion of professionalism to denote 'an agreed standard and set of values for their work' while at the same time viewing their work as a craft. It also argues that this ambiguity has had an adverse affect on journalism education, making it difficult to determine whether the function of journalism education was:

*to supply trained journalists armed with only the craft skills the industry claims is all that is necessary, or educate young journalists to be reflective thinking practitioners. (p. 3)*

The text does not explicitly side with those who view journalism as a profession. Yet the argument to support the claim that journalism is a unique and distinct area of study is based on its function as a public service, its 'defined role in democracy', which is one of the main criteria of a professional occupation.

The challenges to journalism's professional role are discussed, particularly the rise of new technology, but also the uncertainties and questioning caused by the reduction of civic participation in democratic society, the globalisation of the media and the increasing monopolisation of media ownership. Another marker of professional standing, ethics, is placed at the centre of the course as the curriculum is to be developed according the values that journalism should adhere to, rather than the needs of the industry or the needs of general media courses.

There is comment on the type of knowledge and skills needed for journalism. Favourable reference is made to the broad education with practical skills provided

in the American system, the 'professional model' of journalism education. Asserting that journalism should be placed within the humanities, the subjects of specific relevance to journalism are listed as political theory, philosophy, literature, art, history and language, with some communications theory. It is claimed that all these subjects can provide a theoretical basis from which to reflect and critique journalism (not communications theory alone as one might expect). DIT, it says, has chosen to focus on languages because of the importance of story telling in journalism, the ability to move outside of the English speaking tradition and, more pragmatically, because languages have always been part of journalism education in DIT.

The ambiguity in relation to journalism as a profession is still apparent in the summary of the recommendations for the revision of the course. Its function in democracy is again mentioned, and the problems associated with its growth, with ownership issues, globalisation and technological developments. Yet when it comes to specifying the careers open to graduates of the course, there is specific reference to the employability of those with journalistic skills within the information and communication industries.

The course aims and objectives in section B of the document do give the impression of a course that is dealing with a profession. The word 'professional' occurs in phrases such as 'professional training and education', 'to work professionally', 'professional standards', 'professionally competent'. The inclusion of the function of journalism and the challenges it faces can be inferred from the third aim which, as was seen, also features in the course outline:

*to produce journalists who are multi-skilled, critically aware and have a sophisticated understanding of the place, effect, cultural context and importance of journalism in society. (p. 8)*

Ethics and new technologies are mentioned specifically in the aims, and an intercultural dimension is assured in the aims and objectives through the language component. At the same time, however, the aims are not only concerned with journalism. The first aim states that the course is concerned with the 'practical, theoretical and critical issues of both journalism and language studies', and there

are other references to the language component providing a wide range of career options.

The conclusion must be that this text is more nuanced in its attitude to the status of journalism than seemed to be the case from the previous analyses. It acknowledges the different views on journalism and leaves open the possibility of graduates having legitimate aspirations that do not include journalism.

## **7.7 Concept of journalism education**

### **7.7.1 Academic or vocational?**

#### *DCU*

The 1992 DCU document begins by arguing for the setting up of the course on the basis of the need for trained graduates in journalism, quoting from the report of Journalism Training Committee (1989) and citing the university's participation in various European journalism training activities in support of the programme. The impetus therefore would seem to have been for a vocational course, a preparation for entry to journalism. However, later in the introductory section, the use of the phrase 'journalism as an academic discipline' indicates a more academic tendency. In this context, it is claimed that a journalism degree is equally suitable for those interested in pursuing academic studies at a higher level.

The aims and objectives are predominantly vocationally oriented. Just one sentence in each talks of further study and other career options. The vocational basis of the course is reinforced in the section entitled 'Need for the course' which focuses on the need for a skilled workforce in journalism. Under course structure, the needs of the industry are again referred to but also:

*the demands of school-leavers for a dynamic and broadly-based undergraduate programme combining academic and practical elements in the area of journalism and related disciplines. (p. 7)*

This provides an indication that meeting the needs of industry on the one hand and the needs of students on the other is making the course face in two ways at once. One makes the course vocational, specifically concerned with journalism; the other



boasts the more broadly based, academic nature of the programme which will allow the students develop academically and give them more flexibility in their future choices.

The 1996 document more clearly expresses its focus as journalistic in some ways. It begins:

*The programme is designed to produce graduates who have a broad understanding of the place and practice of journalism in national and international settings. (p. 2)*

It describes the course structure as providing 'a foundation in the professional practice and academic disciplines which underpin the study of journalism'. Nevertheless, it also states:

*The BAJ offers a broadly-based education from a range of disciplines consonant with the career objectives of students and their individual talents and interests. (p. 2)*

This indicates a programme open to many outcomes, including the academic, as is reinforced by the final aim of '[p]roducing graduates capable of further study and research in journalism and related disciplines'.

The vocational bias of the course is found in the course modules as we have seen but is different from what seemed to be revealed in the initial analysis of the core text from DCU. There are elements of both the vocational and the academic in all three texts analysed, but the balance has been different, indicating an unresolved issue in relation to the course.

### *DIT*

The first section in the self-study document is a historic review of journalism in DIT which leaves in no doubt the vocational orientation of the course. It traces its origins back to the two year skills-based programme which was then developed into a degree programme 'fostering an analytical and critical reflection on journalism as part of professional competence'. The discussion paper on 'The Development of Journalism Education' is predominantly about the debates on the

nature of journalism and the education and training of journalists as will have been apparent from the analysis so far. The vocational nature of the course comes across strongly in the following statement:

*The degree of Journalism Studies and a Language will prepare students for immediate employment in journalism using any platform. It will educate them to be thoughtful and reflective journalists and equip them to be autonomous professionals in the best sense of that word, able to contribute and improve journalism standards as well as be leaders within the profession, promoting journalism's best qualities. (p. 8)*

The course aims and objectives support this vocational approach and, apart from the language component offering the possibility of 'a wide range of career options', are focussed on providing a preparation for the professional practice of journalism.

The analyses so far have borne out the strong vocational orientation of the DIT course. This document provides the background to this orientation and shows how education for employment has always been the motivation for journalism education in DIT.

### **7.7.2 Knowledge-based or practice-based?**

#### *DCU*

As already stated, given that the DCU programme is not exclusively vocational, it may be somewhat invidious to match it to any model of professional education. The DCU documents nowhere discuss or refer to these models. On the basis of how the course is described, however, it appears to slot more easily into the knowledge-based model, as was the conclusion from examining the course outline and modules.

The course in 1992 is described as:

*a dynamic and broadly-based undergraduate programme combining academic and practical elements in the area of journalism and related disciplines. (p. 7)*

The three strands comprise the disciplines and skills required, listed as the content, the context and practical skills. The former two comprise the disciplines required for the programme, and as is typical of a 'knowledge-based' course, these come before skills in the text, and indeed, the first two years of the course are to be primarily devoted to them. There is no mention and no indication that these elements are integrated with the skills in professional practice.

The 1996 document likewise shows no evidence of integration, but practice has moved to a more central position. The course structure is still composed of the same three elements. Media practice is now listed first, and moreover, it, together with the content strand, has become the core of the programme to be followed by all students, whereas the contextual subjects are all listed as options. However, by 2003-4 some theoretical modules were core subjects as was seen in the analysis of the course modules.

### *DIT*

Although there is much comment in the DIT document on the discussion in the EU and particularly in the US on the place and nature of professional journalism education, it is noteworthy that this discussion makes no reference to professional education in general, to the debates and curriculum models available. Therefore, as with the DCU course, aligning the DIT course with one of the normal models found in professional education is done through examining the course description.

The document is very clear on the basis of the programme. It has been developed 'according to values that journalists should adhere' (sic), rather than the perceived industry needs or the needs of a general media course. Following Splichal and Sparks (1994) and Hunter (1982), it could be argued that the emphasis on values does not necessarily indicate a professional course. Values can also be associated with a skills type course which the DIT document criticises. However, the professional nature of the course is underpinned by the expansion of the argument within the document. It states:

*Journalists have to be educated so they can understand the impact of journalism, provide social analysis, report complex events and issues*

*quickly and with confidence, and at the same time be aware of their responsibilities to the society they serve'. (p. 7)*

A curriculum built on these arguments will take the form of a professional programme in which knowledge, skills and understanding are brought to the practice of journalism. In other words, the discussion confirms the so-called practice-based nature of the course with practice at the centre and other areas integrated with this practice.

### **7.7.3 The Barnett, Parry and Coate model**

#### *DCU*

With regard to the 'knowledge, action, self' model of Barnett et al., DCU's 1992 document confirms what seemed apparent in the course outline, that the emphasis is on knowledge. The course aims and objectives are oriented towards knowledge with little attention given to skills and hardly any elements to do with the awareness and understanding that would be associated with 'self'. One element in the course structure, the content, is described as 'dealing with informed and critical awareness of the content of journalism' but not the context or skills. In the 1996 document, there is more of a balance between the three domains, with practice being brought more to the fore and an emphasis on providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the practice of journalism. Such understanding is brought to the fore in the aims and objectives. It also appears in the first introductory sentence and is included in the first aim listed. The relatively equal weighting given to knowledge, action and self equates with Barnett et al.'s model of a professional course, but the integration associated with professional courses is not indicated in the document.

#### *DIT*

The analysis of the documents from DIT indicates a certain change in the programme vis-à-vis the template of Barnett et al. The outline of the course indicated a programme with practice at the centre which appeared to be action based. However, the self-study document specifies that the programme is to be built on the values in journalism thus centring on the self, which ties in with bringing journalism closer to the humanities. The strong integration of all course

elements, which is advocated, continues to identify the programme as one concerned with professional practice.

The ambiguity in the definition of the two programmes between vocational and academic and, in particular, between being strictly journalism and being open to other professional areas means that the flexibility inherent in Barnett et al. is again most useful.

#### **7.7.4 Models of journalism education**

The texts may not indicate awareness of models or issues in professional education generally but, in striking fashion, both sets of documents indicate knowledge of the models of journalism education; that is, the professional model versus the integrated model, or the American compared with the more European approach.

##### *DCU*

The DCU 1992 document refers only to Europe, and situates its course in relation to the harmonisation of European journalism. As is explained, at the time the course was being developed, DCU was involved in journalism projects with European partners for its postgraduate course, one of its lecturers serving as president of EJTA.

From the analysis, it was seen that DCU places journalism practice within the framework of communications theory. It makes less of a distinction between journalism and other areas of work within the media, and makes fewer claims for the professional status of journalism. It also describes journalism practice mainly in terms of skills. These qualities match those to be found in the integrated or European model of journalism education (Fröhlich and Holz-Bacha, 2003c).

##### *DIT*

The professional and integrated models are discussed in considerable detail in the DIT discussion paper which comes down strongly on the side of the American model. The stress on journalism as a distinct area of professional practice and the rejection of communications theory as the foundation for journalism theory reflect this bias. Similarly, the approving references to the US system explain the position

of languages in the programme. Languages are present on the course partly to ensure a good level of general education, as is ensured in the US by students following a range of modules from the humanities and social sciences, independently from their journalism courses. The double honours degrees in some UK colleges where journalism is one of the subjects to be studied are described approvingly as closest to the US system. Indeed, languages on the DIT course in one instance are talked of as one half of an honours degree. The possibility of journalism combining in a similar way with other disciplines such as law and business is mentioned in terms of future developments. Yet, this is inconsistent with the details of the course modules in the first half of this chapter, which show a drawing back from this position. Languages now appear to occupy approximately one third of the programme and are integrated with journalism in a way not visualised in the original planning, indicating once again, the difficulties and conflicts experienced in putting together the programme.

The debates within journalism education thus appear to have significantly shaped the models of the two courses in DCU and DIT. The differences in the concepts of journalism and journalism education which can be deduced from the course documentation reflect quite closely the two basic models available. The inconsistencies and ambiguities may be due to the tensions within these models themselves but also to the educational and journalistic practices which provide the immediate context of the two programmes. These practices, in other words, the social practice, form the third level of analysis of this study.

## Chapter 8

### Level Three Analysis: Social Practice

#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter considers texts relevant to the social context in which the journalism courses have been produced. The texts in the first section relate to the journalistic context, nationally and internationally, which has influenced journalism and journalism training. The second set of texts relates to the educational environment within the two colleges, and the national and international framework which has shaped the policy and structure of higher education in Ireland in recent times. A list of all documents used is given in Appendix 4.

#### 8.2 Concept of journalism

The texts relevant to the concept of journalism and journalism education come from the colleges, from the academic associations relevant to journalism and media education, from professional organisations representing journalists and employers, and from legislation and reports from national government, from UNESCO and the EU. The OECD, influential in educational matters, is not concerned with journalism.

