



Teacher education in transition: the changing landscape across the UK

Edited by Jean Murray, University of East London
and Jocelyn Wishart, University of Bristol

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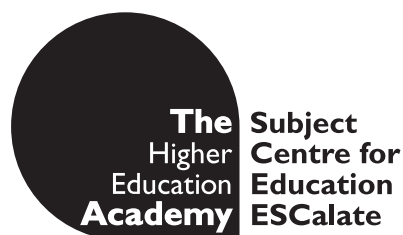
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Introduction



Jean Murray, University of East London

The origins of this publication were in a meeting which I attended in January 2010 with Tony Brown (then Director of ESCalate) and Jocelyn Wishart (its Senior Academic Advisor). At that meeting we discussed ways in which ESCalate could celebrate and re-affirm its long standing support for teacher education. Aware of how teacher education provision across the UK was diverging, we agreed on the idea of a symposium, in which four invited speakers would identify and discuss the changing landscapes of teacher education in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Thanks to James Noble-Rogers, the support of the staff of the University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) and ESCalate, and the commitment of our chosen speakers (now the authors of the papers published here), this symposium eventually took place as an ESCalate-sponsored event within the 2010 UCET conference in Hinkley, UK. The papers in this publication report on the key trends and themes identified and discussed in that symposium in early November 2010.

Gerry Devlin's paper positions teacher education in Northern Ireland as low on the current policy agenda for education. He notes that teaching has long been seen as a profession of choice for able young people in Northern Ireland. Teacher education therefore benefits from entrants with high levels of qualifications, one of the key recommendations of the McKinsey Report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) for creating a strong and effective teaching profession. The teacher education sector has also been commended for its very high standards of pre-service provision. But, as Devlin reports, the current economic climate and a significant deterioration in the employment opportunities for young teachers casts 'a dark shadow over the whole teaching profession'. This situation is made worse by on-going difficulties in establishing a supply / demand equilibrium in Northern Ireland, which now faces an influx of teachers from other parts of the UK. On a more optimistic note, Devlin notes the positive relationships established between the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

(GTCNI) and the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A policy priority for the GTCNI and its partners has been to 'reintellectualise' the teaching profession, not least through the publication of a report entitled 'Teaching: the Reflective Profession' in 2007.

Looking ahead, Devlin predicts that the deployment of quasi-market mechanisms by the Department of Education to allocate scarce resources for teacher education may bring unwelcome fragmentation to HEIs and other stakeholders, rather than the unity which is required to support communal endeavours. Importantly, because of the broader political landscapes in Northern Ireland, he also predicts that there is little chance of teacher education becoming a policy priority in the near future. But he goes on to warn that, in an era of fast economic, social and cultural changes, the status quo cannot remain unchallenged since education has a crucial role to play in achieving 'a new age of enlightenment' in Northern Ireland. Indeed he concludes, 'teachers matter', if government aspirations for excellence in all schools are to be achieved.

John Parkinson's paper characterises the teacher education landscape in Wales as 'rugged'. He traces some of the effects of devolution on education, marking out the introduction of 'The Learning Country' in 2001 as a groundbreaking policy for making provision in Wales distinctive by a variety of means including the promotion of Welsh identity and culture in schools. Given traditional patterns of teacher mobility between Wales and England, this growing distinctiveness in Welsh schools had presented teacher

education providers with dilemmas in terms of how to prepare student teachers. But Parkinson states that, following the Furlong Review of teacher education in 2006 (Furlong et al, 2006), Welsh Assembly Government policy is now clearly directed at a 'made in Wales' policy, that is Welsh teachers are trained in Welsh Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to teach in the country's schools. As a further result of the Furlong Review, Parkinson discusses the re-organisation of teacher education through the creation of three cross-institutional Centres of Teacher Education and Training. This move has brought significant changes to the HEIs, including institutional structural reforms and staff redundancies as well as new ways of working and fresh course developments. The benefits for HEIs of working collegially are now being recognised and brought into the planning of provision for teachers. Parkinson sees this as an area of Welsh teacher education in which past attempts to establish a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework have been far from straightforward. But a positive move here is the establishment of Professional Learning Communities, set up as networks for teachers to share professional practice across groups of schools.

Parkinson analyses a changing government agenda for education initiated by the publication of lowered scores for Welsh pupils in the Programme for the International Student Assessment (PISA). He identifies that the Welsh Assembly Government is now setting up a Standards Unit, strengthening the Schools Effectiveness Framework and requiring the Professional Learning Communities to focus on



literacy, numeracy and countering social disadvantage. Looking further ahead, plans to reduce the number of HEIs in Wales are predicted to bring further changes to the university sector and to teacher education provision.

Joan Whitehead's paper discusses the turbulence of teacher education in England. In particular, she identifies the many changes now underway, most of which could not have been predicted at that first ESCalate meeting in January 2010 and some of which were still not clear at the time of the UCET symposium in early November. The Coalition Government took power in May 2011, and as early as June the new Minister for Education, Michael Gove, stated his views of teaching as a 'craft', best learned in the classroom through an apprenticeship model (Gove, 2010). The White Paper on Education 'The Importance of Teaching', belatedly published in late November 2010, reiterated these key constructions of teacher professionalism, the knowledge bases required for teaching and the implications for modes of teacher preparation.

Whitehead's paper shows that the majority of pre-service teacher education provision (84%)

was still located in HEIs in the academic year 2009-2010, with only 15% in Employment Based Routes and 1% in the Teach First programme (Smithers & Robinson, 2010). But she argues that, for ideological rather than evidence-based reasons, future government policy is unlikely to maintain this balance, with potentially difficult consequences for HEI-based teacher education. As she relates, already the government's decisions around the disproportionate cuts to the number of places for intending secondary students on Higher Education-based routes for the academic year 2011-12 have already destabilised some Schools of Education. Whitehead also identifies a 'policy vacuum' around CPD policy and provision, following the demise of the short-lived Masters in Teaching and Learning route and confused government messages about future directions for the learning of serving teachers.

Given radical changes underway in the school sector in England, as well as in pre-service provision, Whitehead predicts that HEIs will face 'a different and more competitive market' for teacher education places in the future. She concludes, however, that HEIs have proved to be 'resilient and adaptable' in the face of previous government 'reforms' of teacher

education, and believes that these most recent changes, if implemented in appropriate ways and at a reasonable pace, may lead to forms of new and extended partnerships between schools and HEIs.

