

***NEW DIRECTIONS IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND
THEIR
POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR***

NEW DIRECTIONS IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THEIR
POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR BAHRAIN

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To my late father M A SADEQ

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I n t r o d u c t i o n

It is almost a commonplace that educational history generally of the past 150 years or so has been marked by continuing attempts to tie the education system more closely to the economy, to make schools and other educational institutions serve the needs of industry more effectively.

Historically, education has always embraced vocational elements and aims. It has always combined internal values and cultural objectives (achieved by the study of literature, science, history, mathematics, art and music) with the need to respond to the special, economic and industrial demands of the age. Thus, one of the education service's responsibilities was, and still is today, to produce students with the basic skills which industry and commerce can develop.

Such links with the world of work and employment have been, and continue to be, a powerful influence on the development of education, since societies expect schools to develop in young people the knowledge, attitudes and skills which will enable them to contribute to the economy. Young people and their parents, too, expect schools to help them enter a worthwhile job.

But, schools cannot train workers and the match between

what schools can do and the nation's future manpower needs, which are difficult to forecast, cannot be precise. The problem is caused basically by the simplification of both the educational attitudes, preferences and requirements of employers and the available institutional provision, with the consequent simplification of the attempt to bring the two together.

The first point to be made about employers' reactions to education, of course, is that they are not homogeneous. It is important to recognize, for instance, that very many jobs make no demands on schooling at all, but can be filled by people from quite different cultural backgrounds. Apart from these jobs, there is no reason to suppose that the educational needs of large and small retailers, large and small manufacturers, garages, farmers and insurance brokers are all the same. Even within a single occupational area, say clerical work, educational requirements vary enormously. Further, it seems likely that all these different needs could be met simultaneously only with difficulty, and some of them may indeed be mutually incompatible.

The higher than average rates of unemployment amongst specific groups, such as adolescents and young adults, girls and women, foreign workers and their children in many countries is one indication that there is still scope to extend vocational education and training (VET)

in order to reduce disparities in opportunities for access to employment. This is not a matter of setting priorities among them or merely devising special programmes. The different needs of these groups must be met simultaneously and within the framework of established policies and systems, if the danger of new forms of segmentation are to be avoided in education and in the labour market. Moreover, the emergence of multi-cultural societies in several countries calls for reforms at all levels of vocational education and training to help reduce the risks of social and racial segregation.

However, much of the interest in vocational education and training, and its rising status, arises because a trained person has better chances of access to employment, higher income and satisfying work. There is also much evidence that, with few exceptions, the higher the level of qualifications, the lower the risk of unemployment. It does not follow that training is an absolute guarantee against unemployment, nor that increasing the number of trained people will reduce aggregate unemployment. It is becoming increasingly clear that human resources are as important a part of the economic and social infrastructure as fixed capital investment because they are essential to the development and utilisation of capital and technology. For this reason, the need to help promote economic recovery and new long-term development, to reduce unemployment and to help specific

groups in the labour force obtain access to employment, has brought vocational education and training to the forefront of political discussion.

The intention throughout this discussion is to look at some of the recent initiatives in vocational education and training in the UK and related contemporary issues facing schools and further education institutions, for quite clearly what is happening at the moment is of no little consequence and changes that are currently being made will profoundly affect the education of young people for many years to come. This discussion is, therefore, intended to offer an overview of a service working hard to adjust to the demands for change made by society, by government, by employers and by educational theorists.

The UK has been chosen as the basis of the study primarily because for many years the UK has been perceived as a 'centre of excellence' by policy makers within the field of education in Bahrain, as is evidenced not only by the number of government-sponsored Bahraini students studying in British educational establishments over the years, but also by the preferential status still accorded to UK qualifications in Bahrain. This is not to say that the UK's education system offers the only suitable 'role models' for Bahrain nor that everything originating from the UK's experience in VET has validity in the Bahraini context.

It is the intention of this discussion to examine recent initiatives in VET in the UK in order to ascertain which of these, if any, have relevance to the future development of this sector of education in Bahrain and what the likely implications would be of their introduction - whether introduced in part or in full.

Initially, there will be a review of the historical development of VET in Bahrain up to the present day, with an examination of more recent developments and reforms within the system and a consideration of how VET is currently perceived by those with a vested interest in its performance. The second section of the discussion will undertake a critical examination of the possible origins of the recent impetus for change in VET and how that impetus has been translated into the current initiatives. The implications of implementing competence-based curricula, an approach resulting from current initiatives, will be developed in the third section where it will be discussed from four different perspectives, namely, staff development, institutional development, curriculum development and workplace learning and assessment. The latter will be given particular attention, as it is the area which could have the greatest significance for Bahrain. Finally, the discussion will culminate in a study of those recent UK approaches in VET which might be worthy of consideration by the Bahraini Ministry of Education. This section will

then attempt to anticipate what the possible implications of the adoption of such approaches might be for Bahrain, if they were to be an integral part of future VET provision.

C h a p t e r O n e

Background to Vocational Education and Training

Provision in Bahrain

In order to suggest possible future improvements in the current Vocational Education and Training (VET) provision in Bahrain (Chapter 4) and in an attempt to make this sector of education more responsive to employment needs at national level, it may prove helpful to, briefly, describe the historical background of VET and to examine its progress to its current position, with reference to recent reforms. Since its inception in 1937, VET has developed in two distinct phases - pre-independence (1937 - 1970) and post-independence (1971 to present day). These two phases provide a useful structure for the following discussion. [A brief background to the State of Bahrain is given in Appendix 1.]

Vocational Education and Training in Bahrain goes back to early times when traditional trades, namely, fishing, pearl diving, dhow building, farming, pottery and weaving were the only form of employment for which young people were trained. Learning the skills needed for such trades was not in any way formalised - the responsibility for teaching the necessary skills was left to the senior members of the family and passed down from generation to generation.

with teaching personnel had to be brought in from more developed Arab countries such as Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, to set up and run the programmes. This, inevitably, brought with it a number of problems, many of which are still in existence today and which will be examined in due course.

Thus, VET provision, in its most basic formal structure, was established and was initially introduced through the secondary technical school education (what is now referred to as Secondary Industrial School Education) which started operating in 1937. Besides workshop practice, the programme comprised of a number of theoretical subjects such as Arabic, religion, arithmetic, workshop technology and technical drawing. The programme was of two years duration and mainly aimed at providing the students with basic operative skills in three limited disciplines, namely, carpentry, fitting and blacksmith work.

In spite of all the Government's efforts to develop this sector of education and the improvement that the secondary technical school underwent during the 40's, whether in terms of expanding the school building to accommodate more students, or in the provision of equipment and students' facilities, there was no appreciable increase in admissions - student numbers stagnated at 20 'til 1940. This was mainly because, on

the one hand, education of any kind was seen as a luxury that many families could not afford, particularly the poorer sections of society who traditionally had been associated with craft skills and who lived in far-flung villages where there was no means of transport. On the other hand, for those who could afford to send their children to school, secondary school education meant two options only, either 'General Academic Education' or 'Technical Education', and since Technical Education was, and still is, seen as associated with manual skills, it remained unfavourable.

However, in 1953, a commercial stream was introduced into the secondary school education as a third option. From the Government's point of view, there was a need to diversify the national income to create a balanced economy, not solely dependent on oil, and to develop the financial and banking sector. Thus, the rationale behind implementing commercial studies, as a separate stream in secondary school education, was initiated.

In addition to the general subject of Islamic religion, Arabic and English languages, and social studies, the programme for commercial education contained subjects such as book-keeping, commercial mathematics, economics, statistics and typing (both Arabic and English). Thus, the programme aimed at training students in basic business methods and office management, in which students

were mainly prepared for clerical jobs in the financial and commercial organisation.

The introduction of commercial education strengthened the Government's commitment to promoting VET provision and, as a result, a measure of success was achieved, since, from the 60's onwards, commercial education gained favour by both parents and students. It was seen as a superior alternative to technical education since, on the one hand, it did not require a high level of academic abilities as in general academic education, and, on the other hand, it had greater prestige since it did not directly link its graduates with manual work in industries, as in technical education.

The gradual expansion of both technical and commercial education during the 50's and 60's continued, in terms of school numbers, workshop facilities and adequate provision of resources, in an attempt to meet the demands of the fast growing industries for skilled Bahrainis in the labour market and, indeed, by 1970 all schools were equipped with the latest machinery from Europe, and an increase in students' admissions was achieved.

The achievement in terms of an increase in students' admissions to technical schools was partly due to the fact that the Government paid a monthly inducement allowance to every student joining the technical school

(this allowance was increased in the 50's but discontinued altogether in 1966), but mainly due to the improvement in living standards that took place and the commitment of the Bahraini Government to providing every possible means of help and support (free of charge) to make school education accessible for all.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this stage to remind the reader that there was no provision for girls in the VET sector during the pre-independence period. This was mainly because the traditional Arab culture values did not place high emphasis on women pursuing a career as they were not expected to work - such a perception was, and probably still is today, much more significant in the lower social classes where tradition is more rigidly upheld.

The only truly vocational aspect of girls' education was teacher training, which came in the 1960's.

Interestingly, teaching was one of the few professions considered suitable for Muslim women in Bahrain. This took place in a specialist teacher training institution (The Institution of Female Teacher Training) where students were equipped with basic teaching skills as preparation to become primary and secondary school teachers only. But, unlike their European counterparts, student teachers in Bahrain received no further or higher education prior to starting their two-year teacher

training course. This undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on both the academic ability of teachers and their effectiveness in the classroom.

Before proceeding to the second part of this discussion, namely, the development of VET in the post-independence period, it would be useful to summarise a number of issues which came out of the discussion on the development of VET from its inception in 1932 up to 1970 (the end of the pre-independence period).

It is only with hindsight and the benefit of experience that has made it possible to say that Bahrain, as is the case in many developing countries, suffered from an over ambitious expectation of what education could achieve for the economy - education was viewed as vital for economic growth at this time. This view, however, was aggravated by the nature of the education system introduced, which tended to be based upon systems brought in from more developed Arab countries such as Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, as well as using English and American curricula. Inevitably, what resulted was a multi-stranded educational provision on the island.

As the curricula were unfamiliar to Bahraini nationals, foreign nationals from the relevant countries had to be brought in to set up and run the programmes. The influx of foreign nationals in this way inevitably created

difficulties in terms of their ability to adapt both their methods and individual customs to the Bahraini environment. In other words, a significant feature of the development of VET is the dependence of the system on overseas educational models and expatriate expertise. This dependence, as is indicated above, has had far-reaching implications for both the progress of VET and its successful implementation. This is a problem which continues to this day and has yet to be resolved.

It is easy to criticise this approach but it should be remembered that the Government of the day had few alternatives. What can be said is that greater effort could have been made to integrate both the foreign systems and overseas personnel more effectively into Bahraini culture.

The 'post-independence period' forms the most crucial phase in the development of the VET sector in Bahrain. It was an era of unprecedented economic, social and educational expansion. Along with the rapid and phenomenal economic growth and infrastructure expansion, education also took a leap forward. In fact, soon after the declaration of independence on 15th August 1971, the overall educational structure was completely overhauled and the foundation of the present education system was laid - this period also marks the beginning of what constitutes the current VET provision in Bahrain. (For

details of the current educational structure see Appendix 2).

It should be noted from the outset that in Bahrain today, unlike the U.K., VET refers to secondary school education rather than post-school further education. This stage of school education caters for the 15-18 age group and is considered to be the vital stage in the overall educational structure because, on the one hand, it prepares its graduates for admission to universities, and on the other hand, it prepares a large number of its graduates to enter the labour market in both the industrial and financial sector directly.

During the post-independence period, the Government introduced a number of initiatives which facilitated the adoption of school education by the Bahraini population. One of the most significant features in terms of educational expansion, during the 70's, was the establishment of the Gulf Polytechnic in 1968 and which commenced operations in the early 70's. At this time the Polytechnic only offered courses at technician level in the field of engineering. These courses provided both male and female students with the opportunity to continue their post-school education. This was also seen, from the Government's point of view, as positive action towards the development of female education, which in turn reflected the need to encourage more Bahraini women

to enter the workforce.

Such an initiative, undoubtedly, indicated the Ministry's keen interest in providing Bahraini female students with equal opportunities in both higher education and the labour market. However, access to these courses was restricted by the entry requirements which demanded above average grades, particularly in academic subjects.

In addition, the Ministry of Education launched a sponsorship scheme, as part of the Government's commitment to nationalise all professions (Bahrainisation of Jobs), for those who achieved an outstanding overall result at the secondary school level. Since 1974, the Ministry has sponsored students to continue their studies, in Bahrain as well as in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, in different technical and academic disciplines according to the students' specialisations and the Ministry's needs. Once again, such a scheme was limited to outstanding performers within the secondary school education.

Having briefly described these initiatives in the development of VET sector during the 70's, an attempt will now be made to briefly describe what constitutes the current VET provision in Bahrain. This must be seen in the context of the changing education structure in Bahrain.

'Pre-independence', there were simply primary and secondary levels within school education provision whereas 'post-independence' an Intermediate level was introduced which bridged the primary and secondary levels. Its purpose is to this day, to consolidate what is known as 'Basic Education' and to better prepare students for secondary level education. (For details of this structure see Appendix 2).

In one key respect, Technical and Vocational education did not change from 'pre' to 'post' independence. This was that in the overall VET provision there were only Commercial and Industrial options open to students. However, between 1980 and 1984, the 'Applied Education' programme was introduced. This programme consists of five options:

1. Agriculture and Livestock Resources.
2. Hotel Training and Catering.
3. Nursing.
4. Printing Technology.
5. Textile and Clothing. (Females only).

This programme, according to AL-Sulati and AL-Maskati, was implemented 'as part of the Ministry's commitment to improve the provision of the VET sector'. It was hoped that 'the programme would overcome specific human resources shortages that were hampering national development'. It was also intended that it would

'provide students, who did not wish to continue their academic education after the intermediate stage, with a number of choices in which they could pursue their future career in the labour market'. (AL-Sulati and AL-Maskati, 1987).

The 'Applied Education' programme was introduced in conjunction with different Ministries, namely Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture, Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Health. The duration of study in any of the options given in this programme is three academic years, in which students study general academic subjects in addition to technical subjects according to their subject specialism. This programme is open to students who have a pass grade in the two main subjects, namely, Arabic and English.

It must be remembered, at this stage, that the 'Applied Education' programme constitutes only one half of the total VET provision. The other half is made up of the Commercial and Industrial Education branches which, like the 'Applied Education' programme, are of three years duration. Although both the Commercial and Industrial Education branches are available for those who have successfully completed the intermediate stage, the Industrial branch is confined to male students only, while the Commercial branch caters for both.

Starting with the 'Commercial Education', the programme of study is aimed at providing students with basic theoretical knowledge as well as training them in either Accounting or Secretarial specialisation, in order to equip them with the necessary skills needed in financial and commercial business organisations within the labour market. Thus the programme of study, which requires students with higher abilities in Arabic, English and Mathematics, is designed in such a way that all students follow the same route up to their final year (3rd year) at which time the students have to select one subject specialisation from the two options mentioned above. (For details of the curriculum plan see Appendix 8).

The 'Industrial Education' programme, which is confined to boys only, is divided into a number of specialisations as follows:

1. THE ELECTRICAL FIELD

- Industrial Electricity section.
- Industrial Electronics section.
- Radio and Television section.
- Control Systems section.

2. REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING FIELD

3. MECHANICAL FIELD

- Auto-Mechanics (Petrol section).
- Auto-Mechanics (Diesel section).
- Machine Shop section.
- Welding and Fabrication section.

Unlike 'Commercial Education' where students specialise only in their final year, the Industrial Education programme is structured in such a way that all students are distributed on the above specialisations after the 'Induction Course' which takes place in the first half of the first year.

Students' selection of any one of these fields is pre-determined right at the beginning of the programme by their overall grades in four main subjects, namely, Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science, at the 'Intermediate' stage. Those who have achieved an above average grade in both Mathematics and Science are given a choice to select any one of the above three fields, while those who have achieved a pass grade or who are carrying a subject from the Intermediate Stage, can only specialise in either the Refrigeration or the Mechanical Field.