##### 8.2.1 DIT, DCU

*Structures of DIT, DCU.*

From the websites of DCU and DIT, the respective structures within which journalism education is located are given as follows:

<b>DIT</b>	<b>DCU</b>
Faculty of Applied Arts	Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
School of Media	School of Communications

Although not appearing on the website, it is important to note that DIT's School of Media is subdivided into two departments 'that profile two distinct and identifiable disciplines or subject-based units within the wider media field' (School of Media,

2002). These are: the Department of Media Technologies and the Department of Communications and Journalism. The journalism course is obviously located within the latter department which is 'focussed on journalism and communications as areas of study that are professionally based and/or academic in nature' (School of Media, 2002). DCU has no such sub-division within the school. This reflects DCU's flatter overall structure which does not sub-divide into units below the level of school and is similar to the structure in all Irish universities. DIT's school/department structure is the norm in the IT (institute of technology) sector.

The school/departmental structure in DIT therefore both allows and confirms the greater separation between journalism and other media areas and the greater emphasis on its professional standing. DCU's structure on the other hand, allows for the greater integration of journalism into the general media area and the lesser focus on its professional standing.

#### *Mission statements of schools faculties and colleges.*

##### *DIT*

The brief mission statement of the DIT School of Media gives little indication of the ideas that inform its activities. References are to its media courses in general, without subdivision or distinction between them. 'Journalism' does not appear other than in the listing of courses.

The faculty statement is more expansive and illuminating. It divides the faculty's activities into two groups, those under the umbrella of the 'Centre for the Visual, Performing and Media Arts in Ireland', and those under the heading 'Humanities and Social Sciences at DIT'. The School of Media is categorised under the first heading. The aim of the 'Centre for the Visual, Performing and Media Arts in Ireland' is defined as 'seeking to foster an inter-artistic and interdisciplinary creativity' and its students are claimed to be 'extremely well placed to play an active role in the development of the creative/cultural industries'. This hardly describes journalism. The other category, 'Humanities and Social Sciences at DIT', is described very differently:



*We emphasise learners as practitioners, problem solvers and critical citizens with an active role to play in public life and helping people understand their world.*

This statement is very relevant to journalism and its role and if journalism stood more independently within the faculty it would no doubt have been placed in this grouping. As journalism is subsumed within the School of Media, these ideas are, to some extent, lost as far as journalism is concerned.

### *DCU*

The message of welcome to the School of Communications in DCU is quite short also. There are two brief references to journalism, firstly, in the phrase: 'you read them in the newspapers' when listing the various media where its graduates work, and secondly, in the listing of journalism as one of the three areas of its teaching along with communications and multimedia. Otherwise, all statements use the term communications or media. (It should be noted that the terms communications and media are in most circumstances used interchangeably in both institutions, communications the older term tending to be replaced by 'media' in more recent documents).

At faculty level likewise, there is no specific mention of journalism apart from in the list of the programmes. All programmes are described as being interdisciplinary and international, and the faculty's niche strengths are listed as the media, interculturalism and international governance. Journalism fits well into this description. The faculty is smaller and less diverse than that of DIT, encompassing three schools compared with DIT's six, easing the establishment of a common faculty framework.

In the statement at university level, communications is listed as one of the areas in which the university sought to fulfil the national requirement for skills from its establishment in 1980. In DIT, there is no mention of media, communications or journalism at institute level.

The structures and mission statements from the two institutions therefore reflect the understanding of journalism that is apparent from the courses. In DIT, there is a movement towards regarding it as a distinct area but with some confusion and lack of consistency as one moves upwards in the structures. DCU maintains the one approach in categorising it as part of communications/media more generally.

### 8.2.2 National and international education bodies

To move to the national level, it is interesting to look at how the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) has dealt with journalism. It must be noted that as HETAC has no direct remit over DCU or DIT as both have awarding powers in their own right, its influence is not determining but is indicative of thinking in educational circles in the country. HETAC (2004) has adopted the ISCED, the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO, 1997), which makes a clear distinction between journalism and other media areas. In its three level system of subject classification, journalism and media production are classified thus:

Level 1	Social Sciences, Business and Law	Level 1	Humanities and Arts;
Level 2	Journalism and information;	Level 2	Arts;
Level 3	Combined journalism and Information; journalism and reporting; Library, information, archive.	Level 3	Audiovisual techniques and media production

Thus journalism and media are completely separate, being categorised differently at all three levels. Journalism is classified with social sciences rather than with the humanities. The subjects normally linked to journalism divide between the humanities and social sciences in the classification. Languages, history, philosophy and ethics come under humanities, whereas politics, economics and sociology are under social and behavioural sciences.

According to Andersson and Olsson's (1999) manual on ISCED, the rationale for the classification is the subject content approach: programmes are primarily classified according to the main subject content of the programme, rather than the personal aims of the students or the intended occupation. The subject content of journalism compared with audiovisual techniques and media production can be seen in their respective definitions:

*Field 321: Journalism and Reporting*

*is the study of the theory and practices of journalism/reporting as part of the field of mass communication. Journalism and reporting is about the wording and content of messages. It comprises news reporting, writing commentaries and feature stories of public interest etc. Programmes with the following main content are classified here:*

*Broadcast journalism  
Information (wording and content)  
Journalism  
Mass communication (wording and content)  
News reporting. (p. 24)*

Specifically excluded from journalism are the techniques for mass communication and the study of layout and publishing design, both of which come under audiovisual techniques and media production:

*Field 231: Audio-visual techniques and media production is*

*the study of techniques and skills to produce books, newspapers, radio/tv production, film/video production, recorded music production and graphic reproduction. Includes printing, publishing lay-out and design. Study of journalism (wording and content of messages) is excluded from this field and included in field 321 'Journalism and reporting'. (p.19)*

This division of production techniques from journalism and reporting is problematic as nowadays journalists are required to have the basic production skills of whichever media they are working in: for example, editing and layout for print, recording and editing of sound and images for broadcast media. One might interpret this as reflecting an old-fashioned view of the journalist who does not get involved in technical tasks. The other more likely explanation comes from the

origin of this system of classification. It was devised for UNESCO, an organisation that places considerable emphasis on education as a preparing people for life as citizens in a democratic society and considers journalism as very important in this light, as will be further examined when looking at international bodies.

If the ISCED system might be seen as an influence in separating journalism from other media areas, there are other classifications that act as a counterbalance. The UK Quality Assurance Agency has nothing specific for journalism in its subject benchmarking but includes it in the subject area 'Communication, media, film and cultural studies' (QAA, 2002). Statements about this large field are so general that it is impossible to discern any particular distinctiveness or specialist knowledge, skills or theory mandatory for journalism.

Likewise, amongst the Thematic Networks established by the EU under the Socrates programme, there is one network only to cover the communications/media area including journalism, the European Network for Communications Education (European Commission, 1998). This and the British classification, fits with the so-called European model of journalism education in which, it will be recalled, it is integrated with communications theory.

### **8.3.2 Academic and professional associations**

#### *Academic and educational associations*

The most directly relevant academic or educational association is the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) of which DCU and DIT are long time members, and which is referred to in the DCU course document. The aim of this body is:

*to stimulate European co-operation in journalism education and mid-career training between non-profit centres, and to develop a professional approach to journalism training'. (www.ejta.nl)*

For an institution to be eligible for membership of EJTA, the following criteria apply amongst others:

- a clear distinction must exist between the training of journalists and other forms of mass communication
- Recognition of the new member by the profession (both employers and journalists)
- The training centre does not depend on a political party or any group involving social, political or ideological discrimination
- The training centre does not operate on a commercial basis.

Therefore, this body of journalism educators is very clear on marking out journalism as distinct from other areas of media practice and media studies. Furthermore, it clearly indicates that journalism is seen as a profession, and as an activity that must be independent of any vested interest, whether political or economic.

A similar orientation is found in the Association for Journalism Education (AJE) which provides a forum for journalism educators in higher education in the UK and Ireland. AJE likewise strongly defends the specificity of journalism education, but without referring to its professional standing, reflecting the difficulty over its status in Britain and Ireland. Given that both DCU and DIT joined this organisation in 2003, it is unlikely to have had much influence when the course documents were being written.

A third journalistic body that both colleges have had contact with is Journet. JourNet or GlobJourNet was set up in the late 1990s by UNESCO as a 'Global Network for Education in Journalism'. Its objective is to expand and improve journalism and media practices worldwide. Membership is open to all journalism schools and institutions that adhere to the basic ideals of freedom of expression and the principles laid down in UNESCO's statutes.

It seems in the same mould as EJTA and AJE, having UNESCO's clear political purpose behind it. Yet a certain ambivalence can be seen in the inclusion of journalism and media practices in its remit, not journalism alone. Likewise, the first JourNet conference in early 2004 had as its theme 'professional media education'. Thus, once again, the uncertainty over the journalism/media distinction is apparent.

Apart from these associations concerned with practice, the more general academic associations on the media include journalism in their remit. The two most important are the International Association for Media and Communications Research (IAMCR) and the International Association of Communications (ICA). ICA has no explicit division to deal with journalism but it features in the divisions in mass communication, in intercultural and development communication, political communication, communication law and policy, language and social interaction. IAMCR includes journalism in its section on professional education – and the theme of its 2004 conference was 'Communication and Democracy'. DCU and DIT are both members of these associations, DCU hosting conferences for both in the 1990s. It tends to be lecturers in the more academic areas from the two institutions who participate in both these associations.

Currently there are no active academic associations in either journalism or the wider communications/media field in Ireland. The psychological, linguistic and in particular, sociological associations deal with media themes from time to time. The Cleraun Media Conference, organised annually under the auspices of the conservative Catholic body, Opus Dei, focuses mainly on journalism with practitioners and academics from the fields of history, philosophy and politics as well as the media.

### *Professional associations*

#### *NUJ*

The NUJ has influence not only from contacts, formal and informal, between the union and those organising journalism education programmes but from the continued membership of the union by lecturers in journalism practice, and the associate NUJ membership of journalism students.

Their membership of the NUJ marks journalists as distinct from other media workers who, if unionised, are likely to be members of Ireland's largest trade union, SIPTU (Scientific, Industrial, and Professional Trade Union). To recall, the NUJ, based in London, has an Irish section with its own executive and considerable autonomy. The NUJ boasts that it is 'among the biggest and best-established journalists' unions in the world' ([www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)). Its members encompass journalists working on all media platforms, including editorial work in broadcasting and, controversially, in public relations. It excludes those performing more general media production work in technical areas and creative, management roles in sound, television and film.

The tension between journalism as a trade or a profession is evident in the operation of the NUJ. The NUJ in Ireland states:

*The union seeks to defend and promote the professional and financial interests and welfare of its members, to promote the principles and practice of journalism, to defend and promote freedom of the media, speech and information and trade union principles and organisation. ([www.nuj.ie](http://www.nuj.ie))*

The general web-site of the NUJ, covering Britain and Ireland states: 'The NUJ is a trade union, but it has elements too of the professional association' ([www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)). In line with its professional role, it has had, since 1936, a code of conduct to which all its members must adhere. Since 1988, an ethics committee has been charged with enforcing the code. This committee has also issued policy papers on 'The Public Interest' and on 'Media Freedom'. The use of 'media freedom' rather than 'freedom of the press' in the title of the latter paper shows the impossibility of avoiding the term media, of separating journalism from media.

At international level, the NUJ is active through the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) which represents about 500,000 affiliated members. Like the NUJ, it has two sides to its activities supporting journalists 'when they are fighting for their industrial and professional rights'. The information on the IFJ web-site is dominated by the more professional side of its activities. Its Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists sets the professional standards for journalists. This is quite similar to the NUJ's code of ethics, ending with a

statement that, within the law, the journalist shall only recognise the jurisdiction of colleagues with regard to professional matters, to the exclusion of government and others. The IFJ supports issues of long-standing concern to journalists such as the protection of sources and access to information through freedom of information laws. Moreover, it is alert to the challenges to journalism from globalisation, information technology and commercialisation and argues for human rights, labour rights and quality in journalism to confront these challenges. In its declaration of principles, its elaboration of the role of journalists and the threats to this role, the IFJ is more focussed on journalism as a profession compared with the NUJ. It speaks for journalists within the UN system, including UNESCO, and within the international trade union movement.

### *Management*

The managers have direct contact with DCU and DIT through providing employment and work experience for students. Individuals participate through guest lectures, membership of validation, appointment and advisory boards. There is no managerial body that represents all media in Ireland.

The National Newspapers of Ireland (NNI) represents the national print media. The National Association of Regional Newspapers (NARN) which has replaced the Provincial Newspapers Association (PNI) which was involved in the setting up of the original Rathmines course, is dedicated to selling advertising space in its members' publications in a cooperative manner (Horgan, 2001) rather than wider policy issues. The NNI promotes the commercial interests of its members but also has a professional side to its activities. It has published a 'Code of Practice on Privacy' (NNI, 1997) which provides a clear definition of public interest and is intended to serve as a mechanism of self-regulation for the press. The *Irish Times Style Book* (2000) illustrates how such a code is translated into the house practice of a particular newspaper.

NNI is affiliated to the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), the international representative body of news publishers, executives and editors. Like the IFJ, WAN is active in promoting press freedom, but is also concerned with the economic



development of the industry. It has formal consultative status at the Council of Europe, the UN and UNESCO.