Writing about Scotland, Ian Menter argues that the effects of devolution there have been 'remarkably insignificant' since the trajectory and traditions of education policy - and Scottish pride in the quality and distinctiveness of provision - were established before 1998. Menter reports on the process by which all the monotechnic colleges of education in Scotland moved into universities in the 1990s and states that this has now resulted in the consolidation of pre-service provision in the university sector. Further benefits have been a strong consensus about the importance of the university's role in teacher education and the overall provision of good quality, research-informed programmes. Menter identifies that the picture for CPD in Scotland is more complicated, but all the various schemes introduced in recent years have demonstrated a 'sustained commitment' to a strong system for teacher learning at all career stages. Teacher education in Scotland would seem then to have a strong and secure base in Higher Education, but, as Menter reports, a reduction in the number of pre-service places available has initiated re-organisations and staff losses within the seven university providers.

The paper also describes and analyses three reviews of teacher education which have taken place over the last ten years, focusing in particular on the findings of the recent Donaldson Review (2011). Menter draws

attention to the contrasts between the overarching themes, language and philosophy of this review and the corresponding aspects of the White Paper on Education (2010) in England. He then goes on to discuss Donaldson's view of teaching as a complex and challenging profession in which both excellence and equity are important factors when considering new entrants to the profession. Donaldson's four foci are also described in the paper: the importance of the continuum of teacher development; the need for greater partnership between stakeholders; the place of the wider university in teacher education; and the centrality of seeing teaching and teacher education as research-informed.

In terms of future challenges, Menter identifies that the Higher Education sector may face more turbulence, with the prospect of the rationalisation of provision and subsequent employment insecurity for teacher educators working in some Scottish universities. He also warns of the dangers of teacher education becoming less visible within Higher Education, given the complexity of organisational structures in large and diverse universities.

As we anticipated when planning this publication, our readers will certainly find evidence across the four papers of the growing divergence in teacher education policies and practices across the UK. Importantly, they will see that divergence is often expressed in varying professional language and underpinned by diverging philosophies and values which create differing constructions of teacher education as a process of social (re)production and of teaching

as a profession. But our readers will also find evidence of some common challenges for teacher education across the UK, including: creating and maintaining strong partnerships between HEIs and schools; continuing to see pre-service education as induction into a complex and research-informed profession; establishing and embedding excellent models for teachers' lifelong learning; coping with shifting contexts for schooling and HEIs; and finding balance between teacher supply and demand. Together these challenges create a common ground for collaborative learning and action for everyone who practices and researches teacher education in the UK. On behalf of ESCalate, I hope that this publication makes an insightful and productive read for all our readers, whatever the policy contexts where their work takes place.

Jean Murray
ESCalate Associate Director
University of East London
April 2011

Author details

Jean Murray is Professor of Education in the Cass School of Education at the University of East London, where she is the Research Leader. She also leads the Teacher Education research group in the School and teaches on doctoral courses. Building on her background in schooling and

teacher education, Jean's research interests focus on exploring the academic and professional identities of teacher educators and their induction and career development within the higher education sector. She is currently leading an ESRC funded research capacity building project, the Teacher Education Research Network (TERN) in the North West of England. Jean is an Associate Director of ESCalate, and the co-leader of the ESCalate provision for academic induction.

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Teacher education in a climate of change: Northern Ireland



Gerry Devlin, General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland

The title of this paper is taken from that of a conference held in April 2003 which initiated what was to become a protracted review of teacher education in Northern Ireland. In fact, it was only during the summer of 2010 that the Department of Education (DE) finally got round to publishing its policy proposals for the future of teacher education (the closing date for consultation responses was 5 November 2010). It is difficult to explain the political and administrative inertia that has bedevilled the review of teacher education although the vagaries of politics in Northern Ireland and the attempt to establish a local Assembly and Executive has meant that, for both politicians and senior civil servants, teacher education was a low priority. Hence it must be stated that, for whatever reason, political and civil service leadership in this policy area has been minimalist to say the least. Moreover, the time-lag of more than seven years from the initiation of the

review in April 2003 to the closing date for consultation responses in November 2010 has seen a significant change throughout the UK. In short, the review of teacher education was initiated at a time of relative economic optimism, and the final policy proposals published for consultation at a time of financial retrenchment and pessimism across the public sector. In this context, teacher educators and the wider teaching profession in Northern Ireland can be forgiven for being somewhat cynical about the way forward.

The rest of this paper will, albeit briefly, give a summary of the review process, while at the same time, trying to identify some of the positive developments that have taken place. Furthermore, it will also consider the seemingly intractable problem of unemployment among young teachers in Northern Ireland.

The review of teacher education

Arising from the original 'Teacher Education in a Climate of Change' conference back in April 2003, five studies were commissioned jointly by DE and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). Accordingly, these studies were to focus on (DE, 2003):

- demographic trends, the costs of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and the use of the ITE estate;
- the potential impact of the proposed new curriculum, of e-learning and of the longer-term effects of the post-primary review on teacher education;
- the appropriateness of the teacher competence model including the balance between in-Higher Education Institution (HEI) and in-school training in both Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and Bachelor of Education (BEd) courses, and the relevance, effectiveness and value for money of the support provided to beginning teachers during early professional development;
- the effects of ITE on existing diversification; and
- co-ordination, effectiveness and funding arrangements for the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers.

At the time of writing, the four reports on the above studies are available on the DE website (www.deni.gov.uk/index/teachers-pg/4-teachers-teachereducationreview_pg.htm).

The reports are:

- (1) Review of Teacher Competences and Continuing Professional Development conducted by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).
- (2) The Induction and Early Professional Development of Beginning Teachers conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).
- (3) The Impact of Statutory Curriculum and Assessment changes from September 2006 on Teacher Education and Training in Northern Ireland conducted by Alistair Walker of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.
- (4) Aspects of Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland conducted by David Taylor and Rod Usher.

In addition to the above reports, DE and DEL also commissioned Douglas Osler, the former Chief Inspector of Schools in Scotland, to review the four reports taking into consideration DE's 'empowering schools' strategy (essentially DE's ICT strategy for schools) in the context of the wider review of public administration that was also ongoing in Northern Ireland (see Douglas Osler's report, 'Policy review of Teacher Education in Northern Ireland' available from the DE website).

Osler's report was published in June 2005 and with its publication there was a heightened expectation among teacher educators, including the GTCNI, that given the very comprehensive



reports that had been made available to both DE and DEL, a serious and considered policy making process would begin. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case as the micro-political machinations of educational administration in Northern Ireland came into play. It would be difficult in a paper such as this to provide a detailed summary of the 'blockages' that interfered with subsequent policy making, however, what is clear is that the review of teacher education became enmeshed in the wider macro and micro political landscape associated with the wider review of public administration and, crucially, attempts to establish the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The proposal to establish the ESA was a radical and bold attempt to streamline educational administration in Northern Ireland and to replace a whole host of other bodies including the five Educational and Library Boards (ELBs), the equivalent to English local education authorities, along with a range of other strategically important bodies. At the time of writing, the legislation to establish the ESA is mired in party politics in the Northern Ireland Assembly with serious doubts being raised as to whether it will ever reach the statute books in its present form.