During the Induction Course, students rotate around all specialisations within one field and decide on which section to specialise in at the end of this period. Students remain in their specialisation up to the end of the three year programme. On successful completion of the programme, students are awarded the 'Secondary Industrial School Certificate' in their subject specialism. (For details of the curriculum plan see Appendix 9).

In addition to the Industrial Education programme, there is another programme called the 'Secondary School Vocational Training' programme - this is a two year full time programme. This programme is designed for students of lowest academic ability in which they can follow one of the following vocational trades:

- Carpentry.
- Plumbing.
- Auto-body repairs.
- Building and Construction.

Students who complete the programme are awarded the 'Secondary School Vocational Training Certificate' in their subject specialism. (For details of the curriculum plan see Appendix 10).

Within the overall VET provision it is possible to identify common approaches. Firstly, traditional teaching methods (ie formal didactic teacher/student relationship) in that formal class contact in both theoretical and practical elements is carried out. Secondly, there are three 'Core Subjects' which are built into each programme, as appendices 3, 6 and 10 reveals. These are not technical subjects, and are as follows:

- Religious Education.
- Arabic Language.
- English Language.

Thirdly, in terms of assessment methods, it should be

noted that all students must have successfully completed the intermediate level before progressing to any programme within the overall VET provision.

The academic year is divided into two semesters in which students are assessed twice per semester, once mid-semester (Formative Assessment) and once at the end of the semester (Summative Assessment). Students can carry failed subjects from one semester to another but must successfully complete all subjects in the academic year plan before progressing to the next year. (For detailed description of assessment system see Appendix 11). Finally, both theoretical and practical teaching and assessment takes place within the school environment.

Although there are a number of issues one might take up at this point, it is worth noting that some reforms have recently been introduced in an attempt to improve the standard of VET provision. The main area of reform lies in the introduction of a 'Modular System' within the industrial branch.

Before attempting to outline these reforms in greater detail, it may prove helpful to 'set the scene' by describing the background to their introduction.

The present structure of the Secondary Industrial Education system in Bahrain (which is still retained in

two schools) is similar to the conventional systems adopted by many countries in the 60's, in which the overall aim of the three year course is focused on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge as well as workshop practice in a particular specialisation. One disadvantage of this programme is that once the student has embarked upon a particular specialism, it is not possible to transfer to another nor is it possible to study more than one specialism during the three years. Another disadvantage is that, from the employers' point of view, there was, and still is, increasing concern about the quality of the Secondary Industrial School graduates, particularly in terms of the occupational relevance of their education.

However, in 1986, the Ministry of Education conducted a number of evaluation studies on the curriculum and the system used for the Secondary Industrial Education. The main reason for these studies sprang from the Ministry's conviction that Industrial Education was facing a number of problems from virtually every aspect, whether from its goals, content, curriculum, academic plans or the quality of its graduates.

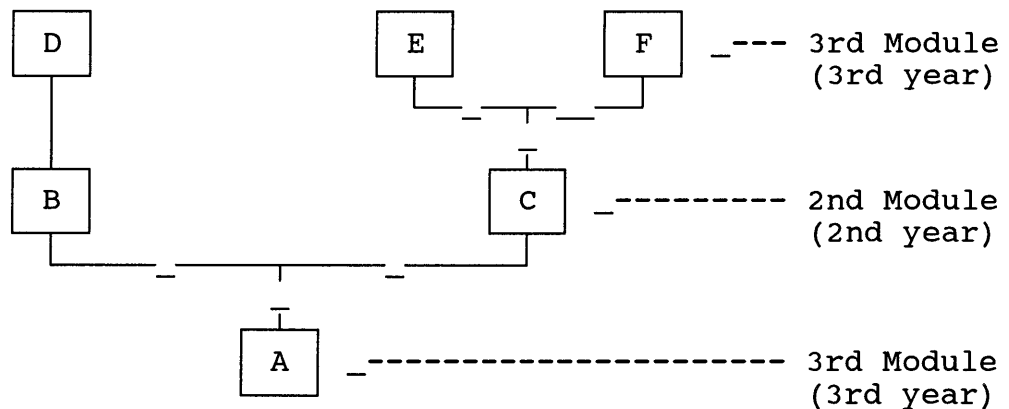
As a result, and as a part of the Ministry's development plan of Industrial Education, the Ministry with the aid of UNESCO experts, decided to replace the existing system with another one called the 'Modular/Credit System'.

This system, which allows students to study and qualify in more than one specialism, is a foreign model which was adjusted with minor modification to fit the existing organisational structure of the Secondary Industrial School. This system was first introduced in 1988/89, and it is hoped that it will be adopted eventually throughout the entire VET sector.

The aim of the Modular System, as stated by the Ministry of Education in a document entitled Development of Education in Bahrain, was that 'it is a revolutionary system ... which is flexibly designed to recognise and improve the quality of its graduates, and provides them with the opportunity to continue their higher studies, as well as turning out medium-level technical personnel to meet the needs of the labour market of technical workforce'. (Ministry of Education, Bahrain, 1990).

Basically, the new Modular System retained the three-year model of the old system, but differed in a number of significant ways. Most significantly, the Modular System allowed students to qualify in one particular vocational trade on completion of a module. This is because the System has three independent modules within each field (each of one year's duration). It, therefore, means that a student can, theoretically, qualify in three different vocational trades - allowing much greater flexibility of student choice and ability to transfer between trades

during the three year period (see Fig. 1).



Key: Letters A to F represent different specialism within one field.

Fig. 1

Students who successfully complete three modules automatically qualify for the award of the 'Secondary Industrial School Certificate'. (For more details of the specialism choices within each field see Appendix 12.)

Another important difference lies in the curriculum itself which has had to be modified in order to fit the new system. Whereas previously the subjects studied tended to be taught in isolation, under the new System

there is a much greater attempt to integrate the subjects within groups identified by the following terms:

'Common Course', 'Complementary Courses', 'Specialized Courses', 'Electives within Specialization' and 'Free Elective Courses'.

The whole 'Modular System' is built upon the concept of 'Credit Hours'. In simple terms, students collect credit hours in order to gain the necessary total credit hours needed for completion of any given subject (each subject is broken down into 'units' and each unit has a credit hour value). (For a detailed breakdown of the Credit System see Appendix 13). The Modular System inevitably increased demands on resources - not least on the teachers themselves who had to come to terms with and implement a radically different system of teaching.

A brief analysis of current VET provision in Bahrain highlights a number of key issues. The most recent statistics reveal that 29.2% of girls are on vocational courses in comparison to 62.3% of their male counterparts (see Appendix 14). As one would expect, VET attracts a far greater percentage of male students - a phenomenon not peculiar only to Bahrain where the need for girls to learn a vocational trade is even less necessary, because of cultural traditions, than in the U.K.

Given that 62.3% of the total male student population in Bahrain are on vocational courses, there is obviously an urgent need to ensure that VET provision is not only of the highest possible quality but, more importantly, of the greatest possible relevance to both students and the labour market's requirements.

Close inspection of current VET provision reveals that it is traditional in nature in that all its programmes are dominated by input-driven models of learning rather than outcome-led models. Both teaching and learning processes are carried out in the school environment where the theoretical knowledge is transmitted to students via didactic methods in the classroom while the relevant practical applications are carried out in the workshop.

Clearly, such methods of teaching and learning (teacher-centred approach) relies completely on the teachers competence as well as his experience in his subject matter. This in turn inhibits the development of students' knowledge with respect to what is currently required in performing their particular subject specialism in the labour market. This is because many teachers have little or no industrial experience and for those who have had some industrial experience, it is often out of date and no longer valid.

This situation is aggravated even further, since, at the present time there is a disproportionate number of non-Bahraini teachers (expatriate teachers) within the overall VET sector, particularly in the Secondary Industrial Schools, as the recent educational statistics published by the Ministry of Education reveals (see Appendix 15). Thus, there is a good reason to believe that whatever constitutes the industrial experience

gained in their home country, it is probably not applicable to Bahraini students. In addition, the statistics also show that a high proportion of both Bahraini and non-Bahraini teachers are not trained and qualified as teachers (see Appendix 16 and 17.)

In terms of assessment, it is clear from the evidence that progress is being made within the VET sector. This progress is shown in the way in which greater emphasis is now being placed on continuous assessment rather than on the traditional, summative type of assessment. It must be said, however, that students are still being asked to regurgitate facts learnt by rote and assessment rarely, if ever, takes place outside the school environment (the concept of work-based assessment is as yet alien to the Bahraini education system). This approach inevitably restricts the system's ability to accurately assess an individual's broader range of skills competence.

An important consideration which should always be borne in mind during any discussion of VET in Bahrain is that Bahraini society is a traditional Arab society in which Muslim customs prevail. In Bahrain today, there are a number of obstacles, which are created by the traditional Arab culture, in terms of meeting the manpower requirements of economic growth - these will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

Apart from the 'Commercial Education' programme, the other programmes that exist within the overall VET provision have been, and still are, associated with manual skills and are, therefore, seen as largely working class by definition, just as it was and, to some extent, probably still is in the UK. For this reason the majority of students enrolled in both 'Industrial' and 'Applied' education programmes tend to be less able students. This has the inevitable consequence that these programmes are regarded as options of the last resort. While ever this situation remains, these programmes will never enjoy the status they deserve. Thus, Bahrain, like many other countries, is facing the dilemma of how to change perceptions and attitudes towards VET - something which can only be achieved over a period of time.

Speaking from personal experience as a Head Teacher in a Secondary Industrial School, if the student has a free choice in the matter, how does he choose an educational programme to follow?

It is clear that in the act of choosing, he is strongly influenced by what he thinks will do the most for his economic and social future. It is obvious that there is a strong student bias in favour of 'white-collar desk' or 'inside' jobs, because a traditional association has been made between manual labour and low social status. Therefore, they view education as an escape route from

social status of manual labour.

On the other hand, with a different group of students, there is a disincentive for obtaining technical and vocational qualifications in a country like Bahrain where many positions at technician level are filled by expatriate labour whose levels of pay are much lower. Thus, a particular problem, at the present time, is the shortage of middle-level Bahraini personnel, and the lack of a proper status for technicians has further aggravated this problem.

Obsession with qualifications, irrespective of the abilities of the person and the quality of their qualification, is a very common feature and is widely spread in the labour market, whether in the public or private sector. This particular obsession creates major obstacles in the context of recruiting good teachers, which should be a top priority on the education lists of all countries. Although, since 1983, a substantial proportion of the national budget was devoted to education in order to improve the quality of its provision, particularly in the field of VET, very little, relatively speaking, has been done in terms of shortages of Bahraini teachers, as Appendix 15 reveals.

What needs to be added here is that the problem of Bahraini teacher supply is not one of simple numbers. It

is first and foremost a problem of quality, that is, getting enough quantity of the right quality. It is obvious in Bahrain that this particular obsession has far reaching implications.

In a society where educational attainments - symbolized by certificates and degrees - are closely linked to preferred categories of employment and to social status, the students who finish have much more promising career prospects. However, in Bahrain there is a reverse point that is less encouraging. People who emerge from Bahraini educational system bearing the proper label of educational qualification for a particular type of work often are not, in fact, well qualified to perform it.

This then leads to the view that there is an urgency, at the present time, for a formal provision of educational guidance and careers counselling on a systematic basis, since pupils have the right to know what they can expect from each sector of education, what qualifications are needed for different careers and what their employment prospects are after graduation. Undoubtedly, such provision has an important role to play in the process of attempting to match students' skills and interests with appropriate careers.

Finally, copying foreign models indiscriminately, with the intention of promoting existing standards to those of

international standards, instead of adapting training programmes to local needs, is yet another area of concern. With reference to the introduction of the Modular System (a foreign model) in 1988 to the curriculum of the Secondary Industrial Education, a developing country such as Bahrain can land in deep trouble by slavishly adhering to the educational forms and rituals of developed or industrialized countries in a context where they simply do not fit.

The main concern is, can the current VET provision in respect of its output overcome or avert human resource shortages that hamper Bahraini national development? Are the newly educated Bahrainis sufficiently qualified for the new jobs in the labour market ?

Starting with the question of educational fitness for the manpower requirements of economic growth, the plain truth is that fitting an educational system to these needs is comparatively simple, but fitting one to the full needs of national development (which is broader and more complicated than economic development) is a far more difficult and subtle affair. In fact, even assuming that the structure and curricula with the overall VET sector were to be completely overhauled to make a perfect fit in these limited manpower terms, there is a good reason to believe that it still would not be adequate. It would not be adequate unless there were a corresponding

overhaul of attitudes and status symbols on the part of students and their families, teachers and administrators, employers and the general public.

It is for this reason that the development of human resources within a country requires basic information on the specific need of society, individuals and manpower requirements of that country. Thus, in terms of the national goals, the conception of VET should be reinforced and attention should be given to the curriculum concerned with responsiveness to these external needs, particularly with the provision of courses appropriate to students who face rapidly changing employment markets.

C h a p t e r T w o

New Approaches to Vocational Education and Training in the United Kingdom

The discussion in this chapter approaches a range of issues involved in VET provision in the United Kingdom in order to examine what past perceptions of vocationalism have been, what they are now and how VET is changing in terms of new concepts and initiatives. However, it may prove helpful, from the outset, to define what is commonly meant by VET - given that there are many diverse interpretations of the term.

Skilbeck defines VET as 'education for work, but more than mere training since it aims to prepare for all the aspects of a social, economic and technological environment rather than just passing on task-specific skills' (Skilbeck, 1985). In other words, VET refers to both the task-specific practical instruction and the more broad-based and transferable learning required for continuing effectiveness in the work role. Therefore, 'vocationalism' refers to a concern with a job or occupation within a programme of learning.

Vocational preparation is generally considered to be a combination of education and training designed both to assist the smooth transition from school to work, and to support a young person in the early stages of working

life. Thus, vocational qualifications are qualifications which relate directly to a person's ability to work. They differ from academic qualifications in that, while they are likely to involve some general learning and theory, they include a practical element which is relevant to a particular area of employment.

Despite the obvious validity of these qualifications, they have never really received the recognition of that given to their academic counterparts. In the U.K., as in Bahrain and elsewhere, a possible explanation for the past absence of serious attention to VET has been the perception of vocational qualifications, 'low-level training' rather than 'education', lacking in a credible knowledge base and as combining part-time preparation for low-level qualifications with 'second chance' opportunities for those who had not succeeded in the 'real' education process. Even at the higher levels of certificate and diploma preparation, VET was seen as concerned with relatively low status employment, with routine teaching of routine information and routine skills for routine jobs.

In some occupations there were many qualifications and their value and relationship to one another were often not understood by employers or those seeking training. For many types of work there was a lack of suitable or relevant qualifications. Access to qualifications was

often unnecessarily restricted according to age, sex or disabilities - or even the lack of availability of suitable learning facilities. Furthermore, requirements for qualifications were sometimes based on the number of classes attended or on the completion of a course in a fixed timescale, rather than on the acquisition of skills - this could result in needless and sometimes costly repetition or discrimination against those who could not attend courses or who had special needs.

In the UK, as in many countries, the boundaries of vocationalism were clear - it was intended for the 14-18 year old age group, and aimed much more at the lower ability range than at those who were able to follow the traditional academic route. However, as the balance has shifted from low-skilled labour intensive industry in favour of low cost labour markets, the last two decades have seen a concern to help industry and commerce compete more effectively in the world market.

This is partly because the technology and work practice have become more sophisticated, and as a result the demands made on the labour force have increased. But, much of the pressure for change has been generated by changes in the economy, the problem of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, complaints of skill shortages and falling standards, and by the politics of alternative approaches to work-related post-secondary

education. Thus, the new broad aims of VET are not confined to training young people for jobs but also include the need to adjust them to a new status, somewhere between work and non-work.

Perhaps it may be worth asking, at this stage, one quite simple question about the new direction in VET provision,

What is meant by 'Vocational'?

The question suggests different emphases if approached in different ways but there are common aspects also. If the focus is on ranges of courses the intentions are those of policy-makers and providers, examining and validating bodies, with attention to conceptions of the practical and theoretical, balances of education and training, options and tracks, occupational outcomes in the labour market. If the focus is on specific courses the intentions are those of scheme designers and institutional decision-makers, with attention to the relevance of the skills to be acquired, the student, the employer and the local conditions. If the focus is on the teacher or the student, the intentions involve considerations of choice and expectation, styles of teaching and learning, implementation and development.