There is no overall representative association for broadcasting. This may be because RTE, the national public service broadcaster, was the only broadcaster until the late 1980s. An association for the independent sector has been set up, Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI), but has not to date produced any relevant policy documents. However, the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) established in its present form by the *Broadcasting Act, 2001*, has the functions of establishing codes and standards for programming, and, indeed, of supporting training and development in the independent sector. It is important to note that broadcasting is more tightly controlled by legislation than the print press. All broadcasting, including news and current affairs, has legal obligations and restrictions that do not exist for the print press as is examined later.

The *RTE Programme-Makers Guidelines 2002* provides a code of practice that applies to journalists as well as to other programme makers. It rehearses the normal values of journalism – fairness, accuracy, impartiality, independence from all vested interests, the right to privacy. It also declares that freedom of political debate is at the core of a democratic society. It is more comprehensive than the NUJ code in that it has to ensure compliance with relevant broadcasting legislation and to deal with certain issues that arise in live broadcasting.

The BCI in 2002 published a report on training for local radio which offers some insights into its concept of journalism. It does not refer to journalism as such but to the ‘news, sport (sic) and current affairs function’ in radio. The ‘output’ required from this function is the provision of accurate information, quality reports, sports commentaries and scripting. There is no reference to its public service role or democratic function, nor is there any mention of ethics. Journalism appears to be seen as not qualitatively different from other areas of radio production. Such an attitude is linked to its focus on assuring the commercial success of independent broadcasting which from this report would appear to be its only concern. However, its obligation to set codes and standards of broadcasting may refine its approach.

By June 2004, guidelines for coverage of elections and referenda were in place but no overall guidelines or codes of conduct have yet been developed.

These documents from the unions and management show the current role and status of journalism in Ireland, and the values ascribed to it by its practitioners. They are relevant in showing the understanding of journalism on which journalism education is built. The unions and the newspaper management agree on journalism as a distinct function, compared with broadcasting where it is subsumed into general media production. Within the unions, journalism is treated as both a trade and a profession. Within the newspaper management, its commercial and its public service role are both given attention. Commercialism appears dominant in the independent broadcasting sector but this may be partly the result of the difficulties experienced in establishing and maintaining the independent broadcasting companies. The further development of the work of the BCI may change the situation.

#### **8.2.4 Legislation, government reports on journalism**

At a more fundamental level, the concept of journalism is shaped by the recognition of its role in both the Constitution and subsequent legislation. Article 40. 6. 1 of *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, 1937 (the Constitution of Ireland) reads:

*'The State guarantees liberty for the exercise of the following rights, subject to public order and morality: –*

- 1. The right of citizens to express freely their convictions and opinions. The education of public opinion being, however, a matter of grave import to the common good, the State shall endeavour to ensure that organs of public opinion, such as the radio, the press, the cinema, while preserving their rightful liberty of expression, including criticism of Government policy, shall not be used to undermine public order or morality or the authority of the State.*

Freedom of expression is thus guaranteed but this freedom is circumscribed for the press. Other relevant articles of the constitution are article 40.3 which guarantees the right to one's good name and therefore is the basis for the law of defamation and article 34. 1 which allows reporting of court proceedings. The right to freedom of expression is further guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Despite its initial constitutional recognition, there has been little legislation enacted concerning the press in general, apart from the long-standing law on defamation (1961), and the more recent provisions on freedom of information (1997, 2003). New legislation on privacy, defamation and press regulation had been promised for the end of 2004, to include the setting up of a statutory press council (Coulter, 2004). Such a council has been much discussed in the recent years.

If there is little direct legislation concerning the print press, this is not the case with broadcasting. RTE is governed by the *Broadcasting Authority Act* (1960), section 18 of which specifies that news and current affairs be covered 'objectively and impartially and without any expression of the Authority's own views'. This was amended in the *Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act* (1976) (section 3) with more precision and detail, including the requirement of fairness, and prohibiting any incitement to crime or encroachment on the privacy of an individual. In legislation for independent broadcasting, the *Radio and Television Act* (1988), lists the values required of news more expansively, including objectivity, impartiality and fairness, respect of privacy, and without offence to good taste or decency or without promoting crime or undermining the state (section 9). Moreover, the act requires that a certain percentage of broadcasting time be given to news and current affairs, twenty per cent in the case of radio (section 9); for television, the requirement is 'a reasonable proportion of news and current affairs programmes' (section 18 (d)).

Both the RTE acts and the *Radio and Television Act* place wide responsibilities on national broadcasters that apply to all programmes broadcast, not only to the news. For example, the earlier parts of section 18 of the 1988 Act, require the broadcaster to:

*(a) be responsive to the interests and concerns of the whole community, be mindful of the need for understanding and peace within the whole island of Ireland, ensure that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the culture of the people of the whole island of Ireland, and have special regard for the elements which distinguish that culture and in particular for the Irish language;*

- (b) uphold the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression;
- (c) have regard to the need for the formation of public awareness and understanding of the values and traditions of countries other than the State, including in particular those of such countries which are members of the European Community.

Thus journalism is part of a more general media function in broadcasting legislation, all aspects of the media having a certain public service role, an obligation towards democracy within the country and towards multiculturalism without, this latter point now outdated by the recent flow of immigration.

One piece of legislation that applies to the print as well as the audio-visual press is the *Competition Act* (2002) which regulates company acquisitions and mergers. Section 23 of this essentially business oriented legislation recognises the special role of journalism by placing particular restrictions on mergers of media companies in order to strengthen the indigenous organisations and to ensure diversity of views within the media. Although applying to all media, this measure was a response to the *Report of the Commission on the Newspaper Industry* (Department of Enterprise and Employment, 1996). The report sets out the role and function of newspapers in Irish society more comprehensively than in any other official document. Its primary contribution to society is defined in section 9 as 'its duty and its ability to reflect a sense of national identity'.

The role of the media in reinforcing national identity has long been a concern in Ireland for nationalistic reasons (Lee, 1997). However, one of the main reasons for the setting up of the commission was unease at the number of British newspapers being sold in the country and fears of the take-over of ownership of Irish newspapers by foreign media businesses. Therefore it was in the interests of the industry to stress the role of the press in reflecting national identity. The more usual democratic function is included but given less attention, along with acknowledgement of the newspaper's function as a source of education and entertainment. Section 10 of the report highlights the contribution of the press to the economy as is to be expected in an industry-oriented document. There is no mention of the status of journalism as a profession or otherwise.

A very different style and approach is found in the Green Paper on broadcasting which was published in the previous year, *Active or Passive? Broadcasting in the Future Tense* (Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, 1995). The paper discusses globalisation and new technologies, and their economic, cultural and political impact. It refers to UNESCO's work and is conscious of the possibility of neo-colonialism through the audio-visual industries. Chapter three is given over to discussion of the media and the public sphere. It calls for the establishment of broadcasting policies that 'promote citizenship rather than passive consumerism' and expresses the need for a 'democratic communications philosophy'. It claims that the role of the public sphere is fulfilled nowadays by the quality press and by public service broadcasting. In chapter four, there is particular concern lest commercial pressures prevent news and current affairs providing the comprehensive, in depth and impartial programming needed to support national debate.

The Green Paper was published by the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht which had responsibility for the policy elements of broadcasting. Its minister, Michael D. Higgins, a former university lecturer in sociology, had a great interest in this area and a different approach to that of Richard Bruton, his counterpart in the Department of Enterprise and Employment, responsible for the report on the newspaper industry. It can be seen from the two that a quite developed concept of journalism was being publicly discussed and debated in Ireland when the present journalism undergraduate degrees were developed. It was a time when such issues were in the public domain to an unusual degree.

### **8.2.5 International bodies concerned with journalism**

UNESCO is the main international governmental body whose work impinges on journalism. It has been mentioned in connection with the IFJ and WAN and with the classification of journalism as a subject field in the ISCED system. UNESCO's overall goal is 'to build peace in the minds of men' (UNESCO, 2003a). Its communication section, one of its five areas of action, is concerned among other things with access to and empowerment of civil society. Internationally it promotes freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right and has a

range of measures to support governments and media in this. The altruistic side of journalism is well to the fore in UNESCO's work. Its democratic function is being defended from the modern challenges of globalisation and technology, as well as the old challenges of poverty, dictatorship and oppression. 'Press' is the term used in the UNESCO text rather than journalism, placed in the wider field of communication and information. UNESCO is not concerned with the status of journalism – there is no mention of it as a profession. The arguments for its importance and autonomy come from concern for human rights.

Within the EU, the recent enlargement process from its beginnings brought to the fore the civic role of the press. The Copenhagen Declaration from the European Council meeting in June, 1993, listed the political and economic criteria that applicant countries must meet prior to accession. The first of these is the political criterion defined as 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect and protection of minorities' (<http://europa.eu.int/comm>). A free press is seen as necessary to this criterion, to which purpose the EU has been funding programmes to modernise journalism and journalism education in Central and Eastern Europe, for example, currently in Bulgaria, and in preparation in the Ukraine. The EU has for a long time supported journalism training within the EU through supporting the European Journalism Centre in Maastricht and EJTA.

What emerges from this analysis of contextual documents on journalism is quite a mixed picture. As is to be expected, within education, there is a mixture of views on journalism, its distinctiveness or not from other media functions, and its status. Education after all reflects the situation in the outside world. The educational and professional bodies concerned with journalism quite vehemently assert its separateness, are ambiguous over its status, but clear on its role and its values. At international level in particular, journalism bodies concentrate on its role in democracy and the current challenges it faces.

The role of journalism is recognised in Irish legislation but more to restrict than to expand and protect it. Nevertheless, in the last decade there has been considerable

debate about journalism and media stemming from various government documents. At international level likewise, journalism's role is clearly recognised and supported, even if journalism and media are sometimes spoken of as one, and no attention is paid to its status. UNESCO and the EU are primarily concerned with developing countries and countries emerging from the communist era where a free press is seen as important in building democratic societies.

Two points worth noting are firstly the lack of reference to the commercial side of journalism, except in reports from the newspaper industry and from BCI. Where commercialism is mentioned elsewhere, for example, by the NUJ and UNESCO, it is in terms of its pernicious effect and the tendency to misuse the press in the interests of media owners. Secondly, while journalism's role is generally linked to the functioning of democratic society, it is given a somewhat different twist by the Irish newspaper managers and to some extent within broadcasting legislation where it is seen primarily as enabling and sustaining national identity.

### **8.3 Concepts of education**

The concepts of education contained in the course documents will be traced back through texts from the two institutions, from the academic and professional associations, from government, and from the EU, OECD and UNESCO.

#### **8.3.1 DIT, DCU**

From the institutions, the texts to be analysed consist of the school, faculty and college's general information texts, mission statements, president's messages and historical outlines, their quality assurance procedures, and the statutory acts under which they are established as institutions of higher education. Unless otherwise stated, these texts are available on the websites of DCU and DIT.

#### *DIT*

The DIT School of Media short web-site entry makes clear that the type of education provided is vocational in orientation. The last sentence reads:

*With an established reputation as one of Ireland's foremost media education centres serving the media industries for over fifty years,*

*DIT is the ideal place to start for a career in this ever expanding field.*

The Faculty of Applied Arts web page states that it aims to prepare students 'for professional life in Irish and European social, economic and public life'. It further specifies the nature of its programmes as linking professional practice with 'critical theory and new technology'.

The general DIT mission statement on the other hand is quite non-specific in its references to the type of education it provides, stressing the comprehensive nature of its provision. There is no ambivalence, however, in the president's message of welcome. He talks of DIT's 'unashamedly vocational mission', of DIT's commitment 'to provide courses for careers'.

The vocational remit is further bolstered by the short history of DIT given on the web, its origins tracing back through the six colleges of higher education formerly under the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee, to the origins of technical education in Ireland in the 1880s.

The quality assurance procedures for DIT reflect a vocational orientation. The composition of validation panels for course programmes includes two external members, one of whom is to be a 'professional or industrial practitioner', the other, an educationalist. Amongst the background information required is 'the market demand for a course', 'job placement of graduates' and 'feedback from employers'. In preparing the self-study, the course committee consults with current students, graduates of the course, industrialists and business people, and government and other external organisations, as appropriate. Information on ongoing relationships with professional and academic bodies is also required in the documentation. The panels are to enquire as to whether the graduates of a course will possess appropriate 'knowledge, skills and competences', not knowledge alone as might be expected in a purely academic institute.

Vocational education is thus the norm within DIT as is further indicated in the titles of the six faculties:



Faculty of Applied Arts

Faculty of Engineering

Faculty of Business

Faculty of Science

Faculty of the Built Environment

Faculty of Tourism and Food

### *DCU*

On the DCU website, the introduction to the School of Communications does not overtly mention vocationalism or careers or work opportunities, but one can deduce from the first sentence that its programmes are 'useful' ones:

*You hear them on radio, you read them in the newspapers, you see the products of their work on television and in Internet media. Our graduates speak for themselves. And they do so right across the full range of media, and in many other areas of public life and of employment.*

The programmes are described as 'well-designed, intellectually demanding and relevant'; the staff is said to have extensive academic and professional experience. What is indicated is a mixture, more than in DIT, of the academic and the vocational. At faculty level, the dean's message is similarly inclusive of both the academic and the vocational. The work of the students and academics in the faculty is described as 'observing, commenting on and changing the way that an increasingly diverse Irish society works and understands itself'.

