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Abstract

The Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme encompasses all levels from introductory to doctoral. It was designed to facilitate the progression of learners through both the Further and Higher Education structures in Northern Ireland and has provided the model for developments elsewhere. Part of its development included a consultative procedure that involved curriculum specialists liaising with a wide range of practitioners to identify strengths and problematic areas within the scheme. The consultation found that, at the time (1998), practitioner awareness of CATS schemes was generally poor. Most teachers of lower level courses felt that the scheme in general would add value to their courses since it would place them within a hierarchical framework and indicate to their students clear forward progression routes. Many teachers of multilevel courses (in particular degrees) felt that attempting to define levels within a course would result in a loss of teacher autonomy and a reduction in the flexibility

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with which courses
nature of their subject?s
student progression through a
concluded that although there was
its potential benefits will only be realized
implemented, it should result not only in a
but also substantial development in the delivery
student learning. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

could be offered. Many interviewees stressed the sequential
structure and the perception that this caused problems for
system of levels based on generic descriptors. It is
broad practitioner support for NICATS, many of
after substantial staff development. When
more transparent description of courses
of curricula and the assessment of