Underlying the discussion, whatever the focus, there will be a set of recurring questions - about the relationship between VET and the economy, the needs of the labour market, the student's personal education, the phasing of

specific knowledge or skills acquisition, the extent and nature of job-related preparation, available models of course design and access to experience.

Although a study of vocationalism relates to the aspirations and expectations of students and staff, institutions and authorities, agencies and policy-makers, the essential focus is the explicit and inexplicit intentions of curricula, the goals set for courses, and their sub-structures and processes.

Over the last few years, new learning strategies have been introduced in schools and colleges. In schools the motivating force behind innovative learning methods has primarily been concerned with helping develop more fully the untapped ability of low achievers. In colleges the motivating force has primarily been concerned with training young people for jobs.

The new learning strategies differ significantly from traditional didactic teaching in that the emphasis is placed on the learner not the teacher. They are fundamentally altering the teacher's traditional role within the classroom and the students too are having to come to terms with change, change which in the main is increasing their participation and responsibility within the learning process. The teacher will, in fact, spend relatively little time teaching in the traditional

sense - his role is to help the student teach himself, an approach known as 'student-centred learning'.

In the last three years or so, student-centred learning has gained a firm foothold in some areas of VET provision. By definition, it is a dynamic interactive process through which young people (and the not-so-young in the case of colleges operating open-access policies) acquire the knowledge and skills which will enable them to take up gainful employment in the modern technological workplace. It is a dynamic process because students learn by doing, by experimenting, by negotiating the curriculum, by taking responsibility for their own learning and, in short, because student-centred learning integrates knowledge and skills.

However, there is still a place for traditional didactic teaching and rote learning - so called 'proper teaching'. Lectures and note-taking, whilst rather passive activities for students, remain, nevertheless, acceptable provided they are kept to a minimum and preferably lead into some form of student activity - activity generally capable of coming under the generic term of assignment, since all student-centred learning strategies are assignment lead.

In addition to the adoption of new teaching strategies, recent years have also witnessed the development and use

of new approaches and methods of defining and measuring occupational competence. However, before examining the latter terms (i.e. occupational competence) in detail and examining their implications, it may prove helpful to look at the origins of such terms.

In 1981, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), as it was at the time, realised that there was a need to establish a new standard and that training should be to 'agreed standards of skill' (MSC, 1981).

In their 'New Training Initiative' the MSC stated that training to agreed standards would 'result in the formation of a more versatile, readily adaptable, highly motivated and productive workforce which will assist Britain to compete successfully in the 1980's and beyond' (MSC, 1981).

Various programmes, initiatives and research work followed in which the Training Agency (formerly MSC) explored how these new standards might be described. This work, together with that of others, led to widespread recognition nationally that what was needed were standards of competence which are precisely and explicitly expressed and criterion referenced.

In 1986, the Government produced a White Paper in which the Training Agency was asked to develop employment

related standards and in which Industry Lead Bodies were asked to develop national standards. An 'Occupational Standards Branch' was set up within the Training Agency to administer the Standards Programme.

Following the 1986 White Paper it became increasingly clear that what was needed was a 'commonality of approach', in other words, standards developed should have three basic aims.

Firstly, they would 'facilitate inter-industry recognition and easy interpretation'; secondly, that they would 'avoid the confusion and cost inherent in asking those who deal with a range of industries and occupations to deal with substantially different approaches' and finally, they would 'allow a national approach to both credit accumulation and credit transfer'. (Debling, G. and Hallmark, A., 1990).

This 'commonality of approach' would, in turn, assist the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in its development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's). (The role and work of the NCVQ will be discussed in some depth later in this discussion). A Technical Advisory Group was established by the Training Agency - overseen by the 'Standards Methodology Unit', whose aim was to encourage 'the adoption of a sound methodology and a common approach to the form and

structure of the standards' (Debling, G and Hallmark, A., 1990).

Before progressing any further in the discussion about standards, it is necessary to examine the concept of competence - a concept which is undoubtedly fundamental to such a new approach.

One difficulty in any discussion of the concept of competence, however, is that it has different meanings to different people. To some, it means the ability to perform specific tasks whereas to others it means criterion-referenced standards as applied to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. What is clear is that if the aim of the Government is to develop a more competent workforce then there must be agreement on what is understood by the concept of competence.

A useful definition has been given by NCVQ which states that competence/occupational competence is 'the ability to perform in work roles or jobs to the standard required in employment' (NCVQ, 1989).

The definition of the concept is based on the idea that competence is not only about attaining a particular standard over a range of contexts but also being able to perform effectively on different occasions.

Mansfield and Mathews developed the concept of

occupational competence further by suggesting that competence in a job 'requires skills in three components - tasks, tasks management and dealing with the role/job environment'. (Mansfield and Mathews, 1985).

Thus, it can be seen that while competence can be used to refer to ability to perform any form of cognitive or practical activity, in VET it is usually applied to occupational activity. Here, increasingly, there are standards, or standards of competence against which (occupational) competence may be judged.

It might be appropriate at this stage to consider the term 'occupational standards' and what it means in the context of competence.

An occupational standard can best be described as 'competence in reality', in other words, competence in a specific occupational area which allows the individual's competence to be assessed.

The term has been more fully defined by MSC as 'standards are based on the needs of employment and embody the skills and knowledge and the level of performance relevant to the work activity. It is envisaged that they will form the prime focus of training and the basis of vocational qualifications'. (MSC, 1988).

In can be seen from the definition above that although occupational standards make it possible to assess whether or not an individual can perform effectively, there is also a recognition that it may also be appropriate to assess whether an individual has the knowledge, understanding and ability to apply that competence to difference contexts.

What we know is that knowledge and understanding are part of the curriculum content of all VET programmes. This is because in order to act we need to know things, and it helps us to act effectively if we also understand why we are doing things. In order to learn how to act effectively - or to use the modern terminology - to perform competently in the work environment, we need knowledge, understanding and skills.

To differentiate between knowledge and understanding in this framework may prove helpful at this stage.

Knowledge, or as it is often referred to, ownership of knowledge, describes the individual's 'ownership' of facts, theories or principles which are needed for competent performance. Understanding, on the other hand, refers to the way in which knowledge is assimilated and applied in different contexts.

Traditionally, in most VET course models, related

knowledge was identified and specified which then went to make up the syllabus for a specific VET course. However, the relatedness of the knowledge to successful performance was often made without detailing the precise nature of such knowledge. These models have, therefore, sometimes reinforced the separation of theory from practice and knowledge from skill.

A problem often encountered has been that the knowledge specified was separated from competent performance and learners have found it difficult to make the links. Rather than contributing to competence in the job or work role, the knowledge content of many courses is sometimes seen as a requirement of an examination.

In the context of the standards framework, however, the role of related knowledge and understanding may properly derive from two considerations. First; where specific knowledge is required for competent performance in the context and work role in which the worker-learner finds him/herself, or in which he/she is likely to be placed in the future. Second; where specific knowledge is needed by that learner-worker during the process of achieving competence. These needs may be identified in advance or may be revealed during the learning process.

Thus, it can be seen that the new emphasis is clearly on 'performance' rather than 'learning inputs' (i.e.

knowledge and understanding). This is not to say that knowledge and understanding are not important in an individual's achievement of occupational competence but rather that they need not be directly evident in the actual structure of standards, nor that they are not highly significant in both the learning and assessment processes.

Not only within the field of VET were perceptions changing, the Government itself had become increasingly concerned about the complexity of vocational qualifications, which were viewed both by employers and prospective trainees alike as confusing and not always adequate, the lack of relevance in education and training to performance in the workplace, the difficulties of access to vocational qualifications experienced by adults, and the widely held perception that vocational qualifications were second-class alternatives to academic qualifications. These concerns were validated by statistics which revealed that only 40% of the workforce had access to relevant qualifications.

This concern resulted in the desire to reform the system of vocational qualifications through the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in October 1986. The NCVQ was set up following the White Paper 'Working Together - Education and Training', (cmd 9823, July 1986) and had nine specific tasks (see

Appendix 18). It must be stressed that NCVQ is not itself an awarding body such as BTEC, RSA, CGLI - it simply recognises qualifications in a specific area which meet standards set by the relevant sector of industry and its own criteria for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's).

Although there were many earlier definitions of vocational qualifications, to which reference has been made, the NCVQ re-define vocational qualification as 'a statement of competence clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate entry into, or progression in, employment and further learning, issued to an individual by a recognised awarding body.' (NCVQ, 1989).

Thus, a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) essentially indicates competence in employment. Competencies in specific occupational areas are determined by what are known as 'Lead Bodies', in other words, representatives of employers, trade unions, the relevant awarding bodies and leading educationalists. This process is considered fundamental to the entire process in that it ensures that NVQ's are not only relevant to work but also recognised by employers.

An NVQ is made up of a number of 'units of competence' each of which is further sub-divided into 'elements of competence', expressed in terms of 'performance

criteria'. The 'performance criteria' indicate the standards of competence to be achieved. It should be noted that an NVQ does not refer to content, mode of delivery or how competence is to be developed - it simply identifies outcomes.

NCVQ has designated five levels of qualifications (see Appendix 19). Needless to say, not all occupational areas will have all five levels of qualifications. The system has been designed in such a way that there can be a logical progression from one level to another and that it is possible to enter at any level according to the individual's abilities and experience. Greater emphasis on the 'Accreditation of Prior Learning' (APL) will facilitate this approach, particularly for those without formal qualifications. The system also allows for progression across occupational boundaries.

NCVQ has set up a national database to assist with the identification of the variety of vocational qualifications and their inter-relationships. This database provides comprehensive information about all NVQ's, their level and the units of competence needed to attain them. It is anticipated that this database will be used by all those involved with vocational education and training.

A new system of recording an individual's plans and

achievements has been established. This takes the form of a 'National Record of Vocational Achievement' and is in four parts: a 'Personal Record', an 'Action Plan', an 'Assessment Record' and, finally, 'Certificates' (including NVQ's and other qualifications). It is envisaged that this 'Record of Achievement' will form part of a national system for recording achievements from school to retirement for each individual.

It is relatively straightforward to identify the aims and tasks of the NCVQ. However, to describe the way in which the new qualifications are to be implemented is much less straightforward and requires much closer examination. This will form the basis of the discussion in the following chapter (Chapter 3).

Chapter Three
Implications of Implementing
Competence-Based Curricula
in the United Kingdom

The main aim of the discussion is to investigate the implications of implementing competence-based curricula in VET courses, as proposed by the NCVQ, with particular reference to four major areas, namely, staff development, institutional development, curriculum development and, finally, workplace learning and assessment, as it is this aspect of competence-based curricula (CBC) which will be the most significant in terms of the successful incorporation of competence-based curricula within Bahrain's VET programme.

Although it is convenient to make a distinction between the first three areas of development, the issues raised under one heading often have implications for the other two. Indeed, although the starting-point for reviewing curriculum development for NVQ's may be to consider how courses should be structured, delivered and supported, the narrowness of such a limited approach should become readily apparent. A more fundamental and thorough-going review is required involving major changes in all three components.

The introduction of NVQ's will undoubtedly have

considerable impact upon the staff of colleges, although to date this is largely only recognised by those staff who are, or who have been, directly involved. Many staff have been happy to adopt a 'wait and see' approach, leaving involvement in NVQ's to others wherever it has been possible to do so. This attitude is to some extent understandable, given the increasing number of initiatives that staff in Further Education (FE) have had to come to terms with and implement. The term 'initiative fatigue' has growing relevance to staff working in VET today.

However, as the momentum for change in the direction of the introduction of NVQ's gather pace, so does the realisation that a coherent, comprehensive strategy for staff development must be established. Moreover, within such a strategy there must be the opportunity for formative evaluation, in order to verify the effectiveness and direction of staff development in the context of overall goals. Without this type of staff development programme, there is the risk that staff will choose to carry on with existing practices, or if the approach is only piecemeal, bad practice is likely to flourish alongside the good practice both resulting in the longer term failure of the new reforms. What is clear is that the changes will not come about if they are left to the chance filtering of knowledge down through the system.

Before considering how such a comprehensive staff development might be established, it first might prove valuable to examine how the proposed changes are likely to affect college staff and thus, in turn, their staff development needs.

An essential difference for staff will be that they will have less formal class-contact time with students in college and, when students are not in college, there will need to be a review of the more traditional methods of delivery and approaches to learning.

Staff will be increasingly involved not only in development links with work-placement providers but also in working in close collaboration with those providers. Indeed, the whole issue of work-based assessment is one which any staff development programme will have to address as a priority. Even where staff already have links with work-placement providers, the nature of these links will have to be re-examined and re-defined in order to meet the demands of the new initiative. The staff development programme will have to equip staff with the necessary 'tools' with which to support, monitor and enhance a system of work-related assessment.

In terms of the curriculum, staff will need a development programme which includes inputs on the Assessment of Prior Learning (APL), the provision of candidates taking

units of accreditation at different times and speeds, credit accumulation and credit transfer, as these are all areas of the curriculum which may well be new to staff and yet are essential to the implementation of a competence-based course.

As yet, no one system of introducing a nationwide staff development programme for CBC has been devised. What is clear, however, is that any such system will need to be vast in terms of its breadth and scale. This has led to the idea that the system should be 'competence-led staff development' as promoted jointly by the FEU and NCVQ in July 1988 and expressed by N Brewster in the pamphlet 'Competence-led Staff Development'. This approach would involve staff development in three stages - firstly, developing an awareness of NVQ's; secondly, an understanding of their implications, and thirdly, the skills needed for the delivery of competence-based curricula.

In addition, it will be necessary to match staff development with the specific role requirements of different groups of staff. For this reason, it is thought that an inter-college approach would make the most sense and in this respect, it would benefit from regional co-ordination. Indeed, the FEU and NCVQ have agreed on the need to promote a regional staff development and support service to support the

implementation of the NVQ initiative. A regional system has the additional benefits of being more cost-effective, better coordinated and able to disseminate good practice. In any national initiative, there is always the danger that there will be a gulf between what is advocated at national level and the response at local level - in other words, that the rhetoric never becomes reality.

Not only staff within colleges will be significantly affected by the introduction of NVQ's, but their institutions will also discover that new initiative brings with it an increased pressure for them to change -this is in addition to the pressures resulting from demographic trends and tighter financial constraints on colleges which institutions are currently facing.

Colleges appear to adopt one of two approaches in the face of the challenge set by the arrival of the NCVQ initiative. Some colleges turn to 'tried and tested' areas of work such as GCSE and 'A' level provision - an area perceived as being both more familiar and financially more secure and one where there might be an opportunity to maintain, or even increase, staff/student ratios (unlike vocational qualifications where the opposite is more likely). Other colleges are more entrepreneurial in approach, they view the NCVQ initiative as an opportunity to diversify their provision to new client groups.

Where colleges have adopted the latter approach, there tends to be a growing awareness that changes in their organisation will be needed. Such changes might include re-defining the distinctions between full and part-time courses, re-assessing the mechanism of credit transfer within and between modular programmes and increasing the provision of 'roll-on/roll-off' facilities which in turn would demand greater resources in terms of resource-based, open learning and self-study materials in college.

If these kind of changes are to be effectively introduced within colleges, there will inevitably need to be a re-appraisal of existing boundaries between departments and the way in which staff and resources are integrated.

Within an institution, staff roles will also need to be re-appraised, particularly at senior management level where staff may well find that they have increased responsibility for areas of work such as marketing, resourcing, salary negotiation and staffing. Moreover, the new learning styles embedded in NVQ's will, to some extent, mean that senior staff will have to re-think their traditional emphasis on course numbers.

It is more than likely that colleges will also witness a move towards industrial training rather than teaching, the appointment of part-time rather than full-time staff and existing full-time staff becoming more involved in

course design, the development of resources, facilitating learning and assessing competence.

One aspect of the implementation of NVQ's which is of prime concern to institutions today is that of cost in an environment where there is constant pressure to reduce costs.