The president's welcome defines DCU as a 'place of learning' like any university but nevertheless defines its unique focus as aiming to develop high quality, high value learning within the wider setting of Ireland's economic and social needs. This vocationalism is further stressed in his assertion that 'students gain direct experience of industry', that employers constantly affirm their preference for DCU graduates 'when searching for future high achievers'.

The difference between DCU and other universities is further clarified in the information provided about the founding in 1980 of the National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin, which was to become DCU in 1989. Its remit was to fulfil the national requirement for a highly trained workforce with skills in specific areas including communications, and to act as an agent for change in its local

community. The listing of the innovations it brought to the Irish university sector, the introduction of work placement (INTRA) to degree programmes, interdisciplinary degrees, collaborative research with industry, point to an instrumental approach in its concept of learning and education.

As in DIT, such an instrumental approach is apparent in the names of its five faculties:

Faculty of Engineering and Computing

Faculty of Science and Health

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

DCU Business School

Joint Faculty of Education Studies

With regard to quality assurance procedures, the review panels for its programmes and schools include one member 'from a cognate industry or organisation'. However, there are two other external members who are academics, compared with one academic, one non-academic in DIT. In the course of the review there is little specific requirement for those responsible to link in with industry but the possibility is there. The group may meet employers as well as students. The programmes must be 'relevant' and take into account 'anticipated developments'. These terms could be applied to industry. The DCU QA processes thus allow for contact with industry, employers and professions but do not prescribe them, allowing more flexibility and the possibility that such contact may not be relevant or necessary.

These details confirm that both DCU and DIT are concerned with vocational education, with DIT having a long tradition, originally in technician and apprentice-type courses and DCU more recently set up to provide higher education with a specific instrumental remit. DIT's stated commitment to professional education and to linking practice with critical theory and new technology fits the practice-based model of professional education. On the other hand, the statement from the dean in DCU that its programmes are concerned with 'observing, commenting on and changing' how Irish society works and understands itself, is more inclusive and flexible. It allows for programmes that are vocational or academic, which seemed to be the case within the journalism programme also. The relevance of Barnett et al.'s model for these programmes is confirmed.

The matter can be further examined in the statutes which govern the two institutions, the *Dublin Institute of Technology Act 1992*, and the three acts relating to DCU, *National Institute of Higher Education Act, 1980*, *Dublin City University Act, 1989* and the *Universities Act of 1997*.

#### *Acts of Establishment*

The *Dublin Institute of Technology Act (1992)* established DIT as ‘an institute of education and training’ (section 3) whose principal function is clearly defined:

*to provide vocational and technical education and training for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State. (section 5)*

For DCU, *The National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin, Act, 1980* set up ‘an institute of higher education’ (section 2) and defined its functions very generally as providing degree level courses, diploma level courses and certificate level courses (section 4 (a)). There is no reference to training or vocational education in the act. The *Dublin City University Act (1989)* amended its functions to:

*the pursuit of learning and the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research and collaboration with educational, business, professional, trade union, cultural and other bodies. (section 3 (a))*

DCU comes under the *Universities Act (1997)* which defines the objects of a university very generally in terms of advancing and promoting learning in all its aspects. The university's role in vocational education is acknowledged in two subsections half way through a list of twelve objects and reads:

*(f) to support and contribute to the realisation of national economic and social development*

*(g) to educate, train and retrain higher level professional, technical and managerial personnel. (section 12)*

It can thus be seen that DIT's unequivocal espousal of vocational education is supported by its status whereas DCU has a more general remit and a concern with advancing academic as well as vocational knowledge and learning.

### **8.3.2 Academic and professional associations**

#### *Academic/educational associations*

The academic associations dealing with the media in general, ICA and IAMCR, are concerned mainly with academic education. On the other hand, EJTA and AJE, both of which are only concerned with journalism education, take a very vocational approach.

EJTA's criteria for membership require applicants to be involved in professional and practical training. It further requires that members be recognised by the profession. Therefore what is envisaged is a form of professional education which is practice-based and recognised by the industry. As a European-wide association, it is not feasible for it to specify further the particular model of education to be adopted.

AJE represents educators in higher education that teach 'practical journalism'. Its seminars cover a wide range of issues, from the very practical (for example, teaching writing skills, teaching shorthand) to the history and ethics of journalism and research by journalism educators. Being primarily British, it also monitors the accreditation schemes that exist for courses in the UK. It does not use the term professional, despite its interest in theory, research and accreditation, all markers of professional education.

The UNESCO-sponsored JourNet is very clear in its aim. It seeks 'better professional education' in journalism and media practices linked to the ideals of 'freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right'. JourNet is part of the UNESCO's involvement in the 'training of communication professionals for print and broadcast media'. It is clear that the sort of education advocated is based in practice, at a professional level, geared towards serving the public through the provision of information.

#### *Professional bodies*

The IFJ, NNI and WAN do not overtly refer to journalism education although one could infer from their general statements on freedom of the press and their codes of professional standards and ethics that they would favour professional education.

The NUJ Irish web-site does not refer to education or training but its main UK-based web-site is revealing. Firstly, the NUJ gives associate membership to two kinds of students, 'those on vocational courses, and those on other courses who are working on student publications and intend to become journalists', indicating that vocational education is not preferred, that general education could equally suffice. On the main NUJ web-site, the lengthy entry on training includes a statement on training policy which discusses the current uncertainties and problems in training in the UK. It stresses the necessity for the NUJ to investigate all matters to do with training. It discusses the emergence of a more knowledge-based approach compared with its previous emphasis on skills. The final sentence of the policy statement talks of considering the development of:

*a pedagogic model which places the acquisition of individual technical skills in the context of journalistic values and a model of journalism appropriate to the developing media environment.*

Such a model fits in with the concept of professional education, and with the practice-based model where theory, ethics and specialised knowledge contextualise the acquisition of skills.

The BCI report on training for local radio (Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, 2002) detailed a list of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for those working in these areas. The itemised nature of the training model proposed indicates a short course structure, with no space for reflective consideration of the nature of news, current affairs or indeed sports. The omission of the term 'journalism' and the stated objective of training staff to be widely skilled in order to ensure the commercial success of local radio, indicates that the training is not intended to accord with professional education of any kind.

### **8.3.3 National policy**

There is no national subject benchmarking for journalism education even for institutions that come under the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), and HETAC. HETAC has currently established fields of study but not subject benchmarking. NQAI (2003) has established criteria for the different levels

of awards. For an honours degree, the learning outcomes in a number of applied fields are defined as those 'linked with the independent, knowledge-based professional'. This description accords in general terms with professional education but with no specific model.

In the UK, the one benchmarking statement for the whole field of Communications, Media, Film and Cultural Studies is so general that it allows for different curriculum models that include critical knowledge and practice, where precedence may be given to either, and allowing for practice that is not necessarily associated with any professional elements such as ethics.

### *National higher education policy*

With regard to Irish higher education in general, the last decade was a period when the government was particularly active in passing legislation, publishing papers and reports. This section deals with these chronologically and then considers general government policy that has had implications for education.

The 1995 White Paper on education, *Charting our Education Future* (Department of Education, 1995), detailed the general aims of higher education very thoroughly, specifying the benefits to society and to the individual. It acknowledged its contribution to intellectual, cultural and artistic accomplishments, and also to economic growth. The paper in no way prioritised the contribution of higher education to the economy, as was the case in the *Report of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of HE* (HEA, 1995), published at the same time. The aims of higher education in this report make no mention of the personal development of individuals but concentrate on its social role, and overwhelmingly on the contribution that education and training make to 'the nation's economic development, innovation and job creation'. The report reflected the view of education in the more general government policy at the time, as will be seen.

Four years later, the *Report of the Review Committee on Post Secondary Education and Training Places* (HEA, 1999) similarly emphasised the link between higher education and economic development. Its terms of reference required it to address the needs of the labour market. In its conclusions, it took the view that an increase in post-secondary places was needed to provide the skills for a growing economy

and to maintain international competitiveness. In the same year *The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act* (1999), with which higher and further education outside the universities must comply, defines the role of education as follows:

*to contribute to the realisation of national education and training policies and objectives and, in particular, to meeting the education and training requirements of industry, including agriculture, business, tourism, trade, the professions and the public service.* (paragraph 4(1) (g))

The emphasis in higher education was therefore focused on using education in a narrow vocational way to build up the economy, not an approach that was going to foster instrumental purposes of education more appropriate to journalism, such as education for social cohesion and in particular for citizenship.

The Green and White Papers on lifelong learning were the first to mark a departure from this. They concentrate on adult education, and discuss higher education along with education at other levels. The Green Paper *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning* (Department of Education and Science, 1998) describes lifelong learning as a component in promoting the well being of all citizens, as 'a participative and empowering process which strengthens the democratic system'. However, it admits retracting from this view to some extent, because of state policy to prioritise enhancing economic growth and social inclusion. The foreword to the report by the Willie O'Dea, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, stressed only the economic contribution of education. In the subsequent White Paper, *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education* (Department of Education and Science, 2000), six priority areas were identified for adult education, amongst them, citizenship. This was the first time that education's contribution to citizenship was included in a government policy document, even if in the rather marginal adult education area. It is obviously a view of education that accords well with journalism education. Willie O'Dea's foreword in this second paper took a more inclusive view of the contribution of the sector towards society, not only in terms of the economy but also to combating social disadvantage and to promoting democracy and social cohesion.

A shift was occurring towards broadening the official view of education from economic and social inclusion aims alone. A paper commissioned by the HEA *The*

*University Challenged* (Skillbeck, 2001), decried the concentration on higher education's role in economic development. Documentation from HETAC (2004) for its expert groups in the various subject fields refers to the Bologna Declaration on qualification structures in higher education in Europe and lists the four major purposes of higher education and training as:

- 1) *personal development;*
- 2) *preparation for life as citizens in a democratic society;*
- 3) *development and maintenance of an advanced knowledge base;*
- 4) *preparation for the labour market*

The then Minister for Education and Science, Noel Dempsey (2004), in the *OECD Observer* in March, 2004 criticised an over-emphasis on the economic contribution of education. He wrote:

*The challenge is to recognise that the primary purpose of education is to provide everyone with the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, both as individuals and as a member of society.*

However, this shift is so recent that it did not impinge on the two journalism degrees which were somewhat outside of the general preoccupations of vocational higher education during the nineties. They developed in an atmosphere which did not offer much support to education for purposes other than the economic.

### *General government policy*

The legislation and reports on education must be placed in the wider context of general government policy over the last decade and a half. Overall strategy has been determined by a series of national plans – national programmes between the government and the social partners – and general reports to government which have impacted on all areas of activity since 1987. The three plans, covering the periods 1989–1993, 1994–1999 and 2000–2006, have focussed on economic development as their main objective, with some concern for social inclusion. All areas of activity, including education, were approached from this viewpoint. For example, in the *National Development Plan 1989–1993* (Government of Ireland, 1989), education was seen as purely vocational, as needing ‘to adapt and expand ... to meet changes in employment patterns’. It stated:



*[T]he third level sector of education must enhance its capability to support industry in bridging the technological gap between Ireland and the more developed regions of the Community. (p. 24, paragraph 1. 2. 45)*

An influential report from the industrial policy review group (1992), the so-called *Culliton Report*, took an extreme view of education as an arm of economic policy recommending that,

*[t]he need for productive enterprise should be an issue of primary importance at all educational levels to de-emphasise the bias towards the liberal arts and the traditional professions (p. 11).*

Priority was to be given to the acquisition of usable and marketable skills and the development a high quality and 'respected stream' of technical and vocational education. The *Programme for Economic and Social Progress* (Government of Ireland, 1991) was more balanced. Education was confirmed as important for economic development but its overall strategy was recognised as providing 'the opportunity for all to develop their educational potential to the full'. However, this was not borne out in the *Strategy for Competitiveness, Growth and Employment* (National Economic and Social Council, 1993) which focussed on the serious unemployment problem of the time. It identified education and training as vital in combating the problem while later admitting that education has 'complex and potentially competing objectives'. The government's *Programme for Competitiveness and Work* (1994) and subsequent *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (2000) saw education as a means of reducing unemployment and fostering economic growth and prosperity, along with improving social equity. The most recent programme *Sustaining Progress* (2003) still focuses on the economy, viewing social and environmental issues through an economic lens.

#### **8.3.4 International policy**

International influences on education have come from the EU, OECD and UNESCO. Whereas the first two have impacted on educational policy and national policy generally and on the way in which higher education has developed, UNESCO's influence on education has been less, but through its strong links with IFJ and WAN, it has had connections with journalism and journalism education.