However, it would be wrong to suggest an overly pessimistic view of teacher education in Northern Ireland. While the Review of Teacher Education has spent a considerable period of time within a bureaucratic black hole, teacher educators and the wider initial teacher education partners have continued to serve the profession well, albeit under significant pressures and constraints.

In Northern Ireland, teaching is still viewed by many talented and able young people as the profession of choice and, as a consequence, competition for places at the local initial education providers (St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, Queen's University, the University of Ulster and the Open University) is intense with high UCAS tariffs required for entry to the undergraduate BEd programmes; typically of around 320 points. Moreover, over a two year period (2009 for BEd, and 2010 for the PGCE), all the local initial education providers were inspected by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Unsurprisingly, the ETI found very high standards of initial teacher education across the whole sector with many examples of very good and outstanding practice. Furthermore, this

excellence was further endorsed by GTCNI which has recently established its own professional accreditation process for initial teacher education programmes, with the agreement of the local HEIs, the DE and the ETI. This was a significant development in that, for the first time, the 'dual currency' (the fact that they lead to both academic and professional qualifications) of initial teacher education programmes in Northern Ireland is being guaranteed through a formal professional accreditation process. Therefore, as a consequence of quality student intake and high quality initial teacher education provision, schools and the local communities they serve can have confidence that the educational needs of our children and young people are in safe hands. However, there is currently a significant and what appears to be an intractable problem!

Teacher employment

In recent years, there has been a significant deterioration in the employment opportunities available to newly qualified teachers leaving local initial teacher education institutions. GTCNI currently holds the most up-to-date and reliable data on teacher employment in Northern Ireland. Table 1 below provides an analysis of the situation as of January 2011. The crucial figures are those under columns 'currently registered with an open job record' and '% of those registered who are currently employed'¹. For example, of all those who graduated in 2004 and are registered with GTCNI (which is a statutory requirement) 86.81% are currently employed while for June 2010 the figure is just 21.84%.

¹ (Currently Registered with an Open Job Record' refers to GTCNI registered graduates for whom the Council holds details of employment in a grant-aided school, where the nature of the employment is permanent or significant temporary (a period of 1 school term or greater).

Table 1: Initial teacher education graduate analysis for Northern Ireland HEIs, January 2011*

Year of graduation	Totals for all institutions, all programmes and all subjects				
	No. of graduates	Currently registered	% of total graduates who are currently registered	Currently registered with an open job record	% of those registered who are currently employed
June 2010	680	577	84.85	126	21.84
June 2009	691	602	87.12	254	42.19
June 2008	735	631	85.85	434	68.78
June 2007	810	672	82.96	455	67.71
June 2006	807	668	82.78	508	76.05
June 2005	817	631	77.23	510	80.82
June 2004	794	637	80.23	553	86.81

* Report date 13/01/2011

Furthermore, the teacher unemployment situation in Northern Ireland is made even more acute by virtue of the fact that local attempts to establish a supply / demand equilibrium is complicated, and some would argue, made almost impossible by the influx of young teachers and others trained in England, Scotland and Wales and elsewhere who apply for registration with GTCNI. Table 2a provides a detailed analysis of the output of student teachers in 2010 from local HEIs and table 2b an analysis of those who have applied to GTCNI to

have their teacher qualifications recognised and subsequently been registered during the periods 2007/8, 2008/9 and 2009/10. The crucial statistics in Table 2b (see page 14) are within the 'UK Other Category', i.e. the figures 436, 478 and 485 covering the above years respectively. It can safely be assumed that these figures largely represent young people who, on leaving school, follow initial teacher education programmes in England, Scotland and Wales and, upon qualification, return home in search of employment.

Table 2a: Analysis of 2010 Northern Ireland graduates registered with GTCNI by institution and programme

Institution name	Qualification / programme description	Total no. of 2010 graduates	Total no. of 2010 graduates registered with GTCNI	% of 2010 NI graduates registered with GTCNI by institution / programme
Queen's University Belfast	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	159	142	89.31
St Mary's College, Belfast	Bachelor of Education	157	134	85.35
St Mary's College, Belfast	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	20	13	65.00
Stranmillis College, Belfast	Bachelor of Education	154	129	83.77
Stranmillis College, Belfast	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	14	14	100
University of Ulster	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	129	114	88.37
University of Ulster	Post Graduate Diploma in Further and Higher Education	43	20	46.51
Total no. of 2010 Northern Ireland graduates registered with GTCNI		676	566	83.73

Table 2b: GTCNI approval of qualification applications

Applications assessed by applicant category & outcome							
Applicant category	Numbers approved and registered						
	17/10/2007 to 30/09/2008	01/10/2008 to 30/09/2009	Change / %		01/10/2009 to 30/09/2010	No. change	Annual % change
DE recognised	207	142	-65	-31.40	75	-67	-47.18
UK Other	436	478	+42	+9.63	485	+7	+1.46
EU	18	33	+15	+83.33	38	+5	+15.15
Rest of the world	7	21	+14	+200	14	-7	-33.33
ROI	2	16	+14	+700	9	-7	-43.75
Total	670	690	+20	+2.99	621	-69	-10

This very difficult employment situation outlined above casts a dark shadow over the whole teaching profession in Northern Ireland. Not only are the hopes and ambitions of our brightest young teachers being blighted but schools themselves are unable to tap into the energy and enthusiasm that young teachers can bring to classrooms and, indeed, staff rooms. Moreover, many newly qualified teachers also find it difficult to access and, thereby, benefit from the beginning teachers' induction programme in any meaningful way. This, as any

teacher would recognise, has unfortunate consequences for the professional growth and development of beginning teachers hoping to embark on a professional career.

It is generally accepted that there is no easy solution to this problem; if there was, policy makers would undoubtedly implement it. It is clear that with current funding levels, demographic trends and accepted pupil-teacher ratios the supply side is out of kilter with demand. Unfortunately, in the current economic



climate it is unlikely that the demand side can be made more congruent with supply. Nevertheless, policy makers have both a moral and indeed economic duty to do more than simply shrug their shoulders and to continue to hope that what is currently a smouldering political issue, does not ignite. For its part, GTCNI has long argued that a guaranteed induction year, similar to the scheme in Scotland, should be seriously evaluated and considered. At least this would give newly qualified teachers a more positive start to their teaching careers and, perhaps, go some way to alleviate the despondency that comes with rejection and unemployment. It would also offer schools a degree of staffing flexibility which could facilitate other aspects of teachers' professional development in schools.