Those responsible for college management are well aware that the cost of delivering the new flexible learning programmes is likely to be high in three key areas. Firstly, there will be the cost of establishing a large scale staff development programme as has already been discussed; secondly, there will be the 'start-up' costs of introducing the new courses and thirdly, there will be the cost of providing additional learning resources to support the new modes of delivery and of incorporating greater industrial relevance within courses.

Undoubtedly, there are also many hidden costs which may not initially be apparent to institutions such as the cost of visiting trainees in the workplace and that of setting up the necessary assessment systems demanded by NCVQ. It is imperative that those with financial responsibility within colleges are able to apply appropriate performance indicators to the changing systems of the future, as indicators such as staff/student ratios, average class size and exam pass

rates will become increasingly effective.

What is clear is that, if provision is to be competence-led, colleges will have to undertake a thorough review of existing policy and management - responsibility for the provision can not be left to course teams, as is often the case currently. There must be a recognition by senior management that many of the changes necessitated by the NCVQ have far-reaching college-wide implications which can only be addressed at senior management level.

Interestingly, in any examination of the implications of implementing CBC for institutions, it becomes apparent that they are very similar to those resulting from other changes in the VET environment. These can be summarised as the need for new client groups in the face of demographic trends; the growing emphasis on adult learning; improved access to learning through the Accreditation of Prior Learning, more flexible programmes and finally, the overall reform of vocational qualifications.

Curriculum development of NVQ's could be seen by the members of course teams in terms of developing the structure, delivery and support needed for their specific NVQ programmes. However, to adapt this view is to seriously underestimate the need for a much more fundamental and comprehensive review of curriculum

development within a college in the light of the NCVQ initiative. Too often today, college managers are distanced from curriculum issues and are thus more than happy for such matters to be left to the responsibility of course teams, or at best, section leaders. It is generally considered to be of significant benefit to a college if it takes part in national or regional curriculum development work, for example, as a pilot college. Such a review must, to be effective, be initiated and supported by college management.

In several forward-thinking colleges, a Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) has been established and, where this is the case, an initiative such as NVQ's is often more easily adopted college-wide. Indeed, the arrival of the new initiative has, in many colleges, provided the impetus for the establishment of a CDU.

It may be helpful, at this stage, to examine briefly the ways in which a CDU could assist with the curriculum development aspects of implementing NVQ's within a college.

A CDU has, ideally, the time and resources, unlike individual members of staff, to gather and record national/regional data on new initiatives and developments, forming, in many cases, a databank or even computerised database of information which is accessible

to everyone within the college. Moreover, it can also disseminate key data to the relevant members of staff as and when deemed necessary.

In addition to its 'intelligence gathering' role, it can often provide support to individuals or groups within the college on various aspects of curriculum development. In this respect, its role takes on a staff development aspect. In the context of NVQ's, this support might take the form of assistance with setting up APL counselling sessions or the systems needed to accommodate 'roll-on/roll-off' access, or even simply helping staff to introduce new methods of facilitating learning.

Whether or not a college is fortunate in having a CDU, the curriculum implications of implementing a CBC are far reaching. For a course team embarking on an NVQ programme for the first time, they may well be involved in some, if not all, of the following activities: liaison with workplace providers to ensure the necessary degree of involvement and integration; the design, development, production and review of teaching materials; the design of new programmes incorporating many new features and the setting up of new assessment procedures. There will also, undoubtedly, need to be a greater emphasis on a team-teaching approach to the delivery of the programme rather than staff adhering to their specific specialisms.

Many existing physical resources may need to be re-deployed in the light of the changing demands of the new-style courses - for example, resource areas may need to be created rather than relying on the traditional college library. Given that within any one group of students, many will be working on quite different competencies at any time and using quite different pieces of equipment or resources, students may need access to more than one resource area at a time. This, in turn, will have considerable implications for the timetabling of rooms.

The problem of reconciling the pressure to increase staff/student ratios, whilst at the same time recognising the demands of an NVQ programme may well mean that more than one member of staff will be needed to work with any one group of students, is one which has yet to be satisfactorily resolved and yet is of great importance whilst staff/student ratios are used as performance indicators.

A key feature of an NVQ programme is that of access, in other words, a more flexible approach by colleges to entry, delivery and progression. The curriculum implications of such flexibility for students would include the provision of modularised programmes which are student-centred and provide self-study materials, the ability of students to 'roll-on/roll-off' courses following an individualised programme of study and

greater access to mature students. Needless to say, these provisions would not be without their cost and in order to recover these costs, colleges will have to generate increased income, for example, from cost-recovery short courses for industry.

Inevitably, such radical curriculum changes will need to be supported by effective systems of communication within a college to assist with student progression between modular programmes which may cross departmental boundaries, an integrated approach to the marketing of courses and links between college staff and representatives from workplace providers.

Many educationalists within the field of VET are of the opinion that the future quality of any competence-based curricula will be determined by the quality of their moderation. In line with existing good practice, the moderation should be supportive, as well as validating. Already, those working within the field of moderation are indicating that the moderation process has not had time to fully evolve in line with the NVQ programme nationally. This could result in a patchy and uncoordinated approach nationally, with pilot centres receiving considerable help and support whilst other centres struggle to cope.

One aspect of moderation that has yet to be reviewed in

the light of NVQ's concerns the newly created roles of verifiers and countersigners. If moderators are to become verifiers and countersigners, who then will take on their previous role of aiding learning and assessment? Indeed, if moderation is to become much more prevalent in the guise of verifiers and countersigners, it is likely that the traditional kudos attached to taking on a moderator's role as a career move, will become less attractive and could thus affect the number of volunteers to this job that, after all, has never been highly paid. These are questions that have still to be raised and resolved.

The discussion so far has looked at the implications of implementing CBC within colleges from the three perspectives of staff development, institutional development and curriculum development, however, as has already been indicated the fourth area, namely, work-based learning and assessment is the one which is possibly causing greatest concern at the present time and the one which has the most significant implications in the Bahraini context.

Perhaps it is appropriate, from the outset, to clarify the on-going confusion of the terms 'work-based learning' and 'workplace learning'. Although both terms are to some extent self-explanatory, a brief examination of how the terms differ in meaning may prove helpful.

'Work-Based Learning' refers to structuring learning in the workplace and not limited to learning that occurs in the workplace. For example, Levy defines work-based learning as:

'Linking learning to the work role and having three inter-related components, each of which provides an essential contribution to that learning process. These three components are:

1. Structuring learning in the workplace.
2. Providing appropriate on-job training/learning opportunities.
3. Identifying and providing relevant off-job learning opportunities.'

(Levy, 1987)

In linking learning to the work role, it is believed that it will, on the one hand, enable workers and employers to better respond to changing labour markets and, on the other hand, it will allow for the provision of learning opportunities on an on-going basis.

As the above definition reveals, workplace learning is only one aspect of work-based learning and one which traditionally has not been developed in terms of assessment of performance. Workplace learning is often associated with the term 'work experience' - a familiar component of many VET courses in recent years and one which all too often failed to be an integral part of any assessment programme. Any learning that did take place or any competence that was developed during a period of work experience was to a large extent only implied.

Assessment of workplace learning is, as a result of the above explanation, necessarily much more restrictive and, again, forms only one of three possible methods of work-based assessment (WBA).

One of the main drawbacks of workplace assessment is that much of the data used for assessment will be highly circumstantial, and demonstration of skills will be often determined by outside factors such as the flow of work on a particular day. Moreover, the logistical and financial implications of this form of assessment are significant. This type of assessment will frequently need to be supplemented by additional information either from the workplace or from other contexts - the alternative being that the assessor waits until the desired kinds of activity happen to occur in the workplace.

In contrast, true work-based assessment uses assessment data and evidence of performance from all three components of work-based learning, namely, structured learning in the workplace, on-job training/learning and off-job learning. This evidence is then used to compile the statements of achievement or competence, as required by NCVQ for the accreditation of NVQ awards.

Having briefly discussed key terms, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the specific demands made by NCVQ in terms of learning and assessment strategies.

For the majority of staff involved in VET, assessment based on elements of competence and their performance criteria is a totally new approach and radically different to traditional practice. Essentially, assessment in a competence-based curriculum relies upon the collection of evidence about a student's performance of the activities described in the elements and then judging that evidence against the standards defined by the performance criteria - its aim being to confirm whether a student is competent and, therefore, entitled to accreditation (the nature of the evidence collected and the way in which judgements are to be made are, of course, already pre-determined in the form of the published standards, the elements and their performance criteria).

With regard to the collection of evidence, staff must ensure that not only is the evidence collected relevant but that it is also demonstrable on more than one occasion and possibly in different situations (in many NVQ elements a minimum number of occasions on which competence must be demonstrated is specified). When judging the evidence, staff have to adhere to the relevant criteria or 'performance criteria' as they are known and in making a judgement the outcome can only be either that the evidence meets the performance criteria or that it does not - in other words, the question of degree of competence does not arise.

In designing an assessment framework, staff have a number of assessment methods to choose from. When assessing evidence of performance, the four key methods are: firstly, direct observation of work activities, secondly, skills/proficiency/competency tests, thirdly, projects/assignments and fourthly, evidence from prior experience. It should be noted that in the assessment of any one unit, one or more of these methods must be employed simply because competence is fundamentally all about performance (this is not to say that supplementary evidence may not sometimes be necessary). When assessing evidence of knowledge and understanding, staff have basically three methods of 'questioning', namely, written, oral and by computer - the latter is not yet widely used as the software is still to be fully developed but it is likely to become an increasingly common form of assessment.

When establishing an assessment system for a competence-based curriculum, there are seven additional factors which need to be considered and each of these will not be examined in brief.

Firstly, staff will need to carefully study the content of different elements and their performance criteria which provide guidance on the types of evidence needed, in order to determine the most appropriate assessment methods to use. This point can best be illustrated with

reference to two different types of elements, for example, elements which relate to the kinds of activities undertaken regularly at work would be best assessed by direct observation of work activities, whereas elements involving group work may be best assessed by projects or assignments. Above all, the content of the element is the essential criteria when deciding on which assessment method(s) to use.

Secondly, in determining how often a competence needs to be assessed, how much evidence is needed, where performance should be demonstrated and which aspects of knowledge are relevant, the course team must refer to the specifications of the elements and their criteria.

A third area of consideration for staff when designing an assessment system is who is going to assess - in other words, the use of internal and external assessors. There are, undoubtedly, advantages and disadvantages attached to both types of assessors. Internal assessors are likely to already know the student either as a work supervisor or trainer and, as a result, can observe a student's performance over a larger period of time and different aspects of that performance. External assessors, on the other hand, would normally come from industry or from a field related to the competence and they are often employed as assessors either on a full-time or part-time basis. This means that they are

unlikely to know the student, and may also be time-constrained on visits thus making any kind of continual observation impossible. There are, obviously, advantages to using both types of assessors and both could be used within one assessment system.

The fourth factor to be considered by those responsible for the design of an assessment system is that of access, because in any system the choice of assessment methods used will, to some extent, exclude some students - for example, where assessment is by direct observation of work activities, students who are not in work or who are in companies which have not been approved to carry out the assessment. This problem can be overcome by building into the system alternative methods of assessment for students.

A highly significant factor in today's VET climate constitutes the fifth area of concern, namely, that of credibility. As with any new initiative that involves change, the assessment methods associated with NVQ's may be perceived as lacking in credibility initially. This perception will only be overcome with time as the system's aims and practices are understood and as its outcomes are judged. Undoubtedly, college staff will have to work hard to assist in changing these perceptions which are often either ill-founded or simply based on the fear of change - the ultimate success of the new

initiative will be largely dependent upon its recognition across the spectrum of VET in the UK.

The costs, both real and hidden, of using different methods of assessment are yet another important consideration for colleges involved in designing assessment systems for competence-based curricula -especially in today's economic climate of cost constraints and reductions in sources and funding. There are costs involved in most assessment methods which range from the costs of developing and providing materials for tests and projects, to the costs of training assessors and setting up a system of verification for assessment in the workplace. Generally speaking, however, assessment is best undertaken where it can occur 'naturally' - in other words, without generating performance solely for the purpose of assessment.

Finally, the course designers must take account of safety and legal restrictions when planning assessment. This is particularly relevant where the competence involves activities which are hazardous or the need for compliance with legal requirements, such as a driving test.

Having thus outlined the key features of NVQ programmes in terms of learning and specifically assessment strategies, it is now appropriate to consider their implications.

Colleges providing VET in the UK have already expressed grave concern over what are perceived to be quite radical, and thus, far reaching changes demanded by NCVQ and not least of these are those facing learning and assessment. Many colleges fear that as the emphasis on workplace assessment increases, so their own involvement could diminish - although some see a new opportunity in the expanding provision for moderating and monitoring standards. A further concern is that experience over the years with work placements for students on VET courses has shown that workplace assessment is only as good as the workplace itself and that the assessment has been more associated with the tasks that students have actually undertaken, than with any competencies they may have developed. Staff within colleges are repeatedly saying that they themselves need training in workplace assessment, as do many of the providers' staff. Moreover, although colleges are advised that assessment can, where necessary, take place in a simulated work environment with the college, it is not clear to what extent this will be either appropriate or, indeed, possible. College staff will have to accept that there will be a move from externally assessed courses to a more internal form of continuous assessment and moderation and that there will be a greater emphasis on criteria referencing as opposed to norm referencing with regards to the assessment of competence.

In terms of the planning and structuring of learning and assessment strategies for an NVQ programme prior to its implementation, course teams are finding that the development work needed is considerable. An added dimension which the new form of skills assessment brings to any NVQ learning programme, is that the programme has to be devised in such a way that a student can, if necessary, move between work placements in order to gain/develop different skills. The extent to which this will be necessary will depend, to a large extent, on the variety of activities and resources within any one provider's organisation. This, in turn, has cost implications for a college because of the resources such development work inevitably demands, namely, time, staff and materials.

In the current environment, where cost constraints are increasing and funding for such activities is dwindling, financing the necessary development work may often prove difficult. For this reason, as has already been suggested, college management must be involved and take ultimate responsibility for the delivery of NVQ's within a college - course teams simply do not have the authority to take the necessary decisions regarding the allocation of resources. It is apparent that where college management has prioritised the introduction of NVQ's within their own college, the initiative is taking a firm foothold and has widespread support amongst staff.

One of the most difficult areas of workplace learning and assessment in any NVQ programme is devising not only how assessment will be carried out in the workplace but also how the off-the-job learning and assessment will be accomplished. NVQ programmes make considerable demands on staff in terms of the collection of supporting evidence for competence and the detailed recording of assessments.

For many staff this is an entirely new approach to assessment and, as such, will require detailed forward planning and preparation. The experience so far of many colleges embarking on NVQ programmes for the first time is that the physical collecting and recording of data is immensely time consuming and, as such, expensive in terms of resources.

In designing an NVQ programme, the course team will have to address the question of how to integrate the knowledge content and the skills development - otherwise there is a very real danger that students will perceive the two elements as unconnected and not view the programme as an integrated whole. It will not be sufficient to say that whilst off-the-job, students will be concerned with the knowledge element of the programme and whilst on work placement, developing skills. Ideally, the student's practical experience should reveal the need for the related or 'underpinning' knowledge.

The staff involved in the design and delivery of a competence-based curriculum will also have to consider how they can manage the learning and assessment needs of a student in such a way that there is a variety of experience ranging from the degree of emphasis on specific skills to the degree of supervision at any given time. This variety of experience should also incorporate times within which the student is not actively engaged in skill development but is able to reflect on their achievements to date and how they might be inter-related or connected to other elements of their programme.

One aspect of developing competence that is regarded as critical to the individual's overall level of competence in a work environment, is that of the transferability of skills. It is, therefore, the responsibility of course teams to try to ensure that students and, indeed, employers alike recognise the importance of learning to perform roles, as opposed to simply achieving competence in specific skills. In a work environment which is constantly changing, it is vital that students who intend to enter the job market are able to adapt both to different circumstances and to different roles.

The new emphasis on the workplace as a key location for the acquisition of skills and knowledge, has far-reaching implications for the traditional relationship between colleges and providers of work places. Historically,

many colleges have developed links with local employers not only through the provision of courses for their employees but also to enhance the quality of their VET provision through the development of work experience components on courses, the establishment of 'Employer Liaison Groups' (or groups with different titles but the same intentions) or through the involvement of employer representatives in course design, implementation, assessment and/or review and evaluation exercises.