## *OECD*

The Irish government commissioned reports from the OECD in the 1960s which shaped much of education over the following decades, in particular with regard to its part in the economy. These reports were: *Training of Technicians in Ireland* (1964), *Investment in Education* (1965), *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland* (1969). The OECD has been very influential in Irish education ever since. It has recently published a *Review of Higher Education in Ireland* (2004). The terms of reference for this review acknowledged the different roles of education for both individuals and society and yet, the report itself emphasises education as a driver of the economy, in line, it states, with the government's general policy based on the EU Lisbon Declaration of 2000.

The OECD's influence has always been geared towards stressing the need for job-related competence. It is essentially an economic organisation. It describes itself as grouping together thirty member countries 'sharing a commitment to democratic government and the market economy'. Article 1 of the OECD Convention declares that it aims to contribute to the world economy by promoting policies for economic growth, employment and rising standards of living. Nevertheless, its web entry under education indicates that it now takes a relatively wide view of the benefits of education for both individuals and countries. For individuals, it lists the potential benefits in general quality of life and in the economic returns of sustained, satisfying employment; for countries, the potential benefits in economic growth and the development of shared values that underpin social cohesion. It thus seems quite similar to national policy in going beyond seeing education as feeding into the economy alone.

## *European Union*

Since joining in 1973, Ireland has taken full advantage of the supports given to education by the EU over the years. Until the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the European Community had jurisdiction on economic matters only. Its influence on education was confined to measures that supported the economic returns from education and in particular, the acquisition of vocational, technical skills. Journalism programmes were eligible for support, as the press were seen as important in building a common European economic area. In the 1980s and early

1990s, the journalism courses in DIT and DCU were supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), all students receiving grants for course attendance. The courses had to comply with the requirements of the ESF scheme, which were for work-related programmes of study, with a concentration on skills acquisition, and a high number of class contact hours per week. This was prior to the development of the degree programmes, which would not have matched these criteria.

Since Maastricht, the European Union (EU) has widened its scope and now deals with a wider range of issues. The current Europa web-site defines the EU as 'a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity'. It comments on the change from the early years when much of the co-operation between EU countries was about trade and the economy, to currently when its remit covers many other subjects such as citizen's rights, security and justice, environmental protection and the effects of globalisation.

As already noted, the extended activities and vision of the EU were seen in the criteria for accession for new members under the Copenhagen Declaration of 1993, which has led to a wider EU view of journalism. With regard to education likewise, a wider vision of its role is evident in the Bologna Declaration in 1999:

*A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship....*  
(European Commission, 1999)

An educational policy based on such a statement would be admirably suited to journalism education but the more recent Lisbon Declaration (European Council, 2000) placed education within a more economic paradigm. It set the EU a new strategic goal for the next decade:

*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* (section 5)

Higher Education is to play its role as seen in the report for the EU Commission (2003) *The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge*. While reaffirming

the importance of the social dimension of Bologna, the Ministers for Higher Education in Berlin (European Council, 2003) took on board the conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon. EU educational policy is thus seemingly unchanged, still focused on economic development and social inclusion. The possibilities of developing its role in civic society, in citizenship, have not so far been pursued.

### *UNESCO*

UNESCO has had less input into national education policy in Ireland. Indeed, the national UNESCO commission has not yet been set up on a statutory basis. The definition of the discipline fields under HETAC was taken from UNESCO (1997). Otherwise, the influence of UNESCO on journalism education has come indirectly through organisations such as the IFJ, WAN and JourNet.

As already stated, UNESCO's overall stated goal, to build peace, has led to its activities in communication. It has also led to its involvement in education where its general goal is to foster values to create harmony between people. Education is seen as having a role in promoting responsible citizenship and full participation in democratic processes. It decries the adaptation of education systems to a quest for economic development alone. Higher education institutions, it states, must retain their critical function in the interests of democracy (UNESCO, 2003b). This emphasis on democracy accords better with education for journalism than the focus of both the EU and OECD on economic matters. An academic programme based on such a view of education will be vocational; it will be professional not in the narrow sense of providing specialist knowledge or skills but in the deeper meaning of being concerned with values and critical reflection. Journalism education in such a framework will give due emphasis not only to skills and the acquisition of a set body of knowledge, but will be based on journalism's role in democratic society and will encompass ethics and critical reflection.

## **8.4 Summary**

This chapter has examined texts that set the context for the development of journalism education. Because these texts were, on the whole, less closely tied to the actual programmes, they tend to indicate the broader concepts involved in both

journalism and education: for example, whether journalism is a distinct function or similar to other media functions, the general vocational emphasis of education, the emphasis on economic returns from education rather than its wider social role. The texts also show how the concepts being analysed are at issue beyond the two programmes at DCU and DIT, both nationally and internationally. In this way, the chapter, while extending the analysis of the programmes in question, links to the general issues in journalism education as discussed in earlier chapters.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusions**

This chapter summarises and discusses the findings of the research study, considers the methodology used and issues of positionality. It proposes some overall conclusions regarding the concepts of journalism and journalism education, including implications for practice based on the findings and indicates areas of further research to advance this study of journalism education.

#### **9.1 Restatement of problem**

The study started from the perceived lack of agreement on journalism education, in particular, the lack of an agreed framework for undergraduate degree programmes. Starting from Toohey's (1995) assertion that deciding on a curriculum involves sorting out values and beliefs in order to clarify the principles on which the curriculum will be based, the research has sought to examine the concepts of both journalism and education behind programmes in journalism education. Limited to the situation in Ireland, it concentrated on an analysis of the two undergraduate degree programmes in the two main centres of journalism, DCU and DIT. Fairclough's version of discourse analysis was used to examine the issue in a three level analysis from the core texts: the brief published course descriptions, through the fuller course documentation from quality assurance, to the wider documentation on the policies of the institutions, industry/profession, government, EU and international bodies which set the context and defined the parameters within which the courses were developed. A summary of the analysis is given below, dealing firstly with the findings related to the concept of journalism and then those relating to education.

#### **9.2 Summary of findings**

##### **9.2.1 Concept of journalism**

The core texts at the first level of analysis showed considerable differences between the concepts of journalism on the two programmes. DCU placed its programme within the general media area. DIT, on the other hand, emphasised journalism as a

distinct area of its own. Neither categorisation, however, was definitive, DCU in particular, indicating mixed messages at times about whether journalism was or was not being fully integrated within media.

A similar picture emerged regarding journalism's status, whether or not it is regarded as a profession. DCU tended to emphasise the skills of journalism, with little reference to journalism as a profession or to journalism's public service role. The theoretical studies on the programme were concerned with broad media theory. In contrast, DIT highlighted journalism's professional status, its role and referred to journalism theory rather than media theory.

The course documents at the second level of analysis, the discourse practice, tended to confirm the initial findings, with DCU being more oriented towards media in general and paying little attention to journalism's status. DIT, on the other hand, more clearly separated journalism from media and focussed on its professional status. However, DIT provided lengthy arguments in support of its categorisation on these points, indicating that they are debatable, that there is no overall agreement on journalism's role and status.

The level three analysis, the so-called level of social practice, moves outside the actual courses in ever widening circles from the department, schools and colleges to national and international bodies. This analysis of contextual documents clearly showed the diversity of views held about journalism. Within the educational bodies (that is, DCU, DIT, and also HETAC, ISCED, the EU thematic networks and UK benchmarking), there is a mixture of views on journalism, on its distinctiveness or not from other media functions, on its definition as a professional or non-professional occupation. These differing views reflect the situation in the outside world.

The bodies concerned with journalism education and those representing journalists both nationally and internationally quite vehemently assert its separateness, are ambiguous over its status, but clear on its role and its values. At international level in particular, journalism bodies concentrate on its role in democracy and the current challenges it faces. The main academic associations concerned with research and

theoretical studies, ICA, IAMCR, make little differentiation between journalism and media, treating journalism as one form of media practice amongst others. At management level, the newspaper organisations agree on its uniqueness whereas in broadcasting, journalism tends to be integrated within media. The management bodies do not talk of professional status but they recognise the importance of its public service role. However, unlike others, they also stress journalism as business.

In the wider national sphere, journalism's role is recognised in Irish legislation but the relative lack of development of legislation on journalism reflects the lack of development of the concept generally, its ambiguous status, and the mix of commercial and professional aspects of the industry. At international level, the European Convention of Human Rights likewise supports freedom of expression for journalists, but using the two terms 'media' and 'press' in its text. UNESCO and more recently the EU clearly recognise and support the role of journalism in democracy, but also tend to speak of journalism and media as one. They pay no attention to its status.

### **9.2.2 Concept of education**

With regard to the concept of education, the first level of analysis found a quite marked difference between the two programmes. DCU's programme seemed firstly to be mainly academic in focus, though the text later developed a more vocational approach. DIT's was explicitly vocational with little in the way of general academic education. In terms of professional models of education, the DCU course appeared to be knowledge-based, DIT more practice-based. In Barnett et al.'s model, DCU's emphasis on knowledge could be contrasted with DIT's emphasis on action. The inconsistencies within the core texts match better the two specific models of journalism education rather than the general models of professional education. The combination of providing a general education with professional education, as found in the aims of the DCU programme and the combination of languages and journalism in DIT, tie in with the so-called 'professional model' within journalism education. The DCU programme though fits best with the 'integrated model' with its linking of journalism practice with media theory.



The level two analysis of course modules reveals that, contrary to initial indications in the core text, the DCU programme is clearly vocational. It matches the knowledge-based model of professional education, as the journalistic practice is not integrated with the theoretical or knowledge-based modules of its other two streams. It is therefore more action oriented in Barnett et al.'s framework, and as before, lies best with the integrated model of journalism education.

For DIT, the modules in the second level analysis confirm its vocational, practice- or action-based approach, despite the considerable number of knowledge-based modules. With regard to journalism models, it is less close to the professional model than previously indicated in that the programme is overall quite well integrated. The languages do not stand alone but are on the whole oriented towards the practice of journalism.

From its stated rationale, it is evident that DCU's attitude towards the academic/vocational nature of the course is ambiguous. It appears to be attempting to face both ways in meeting the needs of students and industry. As indicated in the modules, it is quite practice oriented. The rationale in fact reveals the course to be quite balanced between Barnett et al.'s three elements of knowledge, action and self. The rationale confirms that the programme matches the integrated journalism model, making explicit reference to the European model of journalism education.

The rationale for the DIT course supports its vocational, practice-based position. However, it places journalistic values at the centre, not practice, so in terms of Barnett et al.'s model, it is shown to be more oriented towards self than towards action. In terms of journalism models, it lies between an integrated approach and one where there is a split into two autonomous elements of journalism and language.

At level three, the further documentation from DCU and DIT – the mission statements, messages from the faculty dean and the president – supports the analysis at the other two levels. The DCU Act indicates a general remit for university level education, oriented towards both academic and vocational

education. The DIT Act on the other hand indicates an institution with a remit for vocational and professional education.

The professional associations concerned with journalism education advocate practice-based education but do not specify the model of education to be used. UNESCO's JourNet association is the exception to this, stressing that practice be taught in the context of journalism's democratic role, thus advocating a professional and not a training model of education. Of the management and union organisations, several do not concern themselves with education (that is, IFJ, NNI and WAN). The NUJ and BCI confine their attention to skills, although the main UK NUJ site does indicate a move towards education based on knowledge and values rather than skills.

The national policy on education during the 1990s was overwhelmingly vocational in orientation, reflecting the government's investment in education to stimulate the economy. Such a policy reflects that of the international bodies, the EU and the OECD, although there are some recent indications of it being broadened to encompass more than economic aims. Exceptionally, UNESCO has long sponsored a view of education's contribution to promoting active citizenship and specifically regards journalism education as professional education to be based not on skills but on values, to encompass ethics and critical reflection.

### **9.3 Discussion of issues**

The aim of the research was to investigate the competing discourses in journalism education. The analysis has revealed the differing discourses within and between the courses and the lack of closure on them. The level three analysis reveals the source of the discourses. It also illustrates how the concepts being analysed are at issue beyond the two programmes at DCU and DIT, both nationally and internationally. In this way, the analysis of the social practice, while extending the analysis of the programmes in question, links to the general issue of journalism education as discussed in reviewing the literature in an earlier chapter. It also links journalism education to debates about alternative views of society as Young (1998) claims is the case for all curriculum debates.

I had posed a series of questions at the beginning of the research. These will be revisited to see how far they can be addressed at this stage. The discussion will indicate the discourses that have been accepted and have become dominant, those that have not succeeded and have been neglected, and those that remain to be resolved.

### **What is journalism?**

There is no agreement on this first question, either between the courses or elsewhere. Some see it simply as part of media, others as a distinct field. It tends to blur into the more general media area within broadcasting and when it comes to theory. There is no agreement either on the status of journalism, whether it is a profession or a craft or trade. These two points are interlinked as journalism is not a distinct profession if it can be integrated with the media generally. But what seems to be important is not so much its status as its role – my second question.

### **What is the core function of the work of a journalist?**

There is general agreement on this issue from all sides, unions, management, the law, government and international bodies – and the courses themselves. Journalism's function is that of providing a public service in support of democracy. It may be interpreted in different ways and the notion itself may not be adequately developed or up-dated to meet current needs but its essence is not in dispute.