Now something more positive

Since being established, GTCNI has sought to create positive relationships both individually and collectively with our local HEI initial teacher providers. This has been successfully achieved, as evidenced by the close working relationships that have developed and the positive way the Council, its officers and representatives of the HEIs have engaged with an initial teacher education accreditation

process. The Council's accreditation process formally recognises the professional suitability of initial teacher education programmes in Northern Ireland and reinforces their 'dual currency' as both academic and professional awards. This has been important as one of the policy priorities of the Council has been to 'reintellectualise' the teaching profession and to enhance its professional standing in the local community. Indeed, the Council looks forward to the time when teachers can, once again, be regarded as 'lead intellectuals' within their local communities and society more generally. This is in no way to promote a new self-serving intellectual elite but rather to see activist teachers as catalysts for positive social change, as moral entrepreneurs, who unapologetically advocate social justice and equality of opportunity and who manifest these attributes in schools and classrooms. As a minimum, greater intellectual self-confidence should ensure that teachers and the wider profession have a narrative privilege on matters relating to the schooling and education of our young people. Surely this is necessary to at least counterbalance the party political rhetoric that often passes for educational debate but which often turns out to be simply expedient, populist and ideological in nature.



In the above context, GTCNI published, 'Teaching: the Reflective Profession' in 2007 which was the culmination of the Council's review of the Northern Ireland Teacher Competences that had formed the basis of early teacher education (initial, induction and early professional development) since 1989. The Council, when carrying out its review of these existing competences, was mindful of the controversy around this issue and the dangers often expressed by teacher educators that attempts to reify and apply a simplistic competence model to teacher education had the potential to reduce teachers and the high art of teaching to the status of automatons delivering schooling in the negative, technicist sense of the word. The Council would never have endorsed such a view of professional competence given its advocacy of teachers as lead intellectuals. Thus 'Teaching: the Reflective Profession' encapsulated a fundamental philosophy that situated the teacher competences within a values framework and the imperative of high level reflective practice. The success of the publication is evidenced by its wide acceptance and acclaim throughout the wider educational community in Northern Ireland. Moreover, it is now generally accepted

that the Council's competence model underpins the professional lives of all teachers regardless of the stage they have reached in their careers. Indeed, the DE flagship school improvement strategy, 'Every School A Good School - A Policy for School Improvement' not only celebrates 'Teaching: the Reflective Profession' but also advocates its practical utility as a catalyst for school improvement.

Where to now?

This is a question that many teacher educators in Northern Ireland are currently asking in light of the DE publication, 'Teacher Education in a Climate of Change: the Way Forward'. Since the 5th of November 2010 civil servants have been considering the consultation responses with a view to drawing up policy advice and proposals for the minister of education. However, with elections due to take place for the Northern Ireland Assembly in May 2011 it is unlikely that there will be much movement in this area. Furthermore, policy decisions around the future of teacher education will continue to be subservient to more high stakes issues which currently include the continuation of academic selection, the review of the special needs strategy, the early years proposals and, of

course, last but not least, the proposed ESA. It is likely that only when the dust of battle has at last settled around these issues that the future of teacher education has any chance of becoming a policy priority. Nevertheless, the status quo cannot remain forever as too many changes are taking place socially, culturally and crucially in the economic arena. In the near future, our local politicians and decision makers need to come of age both politically and socially if we are to avoid the risk of becoming an economic and cultural backwater on the periphery of Western Europe. Education will have a crucial role to play in shaping the future and all the creative talents of our teachers and teacher educators must be garnered to bring about a new age of enlightenment in a society often caught up in the morass of its own tragic history. The natural talents of all our young people need to be nurtured and developed in a school system that has its philosophical roots in a humane and enlightened tradition in which education in the etymological sense of 'educare' is a guiding principle. This will only happen when our schools are staffed by highly educated and competent professional teachers who can instil in pupils a love of learning along with the skills and cognitive capacities that will enable our society to flourish in the future. However, there are dangers ahead.

There is a 'straw in the wind' that suggests the DE will, in the future, use quasi-market mechanisms to allocate scarce resources to a range of bodies to provide CPD to teachers. For example, the DE Consultation Document when outlining the proposed remit for the ESA states on page 28:

'[ESA] will, explore the role of the HEIs in providing for the professional development needs of teachers, where possible through academically accredited provision, as secured, where appropriate, under formal tendering procedures and delivery agreement set by ESA' (DE, 2010).

The Council, in its response to the consultation, raised concerns about this reference to competitive tendering. It stated:

'The hallmark of an effective education partnership will be collaboration and co-operation and not a competitive bidding market. [As stated earlier], the education community in Northern Ireland is too small for such market mechanisms to operate. What needs to be identified is a funding regime that acts as a catalyst to make the HEIs work together to deliver aspects of teachers' professional development' (GTCNI, 2010).

It is not an exaggeration to say that if quasi-market mechanisms are used to allocate scarce resources within a small close-knit educational community, particularly with respect to teachers' professional development, then, undoubtedly, the confusion of Pelion will be piled on the muddle of Ossa.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide an overview of some of the main challenges facing the wider educational community, local politicians and policy makers in Northern Ireland regarding the future of initial teacher education. Unfortunately, given the current financial retrenchment and public sector austerity, the significant issue of beginning teacher unemployment is not amenable to a simple solution. However, in the medium and longer term, the future of teacher education, the current employment malaise and CPD will have to be addressed if the government's aspiration that every school must be a good school is to be realised. In short, this is because teachers matter.

Author details

Gerry Devlin is the Senior Education Officer with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI). His main area of responsibility is education policy. Gerry joined the GTCNI in 2004 after 26 years teaching. He began his teaching career in primary education in 1978 and, in 1983 he moved to post-primary education. His last teaching post was as vice-principal of St Colmille's High School, Crossgar, Co. Down.

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The rugged landscape of teacher education in Wales



John Parkinson, Swansea Metropolitan University

There have been many changes in the educational system in Wales over the last 13 years, some of which have closely mirrored changes in other parts of the UK and others that have been unique to Wales. While there have been some key successes - stories such as the development of bilingual education - there have been a number of disappointments in terms of pupil achievement. There appears to be no one clear reason as to why pupils in Wales are underachieving but commentators have pointed out that lack of investment in all areas of education and the failure to prioritise educational concerns has had a considerable detrimental effect. The current Education Minister would also argue that those involved in education have become too cosy and there is a need for a radical change in approach.

The split from England

In 1998 the newly formed Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), known locally as the Assembly Government, began to lay down the foundations for using its devolved powers, one of which was the control of education. From the

outset the government set out to make aspects of education in Wales different from the provision in other parts of the UK. In 2001 the Welsh Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson, set out the Assembly Government's vision for improving education at all levels in a groundbreaking document called 'The Learning Country' (WAG, 2001). This was an ambitious programme involving a series of phased interventions over a period of 10 years. Significant amongst these were:

- *Flying Start*. (WAG, 2009a) Aimed at children up to the age of three from disadvantaged backgrounds and their parents.
- *The Foundation Phase*. (WAG, 2009b) This scheme for 3-7 year-olds was based on the principle that children learn by doing. The scheme focused on developing seven areas of learning: creative development; physical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; Welsh language development; language, literacy and communication skills; and personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity.