However, the demands of competence-based curricula, such as those currently accredited by NCVQ, are such that college staff have to become much more involved with workplace providers despite the costs in terms of time and, thus money, that increased involvement incurs. Moreover, the involvement is two-way in that providers themselves are now being asked to participate much more actively in the delivery of programmes - not least in providing work placements in a more structured and often more frequent format. This, it must be said, is at a time when many providers themselves are feeling the effects of a recession and difficulty in retaining staff. Indeed, many providers faced with the combined effects of a recession and the increased demands of VET in terms of NVQ's and all the inherent hidden and actual costs, are withdrawing their support.

In this light, college staff have to solicit the support

of workplace providers if their NVQ programmes are to be successfully implemented. A major marketing problem is that of persuading workplace providers to participate, especially where those providers have no existing links with the college, such as employees on day-release courses. One possible 'selling angle' could be that many providers have found that having students on work placement enables them to 'vet' potential new employees at very little real cost. Another could be that the college was willing to undertake training needs analyses within the provider's organisation - this, of course, could be of mutual benefit to both partners in the relationship.

So that colleges can build up a more complete picture of their placement providers it has proved helpful for several colleges to seek providers' participation in the collection of data about their organisations through the use of a questionnaire. Where providers are not keen to undertake this kind of survey, the college can suggest that a student on an initial placement could usefully do this on their behalf.

Such a survey would provide colleges (and providers alike) with data on such things as the range of equipment in operation at the workplace or the type of systems employed. Ideally, the data from each survey should be incorporated onto a database which could be continuously

up-dated and added to. Students themselves can be a useful source of information regarding aspects of a workplace if a system of workplace review and evaluation is built into the programme.

Although in a discussion of this nature it is only possible to touch upon the key implications of implementing competence-based curricula, they are, undoubtedly, far-reaching and will have considerable impact upon the VET provision for the foreseeable future.

C h a p t e r F o u r
Viability of the New Approaches to Vocational
Education and Training in Bahrain

Having examined what past perception of VET courses have been, what they are now, how VET is changing in terms of new concepts and initiatives, and their implications in the context of the United Kingdom (Chapters Two and Three), the discussion in this chapter examines the possibility of adopting some of the recent UK approaches and modes of delivery of VET programmes, as well as their implications for the existing Bahraini system.

Of the various new initiatives discussed, three in particular have potentially the greatest relevance to future VET provision in Bahrain and it is these that will be the focus of the discussion to follow. The first relates to the adoption of a more student-centred approach to the way in which curricula are devised and implemented, the second to the introduction of new methods of assessment involving the use of the work-place in that assessment and the third to the involvement of Bahraini employers in VET planning and provision.

From the discussion in Chapter One, the reader can deduce that unlike the UK, the concept of nationalising vocational qualifications (the NCVQ initiative) is not new in the Bahraini context since VET qualifications have

always been nationally determined ever since their inception in 1937. However, what might be useful to consider from recent UK experience in the field of competence-based learning, is the way in which the new teaching/learning strategies moved towards more student-centred learning and assessment, with greater emphasis placed on the learner rather than the teacher and in helping to develop the ability of low achievers.

In a real sense, VET more than any other area of the education service, lends itself to a student-centred approach simply because VET is about skills training. This view of student-centred learning is clearly supported by the UK examining and validating bodies such as BTEC, RSA and CGLI, because they believe that vocational education is about the development of skills, and as pointed out by BTEC, 'the main value of vocational study is demonstrated by what a student can subsequently do and achieve.' (BTEC, 1984). No longer is it considered appropriate to assess students in this area solely by way of knowledge-based examinations. Students on VET courses need to acquire the skills needed for the modern workplace - an environment which, with few exceptions, wants young entrants who are capable of demonstrating competence over a range of skill areas required for use in the work situation. In any case, it is considered inappropriate to assess knowledge by way of traditional written test papers as such forms of

assessment inherently favour the academic and/or those students well suited to rote learning. In other words, the new learning strategies firmly oppose traditional teaching and traditional methods of assessment on the grounds that they fail to bring out the full potential of students in terms of what is gained from the learning experience by the student as an individual.

Many of the young Bahraini people entering the VET sector at secondary school level over the last two decades are the very people student-centred learning aims to help the most; they are not academic, they are the young people who consistently underachieve when traditional teaching and assessment methods are used. Although VET programmes are somewhat less academic, relatively speaking, students' underachievement remain the same. This is not because the examinations were particularly difficult but because many students were not well suited to knowledge-based programmes assessed by terminal examinations. Lack of basic skills in numeracy and communication, for example, placed many students at a disadvantage from the outset and although schools do usually have some provision to offer remedial help to students with problems in these areas, course structures were not sufficiently flexible to cope with such weaknesses and consequently many students were either unsuccessful in obtaining the school certificate or had to repeat the course.

Advocates of the new learning strategies in the UK strongly believe that students learn best by doing, even if doing involves the student coming to terms with the fact that he or she, at this moment in time, lacks the skills necessary to adequately perform a particular task. Insight into one's own weaknesses is often the firm foundation on which to build confidence and skill. Most advocates of the new learning strategies believe that traditional teaching methods have consistently undervalued the ability of students to teach themselves, to find things out for themselves, to complete tasks effectively without constant supervision and to be responsible for their own learning.

Thus, to engage the interest of young Bahraini people (15-18 age group) in what VET courses can offer them, it is obvious that there is a great need to diversify methods of delivery through programmes which both give students a variety of experiences and also involve them in the construction and understanding of those experiences. This would mean that vocational courses should become less knowledge-laden and more concerned with the process of acquiring the necessary skills required by employers in the labour market. This, in turn, would mean that it will be no longer possible for tutors to simply get on with the job, as the job will change so much that it will become necessary for the teaching staff to stop and reflect very seriously on the

nature of what they should achieve and how to achieve it. No longer will a set of teaching notes last a lifetime, no longer can a tutor be secure in the knowledge that the same questions will come up on the exam paper as last year or the year before.

As all student-centred learning strategies are assignment-led, students will no longer be required to spend the lesson entirely within the confines of the classroom. Students may have to commute between a classroom, the course base-room (where specialist equipment is usually located) and the library. No longer is it necessary for students to sit in rows facing the front of the classroom, as tutor input, for most of the time, usually takes the form of being available to give help and advice when required to do so (hence the term facilitate learning). In other words, the library will become the learning resource centre and, of course, the teacher has to become the facilitator. Students may wish to leave school premises in order to obtain information from the local public library or local firm - the assignment-led approach to learning quite definitely frees Bahraini students and tutors (the facilitators) from many of the constraints of time and place.

A well-resourced course may require relatively little input from the tutor in terms of formal teaching as most activities are designed to be undertaken with minimal

tutor involvement unless students themselves identify a need for greater tutor participation by way of instruction or supervision or even formal input. Student-centred learning is ideally much more sensitive to Bahraini student requirements in the area of basic skills. At the very least, a well-resourced simulated work situation is required if skills are to be realistically demonstrated. Practical training in the skills required by employers has to be carried out using modern technology. No-one would suggest that Bahraini schools should provide the very latest in computer, office and workshop machinery. Nevertheless, there has to be a reasonably acceptable fit between resources currently offered by Bahraini schools and the training needs of industry and commerce. This is where the participation of the Bahraini employers, which will be discussed in due course, in the delivery of VET courses through the provision of work placements would be of significance and greatly ease the pressure on schools.

The role of the Bahraini tutor and course team in the learning process fundamentally changes once traditional didactic teaching is abandoned in favour of a student-centred approach. The role of the tutor is now primarily one of manager of the learning process. However, the hardest task for the Bahraini tutor, used to being the dispenser of knowledge, is to stand back and let the students get on with what they have to do. There are

times, of course, when the students will need to be helped along, even the most hard-working students may show signs of need for help if completely left on their own. Some students need a great deal of tutor help and encouragement, particularly during the first few weeks of a course, some may always need such help periodically and some, relatively few in number, really do not need a tutor around at all.

Coming to terms with the knowledge that students can and do learn with little or no formal tutor input is itself a difficult accomplishment. However, this knowledge, coupled with an acceptance that the learning environment can be a place of activity in which, on occasions, the tutor can be less necessary to the learning process, requires an open-minded flexibility.

Student autonomy in the learning process is a concept difficult to translate into practical realization but is nevertheless a goal of all student-centred learning strategies and can be achieved with varying degrees of success depending on such variable factors as the nature of the course and school and tutor commitment to innovation. In its report 'How Do I Learn?' the FEU points out that students will need time to adjust if innovative learning methods are to be successful:

'Students expect a recognizable syllabus which specifies an aim or purpose in learning something and establishing how that is to be achieved. They will take some time to adjust

to the idea of taking a participative and active role in learning, since much of their past experience will be related to learning by being told by someone else. They are not used to being introspective about their learning.'

(FEU, 1982)

If students are to successfully participate in their own learning, tutors involved in student-centred learning will have to liaise closely with colleagues to ensure that the programme is delivered in a meaningful and coherent way. This can be achieved through formal and informal team meetings in which the learning activities and teaching input for each block (a block is a period of time given over for a specific assignment or group of assignments) are identified in terms of skills to be covered and formal lessons or tutor input required. If there is a need for formal input by tutors, and usually there is, the team as a committee of equals, allocates responsibilities to each member. Assignments may be started by one tutor, developed by another tutor and completion supervised by yet another tutor. Teams should, therefore, meet at least once a week to discuss progress during the current block and to discuss particular difficulties that have emerged - there are always some! Thus, team meetings are crucial to the success of the new learning strategies because the roles of each member of the teaching team overlap and inter-relate to one another.

If a student-centred approach is to be implemented in Bahrain, the role of the secondary schools as a provider of education and training and also the role of the Ministry of Education as the examining and validating body, must surely be changed. The Minister of Education must change its traditional role as the sole formulator of syllabuses and examiner, to a new role as specifier of indicative content and validator of course results. Assignments, the main vehicle for learning and assessment (and in that order) should be school-devised and internally marked, although overseen by moderators and assessors, placing primary responsibility for curriculum structure and development entirely in the hands of schools with minimal Ministry of Education interference. This will require the Ministry of Education to specify the curriculum in terms of the intended outcomes of student learning.

The Ministry of Education has a major role to play in ensuring that high standards are set and adhered to by schools running courses which are internally devised and assessed. The aims and objectives of such courses need to be carefully scrutinized and it is equally important that schools are periodically reminded of the need to update their aims and objectives from time to time in the light of on-going experience.

Clearly, the assessment and recording of student

achievement is an area of some concern, as such a new learning strategy necessarily has to operate in conjunction with strictly enforced assessment procedures if a situation is to be avoided whereby a significant number of weaker students 'slip through the net' and gain a qualification not measurable to their ability.

Although recent reforms in VET programmes in Bahrain brought with them the new system of assessment (as described in Appendix 11) which is based on a continuous assessment approach, the traditional time-constrained examination is still seen as the most valid means to decide which students should gain an award. In addition, formal examinations, from the administration point of view, follow a set timetable and it is, therefore, a relatively simple matter to inform students of the time and place and to arrange the necessary invigilation cover. Students then sit the examination, the examiner marks the worked scripts, grades are awarded based upon a rank score and the award is communicated back to the student.

Such traditional assessment procedures involve the very minimum of communication and, as such, the benefits to the Ministry are quite clear. However, such a system where students are assessed on their ability to interpret and write out answers to theoretical questions rather than performance of skills acquired, can have an adverse

effect on the learning processes with 'much of the teaching and learning ... too narrowly tied to preparing students for examination'. (DES, 1987)

Assessment should be much more than this and it should form an essential part of the course itself, with much to offer the learning process. As such, the responsibility for assessment is placed upon the classroom teacher. As BTEC points out:

'Assessment is part of the learning process. It should be related both to the aims of the course as a whole and to the objectives of the course's individual components. Assessment confirms the outcome of learning and is the professional responsibility of the teacher.'

(BTEC, 1984)

In other words, the tutor has the responsibility to oversee the learning of all students in his group as well as recording and reviewing their progress through a structured system of formative assessment.

Assessment, then, can not only contribute to the grade awarded to students, but has formative functions also, particularly with regard to the assessment of work-skills, it is important that Bahraini students can actually do what is being certified, and can do it at the appropriate level. It should provide feedback for all concerned: students, teachers, the institution itself and for employers. To the student, it should be diagnostic,

indicating what success there has been in performance (whether this be in terms of the application of learned knowledge or performance of a skill). It should also, therefore, be useful in indicating what remedial action if any should be taken for improvement. This is why BTEC points out that 'for effective use of assessment, course teams, teachers and students must communicate regularly about the outcomes of assessment, so that learning is reinforced and remedial action is taken.' (BTEC, 1986).

Similarly, for Bahraini tutors and the institution concerned, assessment should indicate how successful teaching has been, and should thus be useful in both short-term and long-term evaluation. Assessment may indicate, for example, what changes in particular teaching/learning strategies and techniques may be needed to make learning more effective and can also indicate the need for possible changes in the longer term. Continuous negative feedback in the form of poor performance in assessment may indicate that changes are necessary in the course or in the curriculum design itself; including, perhaps, pre-course counselling of students.

It is advisable, for both students and tutors, that assessment take place as soon as possible after the task or assignment is completed in order to sustain a 'real work' atmosphere in the learning environment. In this way, students can be actively involved in the assessment

process by being given the opportunity to comment upon their own performance and on what the tutor has to say of that performance. Students too have the added bonus of knowing at all stages just how well or how badly they are doing and, where appropriate, remedial action can be agreed upon by both parties quickly, thus avoiding the often inconvenient time lapse associated with traditional collecting-in of work for later marking.

BTEC recognizes that 'much valuable learning takes place at work, (and therefore) wishes to encourage centres to develop appropriate assessment and accreditation procedures, including assessment at work, to give recognition to this learning.' (BTEC, 1986). It is partially for this reason that the concept of work-based assessment in the UK has been developed, the rationale being that it is not valid to assess practical skills by means of written examinations (a good analogy being the driving test, which for all its faults does attempt to test the candidate's basic ability to drive at the wheel of a car in real traffic rather than by answering questions in writing or by using a simulator). Valid assessment methods should be appropriate to the aims of the course itself and vocational skills in context - and this may well mean at the workplace or workshop areas.

When assessing assignments on a student-centred programme, the assessment itself requires greater

validity and reliability. To allow for a more reliable assessment which produces results linked to the aims and objectives of the course, the use of criteria-referencing, as it has been experienced in the UK, can be adopted. The design of criteria is, generally speaking, the responsibility of the tutor concerned as assessment should obviously take into account the needs of the particular students and course.

Criterion-referencing will enhance the quality of learning in that it will emphasize to the student just what level of performance/skill is required. To this end, the criteria should obviously be made available and explained to the student and should also be used to give feedback to the student concerned, giving the opportunity for him/her to reflect on what was amiss and presenting a starting point for counselling. There is actually much to be gained from the tutor presenting the student with the grading criteria and asking for a self-assessment.

Work-based assignments set by educational institutions are typically research projects, where the student is asked to observe or to find out information which forms part of the syllabus content. In some courses, employers could be asked to participate by setting an assignment which gives the student a real task to do but which is additional to the day-to-day work, and aiming to provide something of use to the employer at the same time. The assessment of such assignments obviously relies upon the

good will of the employer and the provision of sufficient time for the tutor to negotiate the work and to discuss assessment criteria as well as allocating additional time for tutors to visit students at work.

Although the traditional student-centred courses such as those favoured by BTEC in the UK have tended to assess students through a structured programme of assignments, a more varied approach to assessment is increasingly advocated, as is evidenced by the NVQ courses, where assessment can be by observation, oral and written tests, and the production of evidence that a skill can be competently performed.