A second function of journalism as commercial enterprise is highlighted by management but given little attention elsewhere. Journalists may be primarily providing a public service but they work overwhelmingly for organisations that may not all be purely profit-driven but must be economically viable.

In order to guarantee its role, there is general agreement on the need for a code of ethics for all journalists as a means of imposing certain standards of behaviour and also providing protection against external pressures. There is no agreement however on how to safeguard the implementation of such a code. Journalists cannot agree on seeking professional status to ensure autonomy in guaranteeing their own standards. There is little legislation to protect standards either. (As

mentioned earlier, the new legislation on the press, including the setting up of a press council for Ireland has been delayed).

UNESCO and more recently the EU offer a different approach. Viewing journalism as necessary from the point of view of human rights gives it moral authority if not legal authority. Development of this perspective could in the long term be the best basis on which to guarantee the role of journalism. The human rights approach is more likely to be even-handed with regard to both the rights and responsibilities of journalists. Current law can be too restrictive, concerned only with responsibilities, and can curtail the freedom of the press. Professional status, on the other hand, is inclined to emphasise practitioners' rights, rather than the rights of the public.

At the moment, the problem remains: how do you give privileges to journalists and how do you ensure standards without any real definition of who or what a journalist is? There are no requirements to becoming a journalist and there is no authority to enforce ethics in an occupation that is acknowledged to be of great importance to society. Education for journalism, though not mandatory, can have a significant influence in this situation, firstly to the students who avail of it, who, in turn, will impact on journalism practice within the industry.

### **What does a journalist need to know in order to carry out this function?**

Within the two courses we have seen that there is considerable agreement over the knowledge base for journalists, that it comprises practice, knowledge of context and of content. However, there is considerable difference within each of the three areas. Context and content will be dealt with in response to following questions, as will the articulation between the three streams.

It is stated that practice in the DIT course is centred on journalistic values. There is a danger of such an approach leading to a technicist approach to journalism, unless the beliefs and concepts of journalism that underlie such values are considered. Values and ethics as defined at present also tend to be centred on the journalist as a would-be professional with the subsequent neglect of the public and the common

good. In DCU, practice is equated almost entirely with skills, reflecting that course's integration of journalism into the wider media field, and the recognition of the usefulness of these skills for other areas of work within communications.

What is missing from both courses is a component on the business aspect of journalism. The management groups make considerable reference to the commercial imperative under which they operate. The BCI places considerable emphasis on it in its wish list for training, yet it does not feature on either course. It is thus a neglected discourse.

### **What theory is available/should be developed to underpin the professional teaching of journalism?**

The two courses have taken very different approaches to contextual or theoretical studies as was to be expected from their different conceptions of journalism. The theory in DIT is strictly journalism theory but is essentially restricted to history and ethics. The impression given is of a rather traditional view of journalism with emphasis on its relationship with parliamentary politics and little discussion of the challenges to this role, of the need to forge a new vision of journalism for the twenty first century.

DCU on the other hand provides a fuller range of theoretical modules but the theory is general media theory, not centred on journalism and its role. This can be justified not only from viewing journalism as part of media but in order to compensate for the present under-development of more specific journalism theory. Areas of media theory that can be relevant include, for example, policy and regulation of the media, audience studies, multiculturalism, technology and philosophy. Media theory may have inadequacies, but, given the current state of under-development of journalism theory, to make use of it may nevertheless be the better solution.

The two courses illustrate the two paths generally available to journalism education, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world, given the crux presented by the lack of a sufficient theoretical base as discussed in an earlier chapter.

### **What form of education is most suitable to provide this learning? Academic or vocational / professional?**

At its most general, the concept of education that emerged was vocational or professional in orientation. Yet there was also a certain leaning towards general education in the documentation on the two courses, especially in that of DCU. This may be explained by DCU's status as a university, typically more attuned to liberal rather than wholly vocational education. There are other possible reasons. Both courses refer to the needs of students. With them in mind, it is debatable whether an undergraduate degree should be narrowly vocational or professional. It may suit the needs of professions and the needs of the economy to prepare students for a particular occupational field, but this may not be in the best interests of students or the wider needs of society. As advocates of liberal education have always maintained (French, 2002), personal intellectual development and enrichment may be of greater benefit to the student in their careers and their lives in general and to society at large than narrow vocational specialisation.

The other explanation for the tendency towards general education lies within journalism. Journalism is constantly said to require a wide general education, a trained mind (for example, Bronstein and Vaughan, 1998; Medsger, 1996) to be able to report, analyse and comment on any subject. The development in the US of the so-called professional model is based on this notion.

### **What other university subjects can contribute to journalism education?**

The content studies of both courses cover in common politics, economics and law, considered essential in all journalism training. Both also offer the study of second languages, not only for its usefulness in journalism but to help provide the wide general education desirable for journalists. The inclusion of languages in this way may be somewhat unusual but can also be explained pragmatically. As DCU and DIT are non-traditional higher education institutions, they do not have a wide range of liberal arts disciplines to include with journalism. However, they do both have large language departments. Thus, especially in the case of DIT, languages are seen as providing the required general education to the students and opening up other career possibilities.

## **What is the articulation between these subjects and the core subject of journalism?**

This question is concerned with the models of education available. The developers of the two programmes do not refer to the three commonly accepted models of professional education which may not be known to them, at least explicitly. Both courses have moved beyond the first of these models, the skills model, as is to be expected at honours degree level.

The DCU programme can best be described as a knowledge-based programme, with a strong element of non-integrated practice. This seeming lack of integration and the use of general media theory already referred to risk disengaging the skills of journalism from its function, and thus, it can be argued, not educating the students to optimise the practice of journalism.

The DIT course exemplifies a practice-based model, and shows the weakness of this approach with regard to theory. For students to reflect on journalism practice they need a grasp of concepts that will enable them to do so. The under-development of a general theory of professional practice together with the lack of an agreed theoretical base to journalism makes this difficult. The concept of the reflective practitioner in journalism is thus impoverished.

The specific models of education used for journalism were, as we have seen, known to those developing both courses. It was easier to match the courses to these models and to see their weaknesses; the professional model, to which DIT is close, with its weak theoretical component; the integrated model which DCU's course resembles, where the emphasis on general media issues leads to neglect of the specific function of journalism. Both weaknesses stem from the problem of the lack of adequate theory. If a more adequate theory were available, it is likely these forms of journalism curricula would be replaced by forms that would more easily fit in with general models of professional education.

To turn to the third educational model used, that of Barnett et al., its flexibility was most useful for the analysis of the two programmes. It allowed to capture the

ambiguity over the vocational or academic nature of the programmes, and whether they were intended to match the needs of students or employers. In contrast, the professional models are obviously geared towards vocational courses catering for the needs of the industry. A flexible model is also suitable when the profession is not completely closed, when the degree is not a necessary qualification for entry and the skills are also of use in other occupations. It facilitates choice in the content area and in the area of practice between different courses to match the resources of colleges and the preferences of students.

#### **9.4 Methodology and positionality**

When starting this research, I thought of it in terms of a case study or two case studies as it is centred on particular bounded examples of journalism education. However, the critical discourse used for analysis of the data meant that the study expanded into wider areas. The third level of analysis connected the particular instance of journalism education in Ireland with more general debates on both journalism and education in Ireland and internationally. I found this enriching and a valuable consequence of the methodology used but it may not fit into the strict definition of a case study per se as the case is no longer strictly bounded.

Critical discourse analysis provided a strong theoretical and analytic framework within which to work. It is an area in which I had a prior interest and I was pleased with the combination of micro level analysis and connection with wider themes that it allowed. It facilitated a precise and comprehensive examination of the course documents and then opened up the issues from the points of view of all those involved, the industry and practitioners as well as academics and educationalists, policy-makers from national government and international bodies. The approach was basically qualitative but stretched beyond the narrow confines of the two programmes, showing how the concepts and ideas embodied in them are echoes of the same issues in wider circles. The image of the iceberg was used to illustrate this form of analysis when discussing methodology. This image is a useful metaphor for the analysis of the programmes and their contexts starting from the brief course outlines.



The data in the study was confined strictly to written texts and moreover texts that were agreed policy documents and mainly in the public domain. The advantages of this were great, not only in terms of access, but in not having to make allowances for possible distortion from the personal opinions and preferences of any individuals, apart from my own. I had thought I might need to use interviews as well as documents for data in the event that I did not get access to the documents I required. Fortunately this was not necessary. I was also fortunate in that the data used from DCU and DIT illustrated the two main approaches to journalism education, thus, the issues raised in the literature emerged clearly in the research itself.

One point that needs to be underlined however, is the differences between the texts on course documentation from DIT and DCU. The intention was to study the issue at one moment in time, and to use comparable documentation from the two institutions. Yet, what was available from DCU was two internal background documents from 1992 and 1996, together with module descriptors from the academic year 2003-2004. Therefore, the data contained a certain historical development of the course over more than a decade, which no doubt accounts for the greater inconsistencies within the documentation compared with that from DIT. In contrast, the data on the course in DIT all came from documentation from 2002 which meant it had not been modified over time, and also as was seen in the course rationale, was able to benefit from later debates on journalism education. To underline the dynamic nature of these curricula, in late 2004, a major change in the DCU course from a four to a three year programme was notified, resulting from its QA review in the earlier part of the year.

The other difference between the texts was that the documentation from DIT was more detailed than that of DCU because of the differences in quality assurance procedures. This caused a certain difficulty, as the rationale for the DIT programme in particular was more explicit and detailed. The essential elements were present in the DCU document, but given that it was also the institution with which I was less familiar, it was an issue to which I had to remain alert in my research. More particularly, my greater familiarity with DIT and with its history and internal operations meant that it was difficult to allow the analysis to emerge

purely from the texts rather than interpreting them in the light of background information known to me. There was not the same danger in regard to the DCU material. Hopefully, I have succeeded in balancing the analysis of the two sets of texts as was the object of the research.

In the research I have had to maintain an awareness of my greater commitment to DIT and the subsequent danger of interpreting data from DIT and DCU differently. However, this was balanced by my membership of the Governing Body of DCU in the 1990s, as a result of which I also had a positive commitment and interest in its work.

Moreover, I initially favoured the integrated journalism degree over the professional model which meant that I was more supportive of the approach taken by DCU rather than that of DIT. My work on this research has somewhat changed my view. I am now more inclined to support the need for journalism education to be considered as distinct from other media fields although the need for greater work in journalism theory is a large problem. I would however maintain that journalism education should follow the norm of professional education by seeking to integrate its various components.

## **9.5 Conclusions and implications for practice**

The aim of the research was modest: to illuminate the two concepts at its centre. I will conclude by returning to a discussion of my views of these and the implications for journalism education that arise. It should be recalled that it was not intended that the research would lead to proposing a definitive content for the curriculum or a definitive model for journalism education. There is a great deal of progress to be made in developing an understanding of journalism and journalism education before such an aim could be realised, but in any case, as will be discussed, it is neither desirable or feasible to construct one model only.

### **9.5.1 Journalism**

There is no clear or accepted definition of journalism. It can be partly defined by the skills required over which there is no contention and which are based around

writing (in various forms and styles), newsgathering and production techniques for the different media. However, these skills alone do not suffice as they are not unique to journalism, being used for example by public relations and other communications personnel. In order to establish the specific nature of journalism and its importance, one must turn to its role as a public service which should be included in any attempted definition. Its public service role was given wide recognition in the policy documents analysed in this research and, as discussed in chapter four, has to do with informing the public of events and processes in support of civic society. It is because of this role that journalists have certain rights and privileges in their work, to do with freedom of information and freedom of the press, protection of sources, which rights are protected (for Irish journalists) in law, in the constitution, and at international level, in human rights declarations. It is its role which establishes the values and ethos within which the journalist should work, requiring them to be fair, accurate and impartial, working on behalf of all of society whilst respectful of the rights of individuals (for example, with regard to privacy, and individual beliefs and differences).

Journalism's role distinguishes it from other forms of media practice. In particular it marks it off from public relations with which it is frequently conflated as journalism skills are used in public relations and educational programmes frequently claim to prepare for both occupations. The difference is that public relations acts on behalf of vested interests whereas journalism is required to work impartially and independently on behalf of the whole of society in its public service role.

Despite the mixed findings in the research as to whether journalism is distinct or a part of media practice, I feel that it is important that journalism be regarded as a separate field order to safeguard its specific role. However, I would not argue that journalism should have professional status for this purpose. The concept of profession is limited to certain countries only and is becoming weakened if not obsolete and should best be left aside. I would prefer the stance adopted by those who link journalism's role to human rights and to look for greater knowledge and understanding of its role amongst journalists and the general public to match the recognition given to it in policy and legislation.