- *The Welsh Baccaulaureate*. (WJEC, 2009)
A portfolio of qualifications at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels involving recognition of key skills and work-related education.
- *The 14-19 Learning Pathways*. (WAG, 2002) Introduced to give students wider choice and greater flexibility in their curriculum.

In addition, the Assembly Government wishes schools to promote Welsh identity and culture through a Curriculum Cymreig. This is taught using a cross-curricular or whole-school approach and aims to help students understand what is distinctive about life in Wales. The teaching of the Welsh language has a high profile in all Welsh schools and the number of schools who teach entirely through the medium of Welsh is increasing rapidly.

These differences present Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) providers with somewhat of a dilemma in terms of how they should focus their ITET programmes. Should they attempt to equip students for teaching in both England and Wales or should they concentrate on the curriculum taught in Wales? Many of the students who train in Wales find jobs in England but the overriding Assembly Government policy is for teacher training establishments to prepare students to teach in Wales. The students who decide to teach outside Wales experience very few problems in coming to terms with a different National Curriculum, National Strategies, key stage testing and other differences in the educational systems.

One recurring problem that does crop up from time to time is the fact that the Welsh students are not required to carry out the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) skills tests in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Receiving schools who are not familiar with the system for training in Wales are sometimes sceptical when applicants are unable to confirm that they have passed the tests.

Reducing the supply of teachers

Having established a development plan for education, the Assembly Government turned its attention to teacher supply and demand. In 2005 there were eight higher education establishments involved in ITET producing approximately 1,070 primary teachers and 1,100 secondary teachers each year. The employment rate for these graduates teaching in Wales had been consistently low for the previous four years. In primary, the rate never exceeded 41% and in 2003-4 it was 28%. In secondary, the rate was fairly stable at between 54% and 57%. The 'made in Wales policy' for the production of teachers was clearly providing far more teachers than the schools required. In response to this, the Assembly Government commissioned a review of initial teacher training provision in Wales under the directorship of Professor John Furlong (Furlong, 2006). A key question that was asked was 'how does Wales estimate the numbers of teachers it needs to train?' At the time, supply data was generated by the Department for Education and Skills in London. This was done on the basis of changing demography, patterns of retirement and policy issues in England such as staff-student ratios. This



Teacher Supply Model also took into account that not all students will complete their training programme and there were people who wished to return to teaching after a period of being involved with other things. Once the Teacher Supply Model had calculated the number of ITET places needed across England and Wales, it calculated a standard percentage (8.7% in 2005) of places to be allocated to Wales. The Assembly Government and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) used these figures and their own data on the provision of Welsh medium teachers to determine target numbers for each ITET provider. It is HEFCW, and not the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) as in England, that publishes these targets. The school population in Wales has been in decline since 1999 and this trend is predicted to continue until 2014 when it will slowly rise for a number of years. As a result many primary schools and some secondary schools and further education colleges have closed or merged. The review made two recommendations in terms of target numbers: first that the Assembly Government increase its statistical capacity in order to be able to provide more robust data on the demand for and supply of teachers, and second, that there is a phased

reduction of numbers to match the reduction in the child population. The Assembly Government acted immediately on the first recommendation and issued a contract to a new statistical unit to provide more accurate information on future teacher supply. HEFCW made the decision to make a gradual reduction of 50% in primary numbers and 25% reduction in secondary numbers from a 2004-5 baseline. Furlong also made the recommendation that Wales should gradually move to an entirely postgraduate entry route for teaching and that the BA (Ed.) degree should be phased out. The Assembly Government did not accept this but they have reduced the undergraduate target numbers to a greater extent than postgraduate. This has particularly hit the primary BA (Ed.) programmes as the secondary undergraduate programmes tend to be small courses where further reduction would make them unviable.

The formation of centres for ITET

The major recommendation from the report was the suggestion that the number of providers should be reduced from eight to three plus the Open University in Wales (OU). This was proposed on a regional basis of north and mid Wales, south east Wales and south west Wales.



This proposal was accepted by the Assembly Government and three new Centres for Teacher Education and Training have now been established. The first allocation of targets was given to Centres, rather than individual universities, for 2010-11. Glyndŵr University (Wrexham) made the decision to discontinue initial teacher education and to concentrate their work in the area of continuing professional development programmes for serving teachers. The schools of education at Aberystwyth University and Bangor University joined forces to form the North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Education providing secondary PGCE courses in history, drama, geography, English, Welsh and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at Aberystwyth, and art and design, mathematics, music, outdoor activities, physical education, science (biology, chemistry, physics), Welsh and primary BA (Ed.) and primary PGCE at Bangor. The schools of education at the University of Wales Newport and University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) formed the South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training. UWIC provides secondary PGCE courses in art and design, science (biology, chemistry, physics), drama, English, history, ICT, mathematics, MFL, music, physical education,

Welsh and primary PGCE plus BA (Ed.) degrees in secondary music and secondary Welsh. Newport runs undergraduate BSc courses in design and technology, mathematics, ICT and science with QTS. Trinity St David (TSD) and Swansea Metropolitan University (SMU) have formed the South West Wales Centre for Teacher Education with TSD running a BA (Ed.) in primary education and SMU running a primary PGCE programme and secondary PGCE courses in art and design, science (biology, chemistry, physics), English, history, ICT, mathematics, MFL, design and technology, geography, business studies, RE and Welsh. The Open University in Wales offers secondary PGCE courses in science (biology, chemistry, physics), mathematics, MFL, geography, music and design and technology. The process of bringing the individual schools of education together into Centres gave rise to various problems in terms of staffing and course decisions but to help soften the blow HEFCW provided additional funding to the sector for refurbishment and staff changes. Each of the Centres tackled the problems in slightly different ways, some developed new courses to retain ITET lecturers and some had to make staff redundant. The process is still ongoing with Centres working on common policies and ways

of working with their partner schools. Indeed, one of the significant outcomes of the change is the way in which institutions have taken a fresh look at the way they work with schools and how they can improve partnership arrangements. While the change has been difficult for some individuals, others have grasped the opportunity and have relished the idea of working with a wider group of colleagues in developing programmes. Programmes that were in danger of closing because of small numbers have been saved by joining with similar programmes within the Centre partnership. In a number of cases there have been opportunities to share staff expertise within the Centre to enable specialist delivery of particular aspects of programmes. During the last year there has been a growing sense of collegiality across the Centres, possibly driven by the need to respond to government initiatives and reductions in funding. Changes in the Common Inspection Framework produced by Estyn (2010), have also acted as a stimulus for Centres to work together on issues such as the tracking of students' progress, developing students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and the collection and use of data for improvement.