It is essential that assessment at the workplace consists of a series of practical skills tests, some may be optional and some core, designed to be flexible enough to allow use in a wide variety of particular trade situations. In this form of assessment, each task is broken down into a checklist of activities. The assessor informs the student of the criteria and explains how the assessment is to be conducted. The student is then observed performing the work, and the tutor ticks each activity as it is identified or seen to be carried out. To pass the skill test, all the activities must have been observed on any one or more testing occasions. Some activities may be disregarded depending upon the nature of the situation or upon the policy of that particular

firm. The advantage of this system is obvious; it is a true assessment of work-skills, certifying that the student can complete adequately a number of real tasks in the workplace. An example of a checklist taken from the City and Guilds of London Institute 9441 Certificate in Retail Distribution Skills is given in Appendix 20.

It is apparent that there is a wide divide between the methods of assessment currently used in Bahrain and those which have been developed during recent years in the UK in the new approaches to assessment advocated by those responsible for designing competence-based curricula. If student-centred learning is to be successfully introduced within VET in Bahrain, the Ministry of Education will have to undertake a thorough review of its assessment procedures - for those currently in use, will not be appropriate to a student-centred system. Moreover, it is imperative that in any such review, the Ministry consult closely with key employers as will be explained in the following section.

It should be noted from the outset that, unlike in the UK, the educational system in Bahrain is centralised in that the Ministry of Education oversees every aspect of the system, as well as being the sole examining, validating and awarding body. In such a centralised system the responsibility for initiating change, inevitably, lies entirely with the Ministry of Education.

Implementation of change strategies are then delegated to the Directorate of Curricula which in turn formulates and produces guidelines on implementation procedure. It is then the responsibility of a school's Headmaster to ensure that these guidelines are strictly adhered to -there is very little scope for them to make individual changes.

Although in recent years the VET sector has witnessed a move towards a somewhat de-centralised system in that other Ministries such as Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Information, have been involved in the process of devising curricular programmes (as is the case in the 'Applied Education' programmes described in Chapter One) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, employers have not participated in any such schemes. It is important, at this stage, to point out that there has been no tradition of involving employers in VET, unlike the UK, where there has been a tradition of employers providing workplaces for students on VET courses. This earlier involvement of UK employers has, without a doubt, facilitated the current developments in this sector of education.

The recent experience of the UK, as has already been discussed, suggests that where employers are actively involved (the establishment of 'Lead Bodies') not only in

the setting of standards but also in participating in the delivery of national competence-based curricula, there are considerable benefits to all those concerned with the quality and relevance of VET provision. If Bahrain were to consider actively seeking the participation of key Bahraini employers in the improvement of VET provision, there are a number of significant factors that would have to be taken into account. It must be noted that the key and largest Bahraini employers are predominantly Government-owned organisations or if they are not wholly Government owned, the Government has the majority share holding (major companies in Bahrain are given in Appendix 1).

Major Bahraini employers (very like their UK counterparts) whether in the private or public sector, have always complained about both the shortage of appropriately qualified and skilled Bahraini personnel and the standard of students graduating from the VET sector. In the past, such companies have had no alternative other than to employ expatriate employees bearing the appropriate qualifications along with the relevant background experience to do the job competently. Such an alternative, inevitably incurred extra costs to the companies concerned, as well as a number of managerial problems in respect of their terms and conditions of service, promotion opportunities and welfare - problems that still, to this day, exist not

only in the larger Bahraini organisations but also in educational and other types of organisation.

However, since the 70's the Government's policy of "Bahrainisation", that is the gradual replacement of expatriate labour with that of Bahraini nationals in all sectors of the economy, has created the need to raise the standards of Bahraini school graduates, in particular those from the VET sector, to standards required in industry. Such a policy now means that major companies have to employ a certain percentage of Bahraini nationals and re-train them if necessary. As a result, these companies have had to establish their own training centres, along with their own training instructors and programmes of study. From the employers' point of view, such programmes meant additional costs in terms of resources whilst, from the students' point of view, these programmes were perceived as a much more attractive alternative to the secondary school certificate in the relevant specialisation, and as such, acted as a disincentive to enrolling on VET programmes at secondary school level.

Employers clearly support initiatives which train young people in the skills required for the workplace. If such an approach is to be introduced in Bahrain, the Government will have to find ways of convincing Bahraini employers of the benefits of their involvement in setting

standards, curriculum design and participation in assessment - without which, it is unlikely that the employers will be prepared to incur all the related costs of such involvement. As in the UK, one approach may be for the Government to introduce a scheme whereby employers receive funding related to the extent to which they participate in the delivery of national VET programmes.

In any consideration of the likely viability of these new approaches in Bahrain, it is absolutely essential to examine those factors which might both hinder and assist their successful adoption in the longer term.

Undoubtedly, the 'gap' in VET experience between that of the UK and that of Bahrain is because Bahrain has not had the benefit of the UK's gradual progression in VET over the years, which has culminated in the current initiatives. This in turn means that much of the relevant skills and knowledge acquired in the UK is not available in Bahrain, nor are Bahrainis familiar with the underpinning theoretical background to these initiatives.

Yet another area in which Bahrain falls some way behind the UK in terms of overall VET provision, lies in its teacher training programme which, as yet, is only in its infancy. The viability of these new approaches, especially that of student-centred learning, will depend

largely upon the extent to which Bahraini student teachers are trained in the relevant new techniques. Where Bahrainis have been recently teacher-trained in the UK this is somewhat less of a problem in that they will at least be aware of such techniques. However, they will not have had the opportunity to develop their expertise in a Bahraini context.

Another factor which could play an important role in this area is the variety of nationalities of expatriate teachers currently employed within the VET sector. These teachers have inevitably had differing types of teacher training and teaching experience in their native countries. This lack of commonality in training between staff working in VET in Bahrain could, in turn, hinder the successful adoption and implementation of any new approach, as staff would have varying levels of familiarity with, and experience in, the relevant aspects of the approach in question.

Any new initiative always runs the risk of meeting resistance to change from those who are involved, and there is recent evidence in Bahrain to suggest that this might again be the case were one or more of these new initiatives to be introduced. (The evidence is to be found in the introduction of the 'Modular System' within VET in Bahrain - a system whose introduction was mismanaged and to this day, it is a system which is not

fully understood either by those who deliver it or by those who receive it.) It could also be argued that having had only recently to adopt and adapt to a major new initiative in the form of the 'Modular System', staff within VET may not be receptive to yet another new approach.

Such natural resistance to change is aggravated by the lack of formal management training to be found amongst those in key management positions within VET in Bahrain. This is symptomatic of an education system where there is little or no structured staff development programme, other than that of allowing selected personnel to advance their academic qualifications both in Bahrain and abroad. Thus many key management personnel find themselves in positions of authority without the necessary specialist knowledge and expertise to perform their roles effectively, with all the inevitable consequences for those working for them.

The two remaining factors which are relevant to a discussion of the likely viability of these new initiatives in Bahrain, are more concerned with Bahraini society itself than with VET per se.

The first relates to the introduction of workplace learning and assessment in Bahrain. In a traditional Arab culture, like that still to be found in modern

Bahrain, there is considerable secrecy surrounding how recruitment takes place and to what extent people are recruited as a result of 'wasta', that is, their personal connections to those in positions of power. Were a system of workplace learning and assessment to be introduced as an integral part of VET programmes in Bahrain - a system which would inevitably allow greater internal access to Bahraini organisations and in particular to their personnel, it is likely to be met with some resistance.

The second relates to Bahraini society where traditionally, education is perceived as being very formal, hierarchial and authoritarian. In such a society, any attempt to introduce a student-centred type of system where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, is likely to be met with a degree of suspicion, especially if that system is not seen to operate within the other sectors of the education structure and thus, could be perceived as further devaluing an already under-valued sector.

One of the most important factors in this discussion which would undoubtedly assist the introduction of these new initiatives in Bahrain, is the overwhelming desire of the Bahraini Government to bring the standard of VET up to that of its Western European counterparts. Linked to this is the considerable level of resources which the

Government in Bahrain is prepared to allocate to this sector of the education system. It must be stressed that VET in Bahrain is exceptionally well resourced, in terms of equipment, staffing and materials generally.

Underlying the Government's concern to improve VET provision in Bahrain, is its programme of Bahrainising jobs. This programme is providing the current impetus for change and, to some extent, guarantees that any new initiative which promises to further the Bahrainisation programme will be favourably received by the Ministry of Education.

As has already been mentioned, a number of Bahraini VET staff have been, and still are, educated and teacher-trained in the UK where the new approaches under discussion are key features of courses in both education and training. These people could be at the forefront of any attempt to deliver the new initiatives in Bahrain and as such, provide a lead to their colleagues.

Finally, it must be said that in a country like Bahrain where the education system is highly centralised, the Minister of Education can not only insist that a new initiative is adopted but it can also ensure that it is implemented in strict accordance with the Ministry's regulations, thus guaranteeing a uniformity of approach nationally.

Conclusion

The underlying purpose of this study has been to examine recent UK initiatives within the field of VET and to consider whether they might have possible applications for the future development of VET provision in Bahrain.

In any conception of what constitutes VET, it is clear that the acquisition of skills in preparation for performance in employment should be of central interest. People and jobs are not usually as rigidly positioned as is implied by these conventional employment classifications and their official educational equivalents. It seems reasonable to assume that if a person has a good basic education, is well motivated, reasonably intelligent and has been endowed by his/her education with a measure of flexibility, he/she can adapt quite quickly to a wide range of jobs, regardless of what the 'book' may prescribe in the way of educational qualifications.

Clearly, the UK system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) focuses on competence to perform rather than only on competence to pass exams and is, therefore, heading towards a competence-based system (an outcome-led system) in which the control of learning is exercised in response to progress towards achievement of defined outcomes. Such an approach to VET courses,

promotes access to accreditation by recognising that there are various routes to obtaining knowledge and skills, and that the individual's choice in selecting the 'best route' may depend on the events of learning which have occurred to date.

A key assumption within this approach is that learning can be more effective when individual learners are enabled to use learning styles which match their needs. However, it is far too early to predict the outcome of this approach but what is clear is that the traditional teaching and methods of assessment have, for the moment at least, no major role within the future UK learning environment of VET courses. Indeed, the accent for the foreseeable future, will continue to be on innovation, leading to greater student autonomy both in terms of increasing responsibility for their own learning and responsibility for assessing their own performance.

An understanding of some of the recent UK approaches to VET courses could be of significant importance to those who are in charge of the development of VET provision in Bahrain especially, as the current VET system is undergoing a period of comprehensive review. Undoubtedly, the development of this sector of education is essential to the Bahraini economy if it is to meet the challenges of future world markets and the growth of new technologies at home and abroad.

Although the Bahraini Government is committed to improving the quality of VET provision, and a measure of success has been achieved via the Ministry of Education's policy to increase the flexibility of the VET programmes (through the introduction of the Modular System), there is little, if any, statistical evidence to suggest that such a policy has been successful in meeting the needs of the Bahraini employers.

It should be remembered that the Ministry of Education in Bahrain has to serve the needs of two clients through its provision of VET programmes. These programmes should, on the one hand, serve employers whose needs should be met by vocational qualifications, which in turn should specify employers' requirements and, on the other hand, serve individual learners whose needs should be met by flexible and cost-effective programmes, tailored to their requirements. For this reason, the aims and objectives of these programmes should be defined in vocational terms if they are to be valued highly by Bahraini students who seek the appropriate qualifications to assist them in obtaining and maintaining desired employment.

The analysis of employers' needs and the ability of existing VET provision in Bahrain to meet those needs, should become the main concern of all those involved in VET. VET provision in Bahrain must, therefore, be firmly work-orientated and lead to jobs. In order to achieve

these goals, the existing VET provision should be reviewed and, where necessary, adapted to these needs and a new infrastructure of training and assessment should be created, actively involving industry and commerce. This would necessitate the joint participation of major employers, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour in order to formulate skill standards for vocational areas and levels of performance. This standard-setting process is crucial because it not only ensures that students' qualifications are relevant to work but also that they are recognised by employers as a guarantee of an individual's ability to do a job effectively.

Although the involvement of employers in the design of VET courses is critical, this is only one aspect of the UK's recent initiatives which could have applications for Bahrain - more significantly, it is the work developed in the field of student-centred learning and assessment which has the greatest potential for the overall improvement of VET provision, and it is the one which, UK evidence suggests, is the most appropriate for a system which develops students' occupational skills.

It must be acknowledged that the concept of the student-centred approach to teaching/learning and assessment strategies, which should be supported by guidance, counselling and tutoring together with continual feedback

and assessment, will inevitably face difficulties given the hierarchical, mechanistic and highly bureaucratic structure of Bahraini schools.

It is worth stressing at this point that however well planned the new strategy may be, its introduction into the bureaucratic system of Bahraini schools, which have not previously experienced any such initiative, may well be seen as yet another foreign model and may cause misgivings. Though the potential benefits of the student-centred approach are considerable, these will not necessarily be apparent to, or accepted by, teachers. It is important that teachers are able to understand how such an initiative fits into their working lives, both logistically and philosophically, to be able to see the demands it will make on them together with the support they will receive to help them develop their professional skills in responding to these demands. If this is to be achieved, then those managing such initiatives must demonstrate appropriate commitment to respond to and alleviate anxieties amongst teachers. This may also mean that a more participative style of managerial behaviour should be adopted in order to make people more receptive to innovation and development, as well as making them feel more valued as members of the overall organisation. It is, therefore, desirable that a management strategy in Bahraini schools should evolve which would support such an approach to VET courses and which would continue to

use supportive management strategies both from the outside (the Ministry of Education) and inside the school to ensure the long term success of such an initiative.

As the study has indicated, it is imperative to realise that the introduction of any new overseas educational initiative might require adaptation or modification in order for it to be relevant to the Bahraini context, where traditions, values and cultural experience are considerably different to the UK.

Therefore, if there is to be a major effort towards educational innovation in the State of Bahrain, the education system itself must become equipped with the means of innovation, and there must also be an order of priorities. This suggests the following priorities for the educational system in Bahrain:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| <u>Firstly</u> | Improvement of educational management. |
| <u>Secondly</u> | Improvement of the quality of teachers. |
| <u>Thirdly</u> | Improvement of the teaching/learning and assessment processes. |

Firstly, the education system must be well equipped with appropriately trained modern managers - who in turn are well equipped with good information flows, modern tools of analysis, research and evaluation and are supported by a well-trained team of Bahraini specialists to provide

links between what is happening both in the labour market and the educational system.

Secondly, it is clear that the education system in Bahrain will not be improved until the whole system of teacher training is overhauled, stimulated by pedagogical research, made intellectually richer and more challenging and extended far beyond initial teacher training into a system for continuous professional renewal and career development for all teachers. A reform along such lines carries with it exciting possibilities for attracting more Bahraini teachers into the educational system and for developing new 'divisions of labour' that will open opportunities for teachers' talents to rise and be more efficiently used for teaching. Therefore, teachers who are operating at this new professional level should receive salaries equal to those of the best paid professionals in Bahrain. But, if the rise in teachers' salaries continues to lag behind other salaries, as is currently the case, education will continue to be the last in line for the available teachers supply.

Thirdly, it is the students, after all, and not the teachers who are the victims of antiquated educational arrangements. It is doubtful in the extreme, however, if there is any one way, one technique, one gadget, which all by itself could achieve better results than the generally unsatisfactory ones of the traditional

teaching/learning process. It is a new combination of things; new 'systems' of teaching and learning, that must evolve to do a significantly better job than now. It might pay great dividends to have new kinds of centres for teacher training and career development for the generation of new systems of learning, and for the creation and production of the instructional materials and other accessories required to implement these improved systems.

Finally, it is to be hoped that those responsible for managing and implementing change in today's educational environment are able to keep pace with the ever-increasing pressures made upon them. In Bahrain, there is certainly much work to be accomplished in this respect, since these issues have profound implications for the quality and relevance of the educational experience of Bahraini students in future years.

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A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix 1

The State of Bahrain

Bahrain, an Arab, Islamic independent state, consists of archipelago of a group of 36 small low-lying islands situated halfway down the Arabian Gulf, 25 km from the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia and 28 km from the coast of Qatar.

Out of a total area of 692 km², the Island of Bahrain is the largest (563 km²) from which the state takes its name and where Manama, the capital, is located. Due to its location, Bahrain enjoys an important strategic position for both Gulf and international trade. This strategic position enabled Bahrain to become a leading country in the field of transit trading and endowed it with unique prestige throughout history. Thus, Bahrain has always enjoyed the reputation of a great centre of trade and communication, and is now recognised as a vital junction for air traffic linking East and West.