One could argue that such a view of journalism is idealistic, that it does not coincide with the everyday reality of journalism. It differs from the view of the many practitioners who hold that journalism is a trade, that much if not most of journalism is to do with entertainment and that it is best treated as a business. It differs from the experience of the public who find that many news publications and broadcasts bear little or no resemblance to the ideal model. As a defence, it might be argued that the everyday practice of the regulated or liberal professions such as medicine or law is similarly not always concerned with fulfilling the high level public service on which they are centred, yet journalism seems to fall further behind its ideal than many other occupations. However, I would maintain that, even if its democratic function is not the only role of journalism, it is the most important one, the absence of which may not affect journalism as a business or industry, but it does create difficulties for the proper functioning of society. This is evidenced in countries which lack a free press, where the press fails to provide people with independent, accurate and adequate information, hence, democratic governments support a free press and transnational bodies such as the EU and UNESCO support and promotion journalism.

It may be easier to maintain this view of the public service role of journalism in Ireland than in Britain as there has long been a great public interest in and audiences for news and current affairs. There was no commercial press until the 1990s with the arrival of the UK owned tabloids, *The Irish Star* (1990) and *Ireland on Sunday* (1996). Irish journalists were described by Corcoran and Kelly in their 1998 study as a 'highly educated, professionally motivated group' and are overwhelmingly members of the NUJ which is influential in the maintenance of high standards of practice. However, there is no room for complacency. Within the last year there have been some high profile cases of invasion of privacy leading Roy Greenslade (2005), an admirer of Irish journalism, to recently warn of the danger of its becoming infected with the 'British journalistic disease'.

Thus the current state of journalism gives rise to concern and indeed some pessimism for its future. As indicated earlier in this chapter (p.190) proposed solutions include various forms of press regulation all of which have difficulties. I would favour Hargreaves' (2003) view that the problems of journalists are to a

considerable extent self-inflicted and that journalism 'needs to re-absorb the values of democracy into its own self-conduct ... to function properly' (p.267). I would argue that this is where education has a serious contribution to make, especially at graduate or post-graduate level, by ensuring that a number of well qualified entrants to the 'profession' have a critical understanding of the important role journalism plays in democratic society.

### **9.5.2 Journalism education**

To me, therefore, any adequate concept of journalism education must go beyond mastery of journalistic skills and a knowledge of values and standards. It must ensure that graduates have an understanding of the concept of the role of journalism, an appreciation of the actual or potential importance of its function from which its ethos and values stem, and a more critical approach to the received wisdom of journalistic values, ethics and routines. The special privileges, responsibilities and obligations within which the journalist practices are in this way given a contextual framework and it is clearly seen that it is necessary to go beyond the technical skills and unquestioning mechanical implementation of accepted practice to be a good journalist.

This is in line with professional education generally, that an interest and understanding in the wider conception of an occupation's role is necessary to allow for critical reflection on practice. As discussed earlier, it is not possible to reflect on practice without the concepts to do so. Eraut referred to such concepts as propositional or theoretical knowledge which serve to provide a critical perspective from which to judge the principles, routines and practices of a profession. Without it, the professional is not able to theorise about practice and so cannot easily move on from replicating established practice. Practice on its own can be seen as a technical exercise, value free and with no ethical implications. Journalism education should thus include a theoretical knowledge of the concept of journalism itself, along with the acquisition of skills and knowledge of areas that relate to journalistic content.

There is currently a multi-tiered system of journalism education in place, with courses in further education, at graduate and post-graduate level. Given that there is

a great deal of variety in journalistic work and the level at which it is practised, this system makes sense. There is room for a range of programmes that provide varying levels of skills and knowledge and varying levels of conceptual understanding of journalism. All, however, must include a firm understanding of its values and a certain appreciation of the idea of journalism on which they are based.

To focus on the undergraduate degrees with which this research has been particularly concerned where, it will be recalled, there are currently double honours degrees and major/minor combinations along with integrated single honour courses in journalism or communications/journalism. Firstly, with regard to the various models of education discussed in the research, I would see these programmes as being unquestionably vocational in so far as they are a preparation for work. They are also professional in the sense of moving beyond the acquisition of skills to provide a critical, reflective approach to practice. I would favour undergraduate degrees following the norm of professional degrees, in being integrated journalism degrees, rather than in any double honour or major/minor combination. There is a valid argument that specialist knowledge in a particular area together with journalism education is a good preparation for working in journalism. I suggest that in that case, the post-graduate qualification in journalism following a first degree in a different area is the best route to take. But in the first degree itself, it seems to me that journalism should follow the same path as other professional areas and opt for an integrated course including practice, knowledge and theory based around the organising concept of journalism itself, in so far as it can be defined. It has been seen that integration is regarded as the norm in professional courses, according to Bernstein (1975), Eraut (1994), and Barnett et al. (2001). I see no reason why journalism should be different. There is a general question over whether such courses are in the best interests of students in narrowing their interests and future employment options at a relatively early age. This issue needs to be addressed generally, but I feel integrated programmes are undoubtedly the best preparation for those seeking to work in a professional area.

Within an integrated curriculum, there is room for variation in the weighting given to the three different components of practice, context and content (or, in other terms, practice, theory and knowledge) and in what is included in each of these

components. There can be a mandatory core, with basic writing, editing and newsgathering skills from the practice component, a knowledge of politics, law and economics in the content element and study of the concept of journalism in the theoretical or contextual component. Within and between the three elements, students could then be offered choices, to match their individual needs, interests and talents. In this way, a number of different models of undergraduate programmes can validly co-exist.

These debates over the form of journalism education can be said to be more the concern of education rather than the industry. This was not always the case for the particular situation I have been focussing on in Ireland. As previously mentioned, the NUJ in particular took a detailed interest in educational programmes over many years. The report written by Christina Murphy (Journalism Training Committee, 1990), though unpublished, is the only serious overview of the issues concerning journalism education. Many of the proposals in that report are still relevant, the establishment of a co-ordinated network of courses at different levels of education, the call for the development of journalism as a serious professional discipline and for the academic study of journalism, including its nature and role in public life. However, the report was not published and in the intervening years, the industry as a whole has stood back from educational developments. As has been seen the BCI (Broadcasting Commission of Ireland) is the only body to have expressed views on training and those views were extremely limiting and indeed, the industry as a whole would appear to have little or no knowledge of the courses available, (see Kiberd, 1997). Practitioners cannot be expected to have expertise in educational matters and are not in a position to determine the structure or model of particular programmes. Such questions are more a concern for those directly involved in the planning and delivery of courses in the universities and colleges. At the same time, it is in the mutual benefit of both sides to have a relationship that facilitates exchange of views and concerns.

### **9.5.3 Developing journalism theory**

In this view of journalism education, I have included theory as a necessary component and have stated that the general issue to be addressed by the theoretical

component is to develop an understanding of what journalism is, with particular emphasis on its role.

However, as has been seen in earlier chapters, it is widely acknowledged that journalism does not have a clear definition or a developed theoretical base (Charon, 2003; Taylor, 2002; Stephenson, 1997) and furthermore journalists themselves are inclined to deride theory (Cole, 2002). To me, this lack of development of theory is not only a problem in delivering the theoretical component of a journalism programme. It has also hindered the development of journalism education more generally and allowed it be subsumed into more general media education, whether media practice such as public relations or media production or general media or communications theory. It has led to what I have been referring to as the two models of journalism education, the professional and the integrated model, the former essentially being confined to skills as Lonnrath (1997) found, and the latter integrating journalism practice with communications theory. The DIT and DCU programmes in my analysis illustrated many elements of these two models in practice.

By theory I mean the ideas, suppositions, abstract concept or concepts of journalism that stand behind its practice, or more explicitly, referring to Pring (2000), the set of propositions that would explain journalism as an activity and predict its future development. All practice has a basis in theory. Practice, in other words, is constructed and can only be properly understood by seeking to find the beliefs that lie behind it. What journalism theory should seek is to probe the answer to the question, 'What is journalism?' It should seek to articulate the beliefs and understandings not merely about what a journalist does. Given the importance I have attached to the role of journalism, I feel it is particularly necessary that the theory should seek to probe the reasons for what a journalist does, why he/she carries on a particular form of work.

Fields such as sociology, psychology, semiology, history and political science have studied various aspects of journalism but do not provide an explanation for all elements involved in its practice. A more complete solution and one frequently adopted, as has been seen, is to use communications theory to explain journalism.



This can be argued for, on the basis that journalism is a form of communication. However, communications theory as a whole is too general for journalism, making no distinction between it and any other form of communications, thus neglecting what is essential to journalism. One could better adapt the communications theory model to journalism than has been done to date. Thus, the six components in this model (Jakobson, 1960), could focus on theory about the journalistic text itself, the aims of the journalist, the perceptions of the reader or audience, the context of the text, the language or medium used, and the social or interactional function of journalism. Journalism, however, does become integrated once more into the broader communications field if one takes this approach and journalism is identified in such a model as a process of meaning transfer which does not capture its true essence. Journalism is more truly a form of professional practice, and it is that practice that needs to be understood for journalism education to resolve its current problems.

I have already stated that journalism needs to be regarded as a distinct field of practice in order to safeguard its specific function. It similarly needs to be regarded as a field of study in its own right in order to gain an understanding of its essential nature. Such study should strive to provide a coherent body of knowledge to explain journalism as a form of practice, with an important role in society.

To establish this field, journalism could benefit by looking at the theorising of other practices. I have stated that practice is not a natural activity but one that is constructed. Kemmis (1998) who is concerned with theorizing educational practice, also begins with the notion of practice as socially, historically and politically constructed. In order to understand its meaning and significance, he identifies four dimensions of practice that need to be examined: the intentions of the practitioner, the interpretation of the activity by others, the historical and political context. Intuitively this approach seems sympathetic to the concerns of journalism, and provides a framework to examine the question 'What is journalism'. The emphasis thrown on the intentions and interpretation of the activity highlights journalism's role and its relationship with the public. Similarly, the importance of the historical and political context of journalism practice is widely recognised and in tune with the culture of journalism.

Building up the field of journalism along these lines is always going to be work in progress as theory is constantly evolving, never final or complete. A particular problem is the resistance to the very notion of theory and the resistance to research by journalism lecturers. For the latter, the argument is that journalism practice is comparable to academic work, (as manifested in the DCU course with the possibility of replacing the dissertation with journalistic work). It is asserted that it requires the same level of research and analytic skills and should be recognised by academia as being of similar value. This may well be the case but the problem is that journalism practice even at the highest level does not advance our conception and understanding of journalism in the same way that academic research does. It is vital that the position of research and theory building is resolved in order to allow journalism develop as a distinct field of academic study and for journalism education to develop its potential.

Pulitzer (1904) had expected that, by the end of the twentieth century, journalism would be as well established in higher education as medicine or law. Unfortunately, it is still somewhat languishing at the margins. Newman (1996), writing fifty years before Pulitzer, would not have been surprised. In *The Idea of a University*, he drew particular attention to the antithesis, as he saw it, between what is required for journalism or 'periodical literature', and what is required for intellectual training, the former with its incessant demand for views at a moment's notice on all matters of the day contrasting with the 'science, method, order, principle and system' required for critical scholarship. Newman was extreme in his characterisation of journalism as a form of slavery for those engaged in it and as one of the chief evils of his day, yet there is a certain truth in his view of the clash of cultures between the journalism and higher education. It is seen in the continuing antipathy between academics and journalists, both of whom consider it a grave insult for their work to be described respectively as journalistic or academic.

Nevertheless, considerable advances have been made. Institutes of higher education have no difficulty in accepting journalism as a suitable professional or academic discipline for study, and likewise the industry generally recognises the benefit of journalism programmes and journalism research being fully established in higher education. Yet there is room for considerable progress from the current situation.

Journalists could profitably look to educational provision for other occupational groups and their association with the university, and journalism educators could engage more with the principles and processes of education in general to their own advantage and for the betterment of journalism education.

## **9.6 Further research**

There is a need for the development of the two main concepts at the centre of this study, journalism as discussed above, and professional or occupational education as indicated in chapter four. The theoretical foundation of both is not yet well established.

This particular research could be pursued further in many ways. To start with, the issues could be probed through interviewing the educationalists and practitioners involved in the two courses studied. Although such interviews did not fit into the scope of this research, their personal insights and opinions could considerably enrich and illuminate the findings, and it would be particularly useful to compare and contrast the ideas of practitioner lecturers and academic lecturers. It would also be interesting to carry out this same exercise on the postgraduate courses in journalism even if these are somewhat simpler in not having to cater for the students' general educational development. A comparative study of journalism courses in other countries, with different traditions of journalism and of education would be very interesting in view of the claimed internationalisation of the issue in my findings. And finally, in view of the links and overlaps between journalism and media production, another strand to pursue might be the analysis of media production courses using the same approach as has been used in this piece of research.

## Appendix 1

### Research Outline

(for Brian Trench, Head of School of Communications. DCU).

I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Education at Sheffield. The second part of this programme requires the completion of a thesis of 50,000 words based on original research. The topic I have chosen to research is journalism education, specifically the lack of agreement about the content and structure of undergraduate journalism courses. The proposed title is: 'How do you Educate a Journalist? The Conflicting Discourses of Journalism education'. I have been involved in journalism education in DIT since joining the staff in 1978, first as lecturer in linguistics and French and since 1989 as head of department of communications and journalism.