The Centres have mainly focussed their attention on ITET programmes, as this was the requirement from HEFCW, but as the institutions begin to recognise the benefits of working together there are moves to expand to include continuing professional development (CPD) work and research. The Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) has never been part of the education plans for Wales but a significant number of teachers do go on to take higher level qualifications such as the MA (Ed.)

and the Graduate Diploma, a Level 6 programme jointly taught and assessed by Local Authority (LA) advisory staff and staff from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In the main, teachers have been funded for these programmes through either a scheme administered by the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) or the Assembly Government's Better Schools fund. In 2010 the Assembly Government withdrew the funding for GTCW bursaries and reduced the Better Schools fund by 30%. The Assembly Government has diverted the majority of the funding for the professional development of teachers to its flagship programme, the Schools Effectiveness Framework (SEF) (WAG, 2008). Through the SEF, the Assembly Government plans to transform educational standards and provision in a jointly planned reform working with LAs and individual schools. Interestingly the original policy document did not refer to the role of the university Centres for Teacher Education and Training in providing support for teachers. This has changed in recent months and the Centres are now involved in helping to devise strategies for taking the policy forward. Networks of professional practice are being set up to share and embed good practice in groups of schools. These Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) tackle issues that concern them about pupils' learning through a process of working and learning collaboratively.

An initiative to provide a professional development framework in Wales has not fared so well. The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) was invited by WAG to set up a CPD framework for teachers in 2004. The



Council worked with teachers, trade union officials, LAs and staff from HEIs to produce a set of professional standards leading to Chartered Teacher Status and then onwards to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (GTCW, 2006). The scheme was loosely based on the Chartered Teacher Programme in Scotland. Chartered Teacher status could be achieved by following either a taught programme route or a portfolio route. A two year pilot of the modules for the programme route was carried out and a sample of teachers submitted documents for the portfolio route. The scheme was independently evaluated in 2009 by Professor David Egan and a report was produced which was submitted to the Assembly Government. The report was broadly supportive of the scheme and indicated how it would fit in with the PLC structure of the SEF. However, the Government decided that it would not take the Chartered Teacher programme forward and decided instead to focus all its attention on the SEF.

Improvement needed

However, all is not well with the state of Welsh education. In November 2010 a report was published by the University of Bristol comparing

the educational outcomes in England, where schools are ranked in terms of GCSE results, and in Wales, where they are not (Burgess et al., 2010). The research showed that since league tables were scrapped in 2001 there has been a fall of almost 2 GCSE grades per pupil per year. This resulted in the key published performance measure, the percentage of students achieving at least five good GCSE passes, falling by 3.4 percentage points per school. The decline in performance was greatest in schools with the largest numbers of pupils on free school meals (Evans, 2010). While some Assembly Government members blamed this on the lack of funding for pupils in Wales - some £500 less per pupil than in England - others queried the research methodology and the information on which the research was based. A further problem was highlighted in early 2011 when Estyn (the national body for inspection of quality and standards in education and training providers) reported on the delivery of the Skills framework. This non-statutory framework provides guidance on how to deliver thinking, communication, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and number skills for learners from the age of 3-19. The framework was introduced partly to help pupils

who experienced difficulties with a content-led curriculum and partly as a response to employers who were critical of pupils' abilities when they left school. Estyn (2010) found that schools lacked confidence in teaching the Skills framework and that the work tended to be marginalised particularly in secondary schools where the emphasis was still on a subject-based approach.

The most hurtful blow for the Assembly Government was the publication of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results. The performance of Welsh pupils in the standardised tests for 15 year-olds was particularly poor. The achievement of the pupils was the worst in the UK and, since the 2006 survey, Wales had slipped down in the world rankings by up to five places in some categories. Wales underperformed in science but the performance in reading and mathematics was particularly disappointing with the scores well below some eastern European countries (PISA, 2009).

What next?

The current Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, Leighton Andrews, is determined that the situation will improve rapidly. In a speech given on 2 February 2011 he was positive about the progress being made in the initiatives set out in the original 'The Learning Country' document (WAG, 2001) but indicated that the country faced significant challenges, from ideological through to the practicalities of teaching quality and accountability. He said that one of the areas of weakness was that the education system in

Wales was 'too cosy' and that complacency had set in. In order to drive improvement forwards he intends to set up a Standards Unit which will provide a clearer focus on educational performance and outcomes. There will be no return to league tables but schools must share data and use it to compare standards and learn from the best. The SEF will be strengthened and PLCs will concentrate on literacy, numeracy and tackling social disadvantage. The Minister also considered how initial teacher education and training might change in order to support improvement in schools. He said:

"I have asked officials to examine whether we can revise initial teacher training (ITT) so that it becomes a two-year Masters course, with more classroom practice, so that teachers are familiar with advanced teaching skills. They will examine whether this can become the standard entry qualification for teaching in Wales. There will be a statutory requirement on all qualifying teachers to be trained in literacy and numeracy. All new ITT entrants will have been required to pass literacy and numeracy skills tests on entry and exit. One inset (in-service training) day per year will be focused on literacy and numeracy assessment for all teachers." (Leighton Andrews, 2011)

In addition to all these changes that are due to take place within the education sector there are to be further changes in Higher Education. The Minister wishes to reduce the number of universities in Wales from the current ten plus

the OU to six plus the OU. These should be distributed on a regional basis with two in the south east, two in the south west and two in north and mid Wales. There has been considerable debate over this as institutions try to manoeuvre themselves into advantageous positions. A first step in the reconfiguration process has been completed with UWIC, SMU and TSD joining forces along with the federal body, the University of Wales to form one university with different campuses. While this doesn't fit with the Minister's request for a geographical distribution it has the potential to generate substantial savings in administrative costs. The other universities are yet to decide on who to partner with but, whatever happens, there are likely to be consequences for the teacher education centres. Add to this the possibility of more school-based teacher training and you have the basis for increased uncertainty for staff in HEIs and concerns about the quality of provision in the future.

Author details

After qualifying as a teacher from the University of Reading in 1974 Professor John Parkinson taught science first at Kettering Boys School and then at Llandovery College. In 1981 he was appointed as science education lecturer at Swansea University where his research interests were in the areas of practical work in science and the use of ICT to promote pupils' learning. In 2004 he was appointed Head of School of the newly formed Swansea School of Education at Swansea Metropolitan University. He is currently chair of UCET Cymru.

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Teacher education in England: the changing landscape and key drivers behind the reforms



Joan Whitehead, University of the West of England

Backdrop to the current reforms

Turbulent times could well be the descriptor for the current state of teacher education in England as it faces reforms to the structure of provision, to entry requirements and to the structure and curriculum in schools.