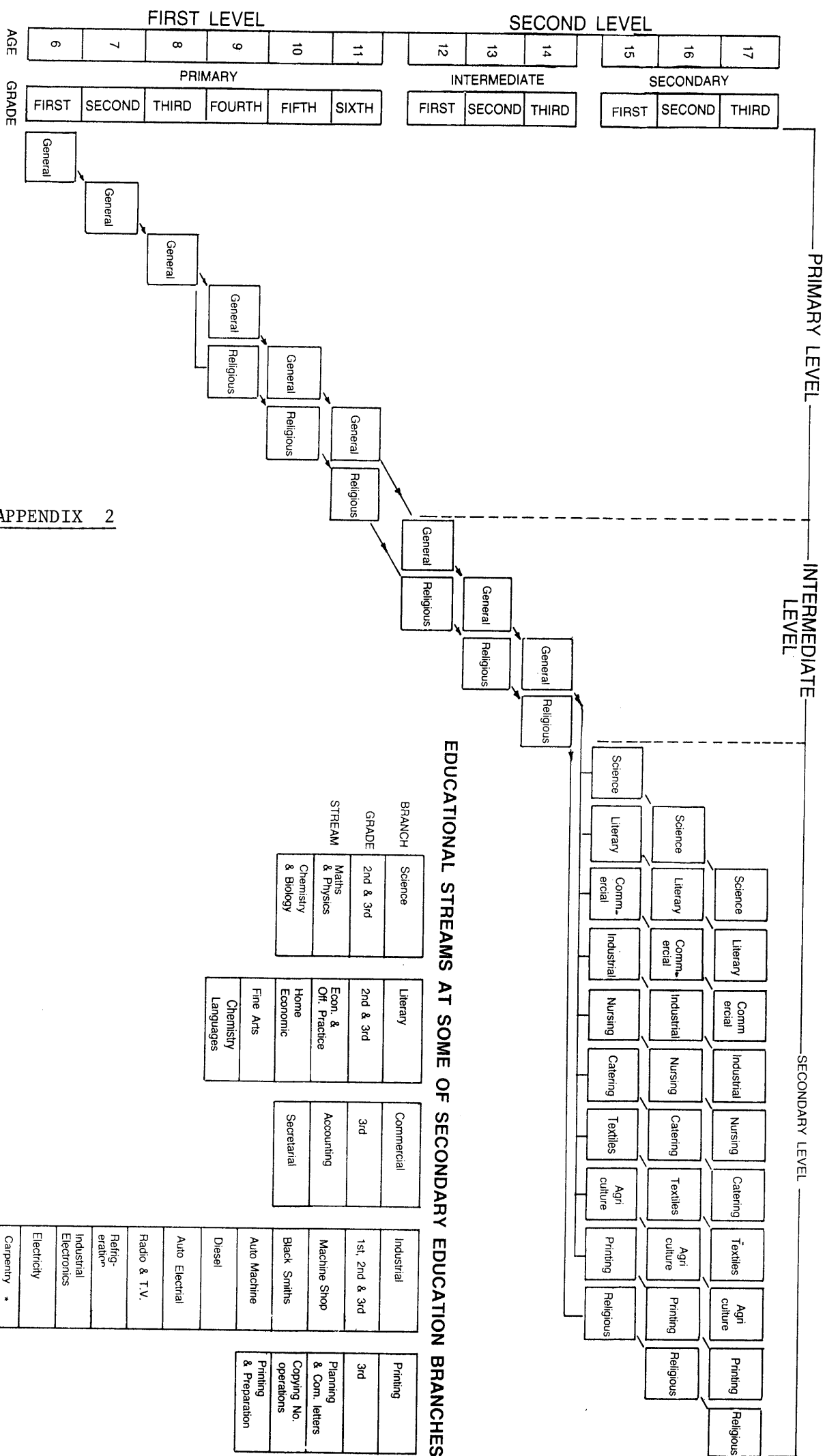
The latest census, published by the Central Statistics Organisation in 1981, shows that the total population was 350,798 inhabitants and the expatriates represent 32% of them, while the estimated population for the year 1987 is 457,599 inhabitants. Bahrain is a country with one of the highest rates of population increase at 3.5% per annum.

The economy of Bahrain has always depended on oil, since its discovery in 1932, as the main source of the national income. However, there was a need to diversify the national income resources, to create a balanced economy, not mainly dependent on oil, and to develop the financial and banking sector.

The manufacturing industries were first introduced in 1968. The first industry was the Bahrain Aluminium Company (ALBA). Since then, a few light industries have been established, such as paper and plastic industries. At the present time, there are a number of well established companies such as the Petrochemical Company, Bahrain National Gas Company (BANAGAS), Aluminium Extrusion Company, Arabian Steel Company and the Arab Ship Repairing Yard (ASRY).

In addition, Bahrain since the 1980's has become known as a financial centre, in both the Arab and the whole world. The Government is increasingly concerned with establishing Bahrain as a tourist destination and with developing its service industries such as insurance, off-shore banking and retailing. Thus, its importance has increased and Bahrain has become an indisputable international financial centre.

EDUCATIONAL LADDER IN BAHRAIN 1987/88



APPENDIX 2

* Full-time
Vocational Training

الخطة الدراسية لفرع الزراعة والثروة الحيوانية بالتعليم الثانوي للعام ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م

Curriculum Plan for Secondary Education (Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Section) 1987/88

Subjects	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	المواد
Religious Education	2	2	2	التربية الدينية
Arabic Language	5	5	6	اللغة العربية
English Language	6	6	7	اللغة الانجليزية
Biology	3	3	3	الاحياء
Physics	—	2	2	الفيزياء
Chemistry	2	3	2	الكيمياء
Mathematics	—	2	2	الرياضيات
Physical Education	2	2	2	التربية الرياضية
Geography	1	2	2	الجغرافيا
Fisheries	4	3	2	الثروة السمكية
Vegetable Production	8	5	5	الانتاج النباتي
Animal Production	3	3	2	الانتاج الحيواني
Statistics and Marketing	2	—	—	الاحصاء والتسويق
Total	38	38	37	المجموع

الخطة الدراسية لفرع الفندقية بالتعليم الثانوي للعام ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م

Curriculum Plan for Catering Branch of General Secondary Education 1987/88

Subjects	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	المواد
Religious Education	2	2	2	التربية الدينية
Arabic Language	4	5	5	اللغة العربية
English Language	5	5	5	اللغة الانجليزية
French Language	3	3	3	اللغة الفرنسية
Physical Education	1	1	1	التربية الرياضية
Typing	1	—	3	الآلة الكاتبة
Mathematics	—	—	2	الرياضيات
General Sciences	—	2	—	العلوم العامة
Principles of Book-keeping	—	—	3	مبادئ إمساك الدفاتر
Humane Studies, Sociology and Psychology	—	—	2	الدراسات الانسانية (الاجتماع وعلم النفس)
Tourist Geography	2	—	—	الجغرافيا السياحية
Catering Sciences	21	21	14	العلوم الفندقية
Total	39	39	40	المجموع

الخطة الدراسية لفرع التمريض بالتعليم الثانوي ٨٧/١٩٨٨ م
Curriculum Plan for Secondary Education Nursing Branch 1987/88

Subjects	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	المواد
Religious Education	2	2	2	التربية الدينية
Arabic Language	4	5	7	اللغة العربية
English Language	5	8	8	اللغة الانجليزية
Humanities (Sociology & Psychology)	-	-	4	الدراسات الانسانية (اجتماع وعلم نفس)
Mathematics	-	2	2	الرياضيات
Physics	-	-	2	الفيزياء
Chemistry	-	-	2	الكيمياء
Biology	-	-	2	احياء
Physical Education	2	2	2	التربية الرياضية
Health Sciences & Nursing	24	18	6	العلوم الصحية والتمريض
Total	37	37	37	الجمع

الخطة الدراسية لفرع الطباعة بالتعليم الثانوي للعام : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م (ذكور فقط)

**Curricular plan for Printing Branch of General
Secondary Education 1987/88 (Males only)**

المواد	الصف الأول 1st Grade	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade	Subjects
التربية الدينية	2	2	2	Religious Education
اللغة العربية	6	5	5	Arabic Language
اللغة الانجليزية	6	6	6	English Language
المواد الاجتماعية	2	2	—	Social Subjects
الرياضيات	2	2	—	Mathematics
التاريخ الطبيعي	2	—	—	Biology
الفيزياء والكيمياء	4	2	2	Physics & Chemistry
التربية الرياضية	2	2	2	Physical Education
الألة الكاتبة	2	2	2	Typing
مواد الطباعة (نظري وعملي) (تصميم وصف الحروف) (عمليات التصوير) (الطباعة والاعداد)	11	16	20	Printing subjects (Theoretical and practical) Planning and composing Letters Copying operations Printing and preparation
المجموع	39	39	39	Total
المواد الاختيارية	3	3	3	Optional Subjects
مجموع الحصص أسبوعيا	42	42	42	Total Number of Period per Week

الخطة الدراسية لفرع الأنسجة والملابس بالتعليم الثانوي للعام : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م (إناث فقط)

**Curricular Plan for Textiles Branch of General
Secondary Education 1987/88 (Females only)**

المواد	الصف الأول 1st Grade	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade	Subjects
التربية الدينية	2	2	2	Religious Education
اللغة العربية	6	5	5	Arabic Language
اللغة الانجليزية	5	5	5	English Language
الدراسات الاجتماعية والانسانية	2	2	2	Social and Human Studies
الرياضيات	2	—	—	Mathematics
التربية الرياضية	2	2	2	Physical Education
الرسم الفني	2	3	3	Technical Drawing
تكنولوجيا النسيج	4	4	3	Textiles Technology
المقاييس والتكاليف	—	2	2	Measurement and Costs
التدريبات المهنية	9	9	10	Vocational Training
المجموع	34	34	34	Total

الخططة الدراسية للتعليم الثانوي التجاري لعام ١٩٨٨/٨٧
Curricula Plan for Commercial Secondary Education: 1987/88

Subjects in Common

المواد المشتركة

Subjects	3rd Grade الصف الثالث		الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	
	شعبة السكرتارية Secretarial Branch	شعبة المحاسبة Accounting Branch			
Religious Education	2	2	2	2	التربية الدينية
Arabic Language	5	5	5	6	اللغة العربية
English Language	6	6	8	8	اللغة الانجليزية
Arabic Typing	4	-	3	4	الآلة الكاتبة العربية
English Typing	4	-	4	-	الآلة الكاتبة الانجليزية
Economics	2	2	-	-	الاقتصاد
Labour Law and Commercial Law	1	1	-	-	قانون عمل وقانون تجاري
Banking Accounting	-	4	-	-	محاسبة بنوك
Secretarial Practice in English	4	-	-	-	سكرتارية باللغة الانجليزية
Secretarial Practice in Arabic	-	-	-	-	سكرتارية باللغة العربية
English for Special Purposes	3	3	-	-	اللغة الانجليزية الخاصة
Financial Mathematics	1	3	-	-	الرياضة المالية
Accounting in English	-	4	2	-	المحاسبة باللغة الانجليزية
Accounting in Arabic	-	2	-	-	المحاسبة باللغة العربية
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	التربية الرياضية
Total	34	34	26	22	المجموع

(Contd.) Commercial Plan.

(تابع خطة التجاري)

المواد المشتركة التي تدرس خلال نصف عام دراسي فقط

Assigned Subjects Compulsory at one term only of the year

Subjects	الصف الثالث	الصف الثاني	الصف الأول	المواد الدراسية
Financial Mathematics	—	5	5	الرياضة المالية
Elementary of Commerce	—	—	4	مبادئ التجارة
Social Subjects	—	3	3	المواد الاجتماعية
Accounting & Book-keeping	—	5	5	المحاسبة وإسناد الدفاتر
Office Practice	—	3	4	الإعمال المكتبية
General Sciences	—	—	3	العلوم العامة

Commercial Optional Subjects

المواد الاختيارية التجارية

Subjects	3rd Grade	الصف الثالث	الصف الثاني	الصف الأول	المواد الدراسية
	شعبة السكرتارية Secretarial Branch	شعبة المحاسبة Accounting Branch			
Salesmanship	2	2	2	—	فن البيع
Store-keeping & Purchasing	2	2	2	—	مخازن ومشتريات
Insurance	2	2	2	—	التأمين
Accounting & Costing	2	2	2	—	محاسبة وتكاليف
Governmental Accounting	2	2	2	—	المحاسبة الحكومية
Shorthand	2	2	2	—	اختزال
Methods of Commerce	2	2	2	—	طرق تجارة
Travel Agency	2	2	2	—	مكاتب السفريات

(تابع) التعليم الثانوي التجاري
(Contd.) Commercial Secondary Education

General Optional Subjects

المواد الاختيارية

Subjects	الصف الثالث 3rd Grade		الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	
	شعبة السكرتارية Secretarial Branch	شعبة المحاسبة Accounting Branch			
Art Education	3	3	3	3	التربية الفنية
Music	3	3	3	3	الموسيقى
French Language	3	3	3	3	اللغة الفرنسية
Social Subjects	3	3	3	3	المواد الاجتماعية
Mathematics	3	3	3	3	الرياضيات
Home Economics	3	3	3	3	الاقتصاد المنزلي
Arabic Typing	3	3	3	—	الألة الكاتبة العربية
English Typing	3	3	3	—	الألة الكاتبة الإنجليزية
Vocational Activities	3	3	3	3	الأنشطة المهنية

Total Number of Common Periods Per Week	34	34	34		مجموع عدد حصص الموارد المشتركة أسبوعياً
Total Number of Optional Periods Per Week	3	3	3		مجموع عدد حصص الموارد الاختيارية أسبوعياً

الخطة الدراسية للمرحلة الثانوية الصناعية : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م (ذكور فقط)

Curricula Plan for Industrial Secondary Education 1987/88 (Males only)

Subject	المجموع Total	التربية الرياضية Physical Education	أشغال الورش* Workshop*	علم أصول الصناعة Technology	الميكانيكا التطبيقية Applied Mechanics	الرسم الهندسي والصناعي Machine Drawing	الرياضيات Mathematics	العلوم Sciences	اللغة الانجليزية English Language	اللغة العربية والدين Arabic Language and Islamic Religion	المادة
Grade											الصف
First	36	1	18	3	—	3	3	2	4	2	الأول
Second	36	1	18	4	2	3	2	2	4	—	الثاني
Third	36	1	18	4	2	3	2	2	4	—	الثالث

* Three days a week.

* ثلاثة أيام أسبوعياً

الخطة الدراسية للمرحلة الثانوية الصناعية لأقسام التدريب المهني النظامي : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م (ذكور فقط)

**Curricula Plan for Industrial Secondary Education Full-time
Vocational Training: 1987/88 (Males only)**

Subjects	الصف الثاني 2nd Grade	الصف الأول 1st Grade	المواد الدراسية
Arabic Language & Islamic Religion	—	1	لغة عربية ودين
English Language	3	3	لغة انجليزية
Industrial Subjects	1	1	حساب صناعي
Machine Drawing	4	3	رسم صناعي وهندسي
Technology	3	3	علم أصول الصناعة
Workshop	24	24	اشغال الورش
Physical Education	1	1	تربية رياضية
Total	36	36	المجموع

Appendix 11

Methods of Assessment

The academic year is divided into two semesters and so are the assessment methods and their procedures. These procedures are based on the continuous assessment approach and comprise the following steps:

1. Regular observation of progress by the tutor.
2. Daily practice which includes verbal, written and practical activities.
3. Applications of knowledge which includes verbal, written and practical activities.
4. Both formal and informal organised activities.
5. Individual and group projects.
6. Short tests.
7. Mid-semester test.
8. End of semester examination.

[The above procedures are in accordance with the educational Legislation Act No. 26/168 - 1/84 concerning the application of the evaluation and examination system, which was approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Education and put into use in the academic year 1984 - 85.]