I am planning to investigate undergraduate journalism courses in Ireland, examining the concepts, values and beliefs about journalism and journalism education that underlie the courses. The research is thus concerned with understandings of the role and status of journalism, and of professional/academic education. The intention is that the research will lead to a better understanding of the issues involved and therefore more fruitful debates about the nature of journalism education.

As the topic is to do with meaning as expressed in language, I am using a form of discourse analysis to research the topic, specifically the form of critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. This method entails a comprehensive, multi-layered analysis of a small amount of data which is then referred to wider data in terms of the discourse practice and the wider social context. I am planning to use an analysis of the published descriptions of undergraduate courses as the basis for the research, probing the analysis through examining the production of the texts – the discourse practice – through the self-assessment texts prepared for course reviews and/or through interviews with key informants involved in the course review process. The analyses of such texts and interviews will in turn be linked to the wider educational and journalistic contexts by analysis of more general texts from education and journalism.

## Appendix 2      Core Texts

### Core Text DCU: prospectus 2004

#### BA in Journalism

- **CAO Code: DC132**
- Points Last Year: 490
- Duration: 4 yrs
- Type of degree: Full-time

Minimum Requirements: HC3 English

GCE Requirements: "GCE A-Level C English "

**Contact:** John Horgan, [john.horgan@dcu.ie](mailto:john.horgan@dcu.ie)

Tel: +353 1 700 5479 Room: C148

#### Course Description:

"Journalism provides a broad general education, both in the major subjects covered in the media and the discipline of journalism itself. This is achieved by covering specific topics related to journalism and its practice. You will gain practical skills in print, broadcasting and new communication technologies as well as an understanding of the general context in which journalism is practised (historical, cultural, legal)"

#### Course Structure:

"The undergraduate degree in journalism at DCU is designed to provide a broad general education along with a number of specific subjects and key professional skills appropriate to graduates who choose journalism as a career. Although the course is strongly journalistic in orientation, all students will not necessarily become full-time journalists. Students intending to become journalists should bear in mind that it is an exceptionally competitive profession and that academic attainment at school will not necessarily ensure entry into journalism. "

#### Course Overview:

"The course is designed to provide a qualification which meets the needs of the media industry in Ireland and to the demands of students for a dynamic programme combining academic and practical elements in journalism and related disciplines. The four-year course has three main elements: content of journalism (politics, economics and social issues), the legal and cultural context within which journalism is practised and practical skills. The course is intensive. From the outset, there is a considerable amount of course work, with frequent deadlines. The penalties for not meeting deadlines are severe. "

#### Career Prospects:

"The particular combination of skills and academic subjects on the course offers students a wide range of career choices. The traditional and inadequate image of the journalist is that of the writer or broadcaster whose by-line rapidly becomes a household name. It should be remembered, however, that much of journalism, although it places a high premium on accuracy and speed, is routine work. Applicants should bear in mind that large numbers of journalists are involved as producers in radio and television, or as sub-editors in the equally skilled jobs of designing and producing newspapers, magazines and other publications in paper and digital formats. These jobs are becoming more and more significant in journalism generally. Graduates will have a level of education and skills which will equip them for employment in media and a variety of other areas (e.g. the information sector, the public service, community development). "

[See what past graduates did](#)[>Modules currently taught on this course](#)[>Full list of degrees](#) >

## **DIT JOURNALISM WITH A LANGUAGE**

**FT353 Honours degree**

**entry 2004**

### **Programme Description**

This four-year honours degree programme is aimed at students who wish to pursue journalism as a career and who wish to have the added benefit of being able to work through a second language.

It offers a programme of professional education and training that will enable students to achieve their full potential and to acquire a range of transferable skills relevant to employment in journalism and related fields. It will also allow students to proceed to postgraduate study. Graduates will be multi-skilled, critically aware, and have a sophisticated understanding of the importance of journalism in society. They will also have a high level of fluency in a second language, be able to move freely between different cultures and work professionally in the target language. The programme also aims to promote understanding of how new technologies are shaping and redefining journalistic practice and to equip students with strategies to adapt to a rapidly changing workplace.

### **Programme Outline**

The programme is based around three areas of study: journalism practice, critical studies and language.

**Journalism practice:** this core area provides a full and thorough grounding in the practice of journalism-print, broadcasting and on-line. The journalism practice stream will be organised, as far as is practicable, so that it occupies one day a week. This allows the class to simulate a working day in a professional journalism environment. It will allow flexibility for visits to courts, galleries, meetings and other events in order to report on them or acquire valuable experience and knowledge.

**Critical studies:** this area gives a critical framework to journalism in its wider social and historical context. It develops the student's analytical, critical and theoretical skills as well as supporting an approach to practice.

**Language:** the study of language aims to provide a rich and exciting educational experience that enhances the student's opportunity to pursue a career as a professional journalist and/or to pursue other career options. The language options currently offered include French, Irish and German (subject to demand). It is hoped to introduce Spanish in the near future. Students study general language and communication skills, the literature of the target language as well as the media and cultural contexts of countries where the language is spoken.

The programme is full-time and is timetabled over five days a week for the four years. Students are expected to complement timetabled hours with private study and self-learning. This is normally expected to be a minimum of thirty hours each week.

### **First Year**

During the first year, students will be introduced to the basics of journalism, of news gathering and in particular, to writing skills. All students will take grammar, shorthand and basic computer and keyboard skills. Students will take programmes in Irish politics, journalism history and the sociology of the news. In the language of their choice, they will undertake a programme in general language skills and be introduced to the literature, culture/media of the country.

## **Second Year**

In the second year, students will build on their writing skills, and will be introduced to radio and television journalism. They will take programmes in newspaper layout and design and, towards the end of the year, produce the students' community newspaper *The Liberty*. The critical studies stream includes programmes in European politics, Irish business and economics, and law, each relating to the media. Ethics and standards in journalism are also addressed. The language programmes continue with a combination of language and communication skills and study of the relevant literature, culture and media.

## **Third Year**

The students continue to produce *The Liberty* in year three, further develop their competence in radio journalism, and undertake more in-depth reporting and commentary with a programme in journalism research and investigative reporting. The critical studies stream explores the relationship between politics, democracy and the media in Ireland and abroad; it also approaches issues of cultural theory through study of the documentary. Preparation for the final dissertation is initiated. In the language options, programmes in the third year can include journalistic work, e.g., producing a newspaper or radio programme in the target language.

It is planned that students of French and German will spend the second semester of the third year in a journalism school abroad. Students of Irish will undertake a work placement in an Irish language media organisation; they may also spend this term abroad, provided they undertake the required Irish language placement at an agreed alternative time.

## **Fourth Year**

In the final year, students will be offered modules in on-line journalism, television reporting and international reporting. They will produce a major journalistic project in print, on-line or radio journalism. They will have further programmes in media law and ethics and will submit a dissertation on a subject of their choice related to journalism. In their language study, they will continue with programmes in media, literature and culture and will undertake a language project/minor dissertation in their stated option.

Students will be encouraged and assisted to arrange placements and work experience during the final year or during the summer of the final year. Throughout the four years students will be expected to produce work to the highest professional standards. Students, including those in the first year, will be encouraged to publish or broadcast their work, through the School of Media's own publications, during the annual radio week or by submitting work for professional publication or broadcast. Students are encouraged to contribute to DIT's own student publications.

## **Duration**

Four years full time.

## **Location**

DIT Aungier Street.

## **Entry Requirements**

Applicants must have obtained passes in six Leaving Certificate subjects, including at least grade C3 on higher level English or Irish. Applicants are

also required to have at least a grade C3 at higher level in the language they intend to study (Irish or French or German).

The Faculty makes special provision for non-standard applicants in accordance with DIT policy. When selecting such applicants, evidence of the following qualities is sought:

- Ability and potential in both practical and theoretical areas of the programme
- A lively interest in ideas, current affairs, communication and expression
- A critical awareness of the role of journalism in society
- An interest in a career or prior involvement in any aspect of journalism.

### **Award**

Bachelor of Arts (Journalism with a Language) of Dublin Institute of Technology with grades of Pass, Lower Second Class Honours, Upper Second Class Honours or First Class Honours.

### **Career Opportunities**

Graduates of the programme are suited to a wide variety of openings in the newspaper, broadcast and web publishing industries in Ireland and in Europe. The programme will assist students to identify their particular career objectives in journalism. Students may also pursue further academic/research study or additional professional qualifications.

### **Progression**

Students who have reached the appropriate honours standard may have access to a range of Masters degrees in DIT and elsewhere in higher education.

### **Further Information**

Secretary  
School of Media  
t 01 402 3098  
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e [media@dit.ie](mailto:media@dit.ie)



## Appendix 3 Course modules

### DCU Entry 2003

#### Programme Structure: B.A. in Journalism

##### Year 1 Semester 1

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Introduction to Journalism	5
Core	Social & Economic Perspectives	10
Core	Media Technology	10
Options	<i>Choose either</i>	
	History & Structure of the Media	5
	<i>or</i>	
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	Total credits	30

##### Year 1 Semester 2

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	News Reporting	5
Core	Reading Media	10
Core	Media Culture & Society	5
Options	<i>Choose either</i>	
	Introduction to Law	5
	<i>and</i>	
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	<i>or</i>	
	Cultural & Historical Perspectives	10
	Total credits	30

##### Year 2 Semester 1

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Feature Writing	10
Core	Introduction to the Irish Political System	5
Options	<i>Choose three</i>	
	Media Audiences and Consumption	5
	EU Policy and Politics	5
	Introduction to Microeconomics	5
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	Total credits	30

##### Year 2 Semester 2

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Ethics of Journalism	5
Core	Radio Journalism	10
Options	<i>Choose Three</i>	
	The Wider Europe	5
	Global Communication	5
	Introduction to Macroeconomics	5
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	Total credits	30

**Year 3 Semester 1**

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Shorthand	
Core	Media Law	5
Core	Television Journalism	10
Options	<i>Choose three</i>	
	Media, Technology & Society	5
	Literature and Journalism	5
	TV Drama & Social History	5
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	Total credits	30

**Year 3 Semester 2**

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Shorthand	
Core	Advanced News Reporting	5
Core	Newspaper Editing	10
Options	<i>Choose three</i>	
	Advanced Radio & TV Journalism	5
	Current Affairs	5
	Public Design	5
	Language (French/German/Irish)	5
	Total credits	30

**Year 4 Semester 1**

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Semester Abroad	30
Options	Students who opt to remain at DCU will be offered modules in the School of Communications and Law & Government	30
	Total credits	30

**Year 4 Semester 2**

Module Type	Module Name	Credits
Core	Dissertation	20
Core	INTRA work placement	5
Core	Newsdays	5
	Total credits	30

## Course modules DIT

### BA Journalism Studies and a Language

#### Year 1

Semester 1 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 1 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 1 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
General Language Skills	2	Writing and Reporting 1	3	Ireland: Politics, Economy and Society	2
Literary Studies	2	Grammar Module	1	Tutorial	1
		Workshops in Computing	1		
Cultural Studies	2	Shorthand	3	From Gutenberg to the Tabloids: the evolution of the press	2
Semester 2 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 2 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 2 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
General Language Skills	2	Writing and Reporting 2	3	History and Issues of Irish Journalism	2
Literary Studies	2	Explorations in Journalism	2	Tutorial	1
Cultural Studies	2	Shorthand	3	Sociology of News	2

## Year 2

Semester 3 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 3 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 3 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
General Language Skills	2	Advanced Journalism and Storytelling	3	Business, Finance and the Economy	2
Literary Studies	2	Broadcast Journalism	3	Tutorial	1
Cultural / Media Studies	2	Quark Express Workshops	1	Ethics and Standards in Journalism	2
Semester 4 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 4 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 4 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
General Language Skills	2	Visual Communication for Journalists	2	European Politics and Society	2
Literary Studies	2	Presenting Television News	2	Tutorial	1
Cultural / Media Studies	2	Production of a newspaper, the <i>Liberty</i>	3	Introducing Law	2

### Year 3

Semester 5 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 5 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 5 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
Language and Communication	2	Production of a Newspaper, the <i>Liberty</i>	3	Political Communications	2
Literary and Cultural Studies	4	Journalism Research and Investigative Reporting	2	Picturing Reality: Studies in Documentary	2
		Radio Journalism	2	Dissertation Preparation	1
Semester 6 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 6 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 6 Critical Studies	Hrs week
Semester Abroad		Semester Abroad		Semester Abroad	

## Year 4

Semester 7 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 7 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 7 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
Language and Communication	2	On-Line Journalism	2	Media Law	2
Literary and Cultural Studies	4	Television Reporting	2	Ethics and Issues in Journalism	2
		Global Issues for Journalists	2	Dissertation Seminar	1
Semester 8 Language	Hrs Week	Semester 8 Journalism Practice	Hrs Week	Semester 8 Critical Studies	Hrs Week
Language Projects		Journalism Projects		Dissertation	

## Appendix 4

### Texts for level three analysis

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