Teacher education reform is not, however, a new phenomenon. Rather it can be seen as continuous with the politicization which occurred with the establishment of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) (Department of Education and Science (DES), 1984) subsequently replaced by the Teacher Training Agency/Teacher Development Agency (TTA/ TDA) to ensure the quality of entrants to the profession. Among the more radical changes were the introduction of the National Curriculum for Initial Teacher Training (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1997; DfEE, 1998) and the prescription of around 100 Standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This was

followed by two further iterations of the standards and accreditation requirements (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2002; TDA, 2007) resulting in their streamlining and location in a framework of National Professional Standards. A key element from the onset of CATE, and reconceived and promoted by Kenneth Clarke, was the importance of school experience and the greater involvement of schools in the training of teachers. This led to Circular 9/92 (Secondary) (Department for Education (DFE), 1992) and Circular 14/93 (Primary) (DFE, 1993a), both of which reduced the time trainees spent in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and increased both their time in schools and the responsibilities of school-based partners in their training.

This move towards the greater role of schools in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) for both undergraduate and postgraduate trainees across all age phases has, over the past two decades, seen an incremental shift in types of provision,

particularly for those with graduate status. Predominantly or wholly school-based training has been introduced thereby breaking the monopoly previously enjoyed by HEIs. These alternative routes include the Licensed and Articled Teacher Schemes (later reconfigured as Employment Based Routes (EBR)), School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) (DES, 1989; DFE, 1993b), and Teach First. The latter, founded in 2002 and targeted at secondary training in challenging schools, is managed by the independent education charity of that name, working with partner schools, HEIs and businesses.

A key driver behind the initial introduction of EBR was to meet problems of teacher supply in shortage subjects and to attract career changers but more recently, in the case of Teach First, the objective was to attract high quality graduates who might otherwise not consider teaching.

Looking across this changing landscape, Smithers and Robinson (2010) found that out of a total of 231 teacher training providers, 74 were universities, 57 were SCITTs and 100 were EBRs with 1% of trainees in Teach First. Despite what look like high numbers of EBRs and SCITTs these routes account for just 15% of training places. However, it is these routes that the Select Committee advocated doubling, provided there was sufficient capacity to ensure high quality training (House of Commons, 2010).

There appears therefore to have been a broad political consensus about this direction of travel i.e. support for centrally prescribed professional standards, increased involvement of schools in training and the diversification of training routes.

Continuity or rupture: breaking the mould in structural provision?

Are we witnessing a new era?

Among the coalition government's early announcements was its grant to Teach First to enable expansion to cover all regions of the country and to expand into primary schools, doubling numbers from 560 to 1140 by 2013/14. It has also committed to an increase in existing school-based routes and the creation of a new national network of Teaching Schools (DFE, 2010). These are to have lead responsibility for ITT as part of a partnership, as well as responsibilities for professional and leadership development. Alongside this new initiative are to be University Training Schools closely linked to practice as can be found, according to Burghes (2009), in Finland, Hungary, Japan and China. Such schools can involve both education and subject staff from universities and expert and experienced teachers as mentors. They can also 'act as test beds for innovation by university academics or government agencies' and as 'regional centres of excellence for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers'.

Neither the funding nor the operation of either Teaching or Training Schools in England is as yet clear nor is the ability of interested parties to meet the eligibility criteria. Nevertheless these, together with the increased provision in other school-based routes, will mean that the landscape of teacher training provision will be radically changed and, in the case of Training Schools, a more holistic approach to relationships between ITT and CPD will be configured.



However, as more training places become allocated to school-based routes, inevitably the viability of some secondary subject specialisms in higher education institutions will be threatened.

Already the government's decision to cut 27% of places in secondary ITT compared with 14% cuts overall across all training routes with the exception of Teach First (Cunnane, 2011) will destabilize some university education departments. This could lead to some subject provision being closed, exchanged within the sector or taught collaboratively. For some HEI education departments, depending on their subject specialist configuration, their very future could become precarious. This could be the case in universities who are themselves under financial pressures and where, as yet, there are no guarantees that their services will be bought back by Teaching Schools for accredited ITT, Masters-level work or practice based research as envisaged by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCL, formerly NCSL) or for CPD.

Moreover the removal of bursaries for ITT in some subject specialisms and rising levels of student debt could make EBR increasingly attractive to graduates and in turn reduce the numbers applying to universities.

Falling numbers of pupils in secondary schools, teacher turnover and the likely impact of reforms to the school curriculum have been used to explain these cuts. Although these factors can help legitimate the overall percentage reduction, the weighting of cuts in favour of school led provision can be seen as integral to the government's structural reform of teacher training. The government's stated aim is 'to shift trainee teachers out of college and into the classroom' informed by its ideological commitment to teaching as 'a craft' – 'best learnt as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman' (Gove, 2010). This belief has been repeatedly expressed by Tory advisers who have long and consistently argued the case for on-the-job training and that those with sufficient subject knowledge be able to qualify as teachers 'through direct practical experience and without having to undertake theoretical courses of dubious or negative educational value' (O'Hear, 1991).

There is, though, a tension between this ideological driver and the driver for the high quality workforce that the government is seeking in order for the school system to be amongst the highest performing internationally. Evidence from OfSTED's (2010) inspection findings indicates more outstanding provision of Initial



Teacher Education being delivered through higher education led partnerships than by SCITTs and EBRs, which suggests that these cuts appear to be in part ideological rather than evidence based. Furthermore it is difficult to reconcile the promotion of teaching as 'a craft' with other statements made by Gove, albeit prior to the election, when he argued that 'Teachers should be seen as central to the academic and intellectual life of the nation – just as much as university lecturers and other public intellectuals' (Gove, 2009).

The idea of teaching as solely a craft sits uneasily with this aspiration even though the acquisition of practical classroom skills is undoubtedly important. Similarly whilst mastery of subject knowledge is a key prerequisite, neither is it sufficient for teaching excellence. There is rather an additional element, namely the fostering of a questioning approach to practice through recourse to a wider spectrum of academic and professional knowledge to guide one's professional values and action. Indeed the conclusion and recommendations of the House of Commons Select Committee (2010) recognised the need for greater understanding of theory underpinning practice for those on EBR and the importance of HEIs in 'bringing

rigour and status to initial teacher training'.

One is left to ask whether the act of dispersing numbers, reducing a critical mass of trainees in HEIs and promoting a more technicist approach, devoid of a consideration of research-informed pedagogy and confined 'purely to the exchange of personal experiences' as Kirk (2011) has warned, will make provision not just economically unviable but may impact negatively on both quality and teacher supply.