The continuous approach to assessment is carried out through daily work, and marks are awarded according to individual participation. These marks are recorded and added up at the end of each month in order to measure and evaluate the progress of each student. In order to determine the overall end of semester result of each student, these marks are added up according to the following system:

30% is allocated to the daily marks awarded through the semester.
20% is allocated to the Mid-semester test.
50% is allocated to the End of semester examination.

This system is mainly for 1st and 2nd year. But in the case of 3rd year, this does not apply since there is no mid-semester test. The overall result is, therefore, granted as follows:

15% is allocated to the daily marks awarded through the semester.
85% is allocated to the End of semester examination.
The overall grade for each subject at the end of the year is determined by the average result of both semesters, except for those subjects which are taught as an individual unit in either semester, the grade of which is then considered as the overall grade.

In order to pass the academic year the student must achieve the required percentage which is 50% in both Arabic and all the specialist subjects, but require 40% only in other subjects. Promotion to the next level at the end of the academic year can be granted if the student successfully passes all subjects, or if he/she passes all subjects except one, but this subject must not be a specialist subject. The student who has been promoted despite his/her failure in one subject must attend supporting sessions in the same subject (his/her attendance should not be less than 75%) in order to resit the subject he/she failed in.

Promotion to the next level cannot take place if the student fails:

- In the Arabic language.
- In any specialist subjects.
- In any two or more subjects (apart from specialist subjects).

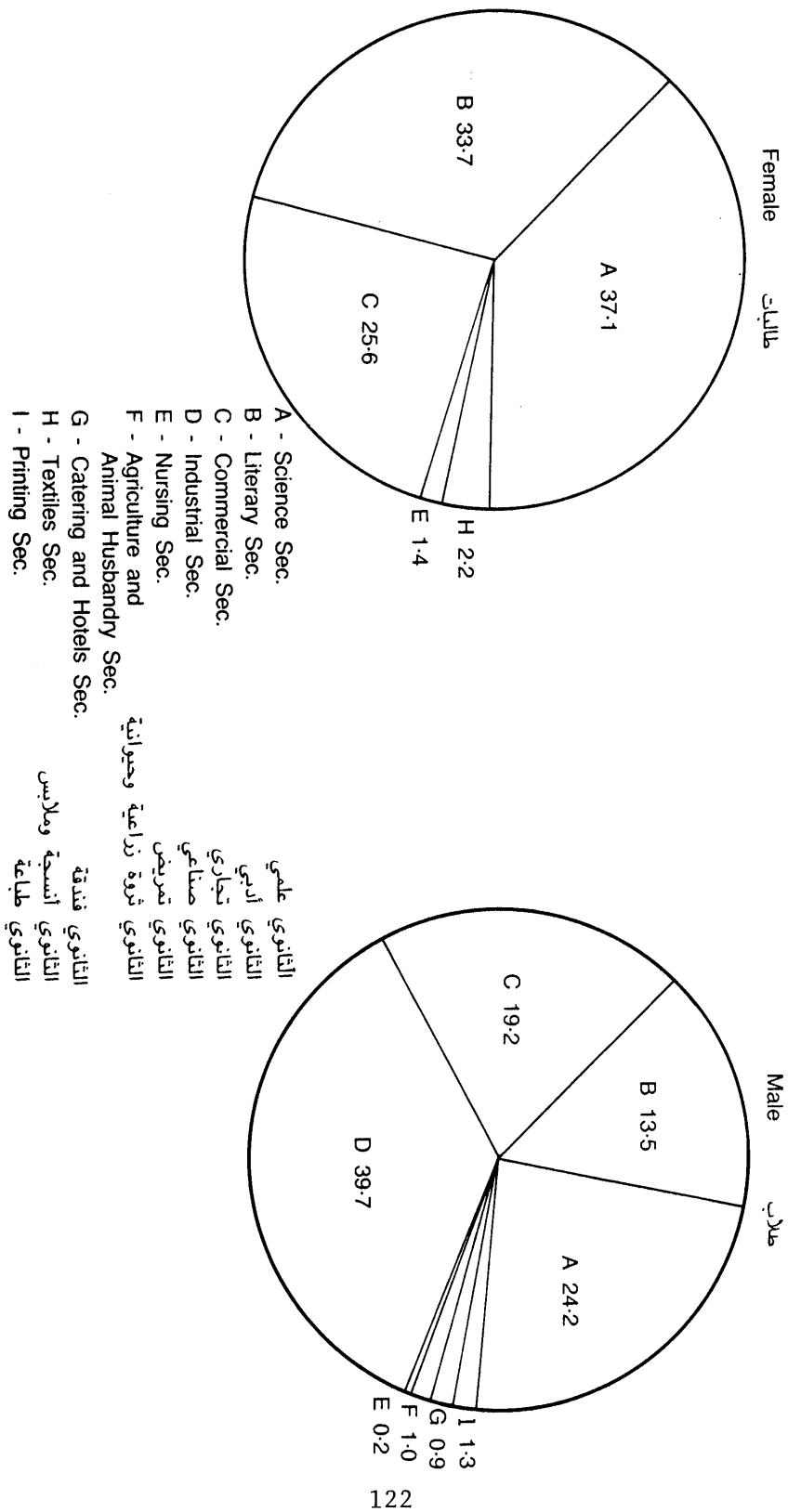
The student, however, is entitled to resit the examination if:

1. He/she has failed to achieve the required average for the overall result of both semesters in one, two or even three subjects.
2. He/she was not able to sit the end of semester examination and produced an acceptable evidence to support his/her absence.

If the student failed the year, he/she is entitled to re-sit the whole year. If he/she failed again, he/she will be dismissed from the school as a full-time student but can re-sit the examination for the third time as a external student.

(Source:- The above is a translation from the Arabic original in AL-Sulati and AL-Maskati (1987).)

توزيع عدد الطلبة في المرحلة الثانوية حسب نوع التعليم والجنس : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م
 Distribution of Enrolments in Secondary Level by type of Education and Sex: 1987/88



عدد المدرسين في المدارس الثانوية الصناعية حسب الجنسية والمواد التي يدرسونها ٨٧/١٩٨٨م (ذكور فقط)
Teachers in Industrial Secondary Schools by Subjects and Nationality: 1987/88 (Male Only)

المواد	الجنسية	النسبة المئوية		المجموع Total	فلبينيون Philippians	هنود Indians	بريطانيون British	تونسيون Tunisians	لبنانيون Lebanese	أردنيون Jordanians	فلسطينيون Palestinians	مصريون Egyptians	بحرينيون Bahrainis	Nationality
		بحرينيون Non-Bahrainis	بحرينيون Bahrainis											
اللغة العربية والدين		100-0	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	Subjects
اللغة الانجليزية		90-0	10-0	20	-	2	-	2	-	1	-	13	2	Arabic Language
الرياضيات		100-0	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	English Language
العلوم		90-9	9-1	11	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	9	1	Mathematics
التربية الرياضية		-	100-0	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	Sciences
الرسم الصناعي والهندسي		100-0	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13	-	Physical Education
الميكانيكا التطبيقية		100-0	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	Mechanical Drawing
التشغيل الماكيني		75-0	25-0	24	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	15	6	Applied Mechanic
للحام والفيركة		66-7	33-3	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	7	Machine Shop & Fitting
محركات الديزل		72-7	27-3	22	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	15	6	Welding & Fabrication
السيارات		69-2	30-8	26	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	17	8	Diesel
راديو وتلفزيون		86-7	13-3	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	2	Auto-Machines
التبريد وتكييف الهواء		90-0	10-0	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	2	Radio & T.V.
الالكترونيات صناعية		78-9	21-1	19	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	10	4	Refrigeration
التعميدات الكهربائية والتحكم		90-4	9-6	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	2	Electronics
أجهزة القياس والتحكم		57-1	42-9	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	Electricity Installation
سباكة المعادن		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Instrumentation & Control
الاعمال الصحية والمنتجات اللوحية		100-0	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	Foundry
السمكرة وصناعة السيارات		100-0	-	6	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	Sheet Metal work & Plumbing
تجارة الآثاث		77-8	22-2	9	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	2	Car body work and painting
أصول الصناعة		100-0	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Furniture Carpentry
قسم العمارة (أعدادي مهني)		100-0	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	Technology
المجموع		81-1	18-90	275	5	6	2	6	1	3	1	199	52	Brick Laying

عدد المدرسين البحرينيين في المدارس الحكومية حسب المؤهل ونوع المدرسة والجنس : ١٩٨٨/٨٧ م
 Number of Bahraini Teachers in Public Schools by Qualification, Type of School and Sex: 1987/88

Qualification	Sex	المجموع Total	أخرى Other	ماجستير غير تربوي Other Masters	ماجستير تربوي M. Ed.	دبلوم عالي غير تربوي Non-Educational Higher Diploma	دبلوم عالي تربوي Educational Higher Diploma	بكالوريوس أو ليسانس غير تربوي Non-Educational Bachelor	بكالوريوس أو ليسانس تربوي Educational Bachelor	دبلوم غير تربوي Non-Educational Diploma	دبلوم تربوي Educational Diploma	الثانوية العامة أو ما يعادلها Secondary or Equivalent	دون الثانوي Pre-Secondary	الجنس	المؤهل نوع المدرسة
Primary	Male	656	-	1	1	1	4	48	100	2	370	117	12	ذكور	ابتدائية
	Female	1 087	-	-	-	1	5	127	246	2	634	50	22	إناث	
Primary Intermediate	Male	292	-	1	-	-	7	26	50	-	171	34	3	ذكور	ابتدائية اعدادية
	Female	234	-	-	-	1	3	23	104	1	93	9	-	إناث	
Intermediate	Male	248	-	-	-	4	3	35	62	-	120	21	3	ذكور	اعدادية
	Female	329	-	1	-	-	10	30	120	1	159	8	-	إناث	
Intermediate Secondary	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ذكور	اعدادية ثانوية
	Female	106	-	-	-	-	15	12	38	4	34	3	-	إناث	
General Secondary & Other Branches	Male	102	7	4	3	2	12	17	45	2	6	4	-	ذكور	ثانوية عامة + فروع أخرى
	Female	249	2	2	4	-	56	41	109	12	22	1	-	إناث	
Commercial Secondary	Male	11	-	-	-	-	3	2	4	1	-	1	-	ذكور	ثانوية تجارية
	Female	141	1	-	-	-	44	42	21	28	2	3	-	إناث	
Industrial Secondary	Male	52	6	-	-	-	-	7	8	22	6	3	-	ذكور	ثانوية صناعية
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Industrial/ Commercial Secondary	Male	42	9	-	-	1	2	15	12	2	-	1	-	ذكور	ثانوية صناعية تجارية
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Religious Institute	Male	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	2	-	-	ذكور	المعهد الديني
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Total	Male	1 410	22	6	4	8	31	150	286	29	675	181	18	ذكور	المجموع
	Female	2 146	3	3	4	2	133	275	638	48	944	74	22	إناث	

عدد المدرسين غير البحرينيين في المدارس الحكومية حسب المؤهل ونوع المدرسة والجنس : ١٩٨٨/٨٧
 Number of Non-Bahraini Teachers in Public Schools by Qualification, Type of School and Sex: 1987/88

Qualification	Sex	المجموع Total	أخرى Other	ماجستير غير تربوي Other Masters	ماجستير تربوي M. Ed.	دبلوم عالي غير تربوي Non-Educational Higher-Diploma	دبلوم عالي تربوي Educational Higher Diploma	بكالوريوس أو ليسانس غير تربوي Non-Educational Bachelor	بكالوريوس أو ليسانس تربوي Educational Bachelor	دبلوم غير تربوي Non-Educational Diploma	دبلوم تربوي Educational Diploma	الثانوية العامة أو ما يعادلها Secondary or Equivalent	دون الثانوي Pre-Secondary	الجنس	المؤهل
Primary	Male	126	-	1	-	1	7	17	96	-	4	-	-	ذكور	ابتدائية
	Female	279	-	-	-	2	9	52	163	-	52	1	-	إناث	
Primary/ Intermediate	Male	152	-	4	3	3	15	43	78	1	2	3	-	ذكور	ابتدائية اعدادية
	Female	61	-	-	-	-	2	20	30	1	8	-	-	إناث	
Intermediate	Male	148	1	6	4	3	11	48	67	2	1	5	-	ذكور	اعدادية
	Female	56	-	1	-	-	1	7	35	-	11	1	-	إناث	
Intermediate/ Secondary	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ذكور	اعدادية ثانوية
	Female	15	-	-	1	1	-	5	6	-	1	-	-	إناث	
General Secondary & Other Branches	Male	186	-	3	-	2	19	74	82	1	2	3	-	ذكور	ثانوية عامة + فروع أخرى
	Female	124	-	8	4	1	8	52	45	1	4	1	-	إناث	
Commercial Secondary	Male	54	-	5	-	-	3	28	16	1	-	1	-	ذكور	ثانوية تجارية
	Female	48	-	3	11	-	-	15	18	1	-	-	-	إناث	
Industrial Secondary	Male	223	1	1	1	7	4	139	53	8	6	3	-	ذكور	ثانوية صناعية
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Industrial Commercial Secondary	Male	116	4	5	4	5	4	58	32	1	3	-	-	ذكور	ثانوية صناعية تجارية
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Religious Institute	Male	13	-	-	1	-	4	-	5	-	-	3	-	ذكور	المعهد الديني
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	إناث	
Total	Male	1,018	6	25	13	21	67	407	429	14	18	18	-	ذكور	المجموع
	Female	583	-	12	16	4	21	151	297	3	76	3	-	إناث	

Appendix 18

The National Council was set nine specific tasks. These were to:

- secure standards of occupational competence and to ensure that vocational qualifications are based on them;
- design and implement a new national framework for vocational qualifications;
- approve bodies making accredited awards;
- obtain comprehensive coverage of all occupational sectors;
- secure arrangements for quality assurance;
- set up effective liaison with bodies awarding vocational qualification;
- establish a national database for vocational qualifications;
- undertake or arrange to be undertaken, research and development to discharge these functions;
- promote vocational education, training and qualifications.

Source: NCVQ (1990). A Brief Guide, London: National Council for Vocational Qualifications.

Appendix 19

The Five NVQ levels defined by NCVQ can be broadly described as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Level I | competence in the performance of routine work activities and/or achievement of a broad foundation of work competence as a basis for progression. |
| Level II | competence in a broader range of work activities involving greater individual responsibility. |
| Level III | competence in skilled activities which are complex and non-routine, including supervisory activities. |
| Level IV | competence in the performance of complex, technical and specialised activities, including supervision and management. |
| Level V | competence in the pursuit of a senior occupation or profession including the ability to apply a significant range of fundamental principles and techniques.
Also, extensive knowledge and understanding of the field and appropriate managerial capability. |

Source: NCVQ (1990). A Brief Guide. London: National Council for Vocational Qualifications.

Appendix 20

Methods of Assessment

Figure 2.3:Workplace assessment checklist

CUSTOMER CONTACT

Test C1a

Preparation

The test should be carried out on the sales floor while the candidate is carrying out a routine task e.g. re-stocking. The role of the customer should be played by another senior member of staff who should make a typical but stretching enquiry of the candidate. The test should be carried out a minimum of two times with different enquiries.

Instructions to candidates

You will be interrupted by a customer (name staff member) with a query some time during the next half hour. You are required to handle the enquiry in accordance with company procedures.

Marking

Each point opposite must be marked with a tick _ if it is carried out correctly or a cross x if it is not carried out correctly or omitted altogether. To pass, the candidate must have a tick _ in all the squares on any two testing occasions.

Note: This test may be used instead of Test C1:Selling.

Customer contact

Test C1a

Marking scheme

Greeted customer promptly and politely

☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Listened attentively to customer requirements

☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Maintained eye contact

☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Demonstrated

1 knowledge of merchandise/staff/
facilities

☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

2 location of merchandise/staff/
facilities

☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Correct tone/inflection of voice used

☐ ☐ ☐

Accompanied/directed customer to
correct location

☐ ☐ ☐

Company policy adhered to with respect to:

1 lack of availability of merchandise

☐ ☐ ☐

2 alternatives offered

☐ ☐ ☐

Customer contact ended positively

Service provided politely and in optimum time

Date(s)	Place	Manager's Signature	Candidate's Signature