Given that higher education led ITT is delivered in partnership with schools, the fact that the school system is also undergoing radical change could also have implications for the future viability of partnerships. Rather than being confined to schools in areas of social deprivation, all schools are being afforded the opportunity to become academies, whilst university technical colleges and state financed free schools, able to employ unqualified teachers, are being encouraged. The numbers of those deciding to exercise these freedoms so far appear to be relatively small.

Much therefore depends on the eventual take up but, should this be high – and with greater freedom over the curriculum including opt-out of the National Curriculum, different conditions of

service and freedom over term dates – there could be more difficulties placing trainees. Moreover, with some private service providers involved in running academies also offering educational consultancy, teaching and assessment materials, HEIs could face a different and more competitive market even if they offered more extended forms of partnership, as some already do.

What might be the response of HEIs?

Several scenarios come to mind including HEI sponsorship of academies, as progressed by universities such as the University of the West of England (UWE), in order to enhance opportunities for placements, CPD, research and involvement in governance. Alternatively, and in order to compete with private companies seeking to 'build chains of schools to which they can offer services with economies of scale' (Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 2010), HEIs could become more market oriented, working together at a local level in ITT and CPD. This might become increasingly attractive with the demise of both the TDA and QCDA as announced in the 2011 Education Bill.

With therefore, the reconfiguration of the structure of ITT provision, and the structural reform of the school system, new challenges are emerging prompting HEIs to reconsider their place in a more diverse market and to find a niche in which their unique value as individuals or consortia can be recognised as vital to the profession.

Have we then reached a tipping point for teacher education as it has been practised over the past 25 years?

The quality driver: raising the status of the profession

In addition to reforms of structural provision, some of which are designed explicitly to attract high quality graduates into the profession, namely the expansion of Teach First, the government is raising the bar for entry to all routes by ceasing to fund applicants with less than a 2:2 degree or its equivalent. Other measures include a review of the TDA's literacy and numeracy skills tests so that they can be used as entry rather than exit criteria, restricting the number of resit opportunities and making the tests more rigorous. Informed by practices used by Teach First and countries with successful models of teacher training, namely Finland and Singapore, assessments of personality attributes are also to be explored as part of the selection process for teacher training (DFE, 2010).

The emphasis on increasing the academic quality of entrants is similarly informed by the recruitment practices of top performing countries as part of the strategy to 'learn from and outpace the best'.

Increasing entry requirements may well, in the long term, achieve enhanced standing for the profession, but the more immediate issue is the extent to which the implementation of the 2:2 criterion will lead to supply problems particularly in the shortage subjects. Smithers and Robinson (2010) have suggested that Teach First, for example, 'is making less of a contribution to bringing in graduates into the shortage subjects than might be expected', although whether or not this is because of the higher threshold for entry is unclear.

These measures overall could, though, be significant in enhancing the status of the profession, but also of importance will be the conditions under which the profession works. Professional standing comes not just from greater exclusivity through levels of qualification, but from also being self regulating whilst remaining publically accountable. As the House of Lords Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee (2009), commenting on the plethora of government documents sent into schools, observed –‘able, brilliant and skilled professionals do not thrive in an environment where much of their energies are absorbed by the need to comply with a raft of detailed requirements’.

These needs to reduce the excessive bureaucracy on schools and the regulatory burden on ITT providers have been variously championed (House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2010; Alexander, 2010) and have found expression in the coalition government’s pledge to accord a higher level of autonomy to the profession.

Curriculum reform and implications for teacher education: freedoms or not?

To date the clearest manifestation of this commitment is through the Government’s review of the National Curriculum for schools, which will, as acknowledged previously, impact on the future shape of the teaching workforce in terms of demand for and supply of subject specialist teachers.

The rationale for the review is said to be a desire ‘to reduce unnecessary prescription,

bureaucracy and central control’ (DFE, 2011) part therefore of the more general move towards a smaller state with schools being given more discretion over the wider curriculum and teaching approaches. This marks a break with the micromanagement of schools through the National Strategies and target culture of the previous administration. A key driver behind the review is the Government’s desire to raise the school system’s performance in international league tables, and the vehicle to achieve this is thought to be a stronger focus on subjects, and slimming down of specification.

Whilst the reduction of prescription is supposedly one of the key rationales for the reform, and could be welcomed by the profession, there are some inherent contradictions. For example the very terms of the review with its emphasis on knowledge and subjects and, as yet, apparent disregard for dispositions and skills, is in effect prescribing the organizing principle of the curriculum. Moreover the limited selection of subject specialisms in the new English Baccalaureate, the Schools Minister’s strong belief that ‘education is about the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next’ (Gibb, 2010) and his interventions in ITT and schools to promote the use of systematic synthetic phonics, suggest professional autonomy is in effect being more circumscribed than the rhetoric of freedom suggests.

If though, as Oates (2010) has argued, a clear distinction is drawn between prescription of subject content – i.e. of essential knowledge, principles and concepts – and freedom with



regard to their contextualization and pedagogical approach, teachers would be freed to exercise professional judgement in relation to the needs of their pupils. There would then be more scope for innovation and creativity at a local level. The issue will be whether or not this is the outcome of this review and if so, whether the profession will take up the challenge. Or whether, as Trafford (2010) has speculated, teachers and arguably teacher educators will feel lost after years of dependency in a culture of compliance – they will be like battery hens in the coalition's free range farmyards!

Where now?

Given this changing landscape and reforms to structures, entry requirements and the curriculum, there are many areas of uncertainty including the level of future funding and its distribution. Uncertainty exists too about teacher education beyond initial training since the demise of what had at one time thought to be a flagship programme for raising the status of the profession, i.e. Labour's introduction of the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL). There now appears something of a policy vacuum in terms of pronouncements about CPD. Yet it is this aspect of teacher education and the

development of teachers once in post which is likely to aid retention and produce the quality workforce the government purports to be seeking.

Prior to the election of the coalition government there were some grounds for optimism from the positive note struck by Gove (2009) when he spoke of 'support for Masters and Doctorates with sabbaticals, bursaries and university fellowships for teachers'.

Since taking office, there has been a much less ambitious statement in the White Paper (DFE, 2010) about the introduction of a competitive national scholarship scheme for those wanting 'to pursue further study in their subject or broaden their expertise' and it is unclear whether Education as a specialism in its own right is to be included.

There does though appear to be a role for Teaching Schools in supporting 'a school-led, collaborative system of professional / leadership development that is ultimately self-sustaining' (NC, 2011) and which involves peer-to-peer learning and links with at least one university partner to support the work.

If teachers of the future are to be 'central to the academic and intellectual life of the nation' as Gove earlier claimed, what remains important is that the foundations for intellectual enquiry and the generation of professional knowledge are laid in ITT and that CPD enables this to be built upon subsequently. Teacher educators, both HEI and school-based, have roles to play in realising that aspiration in new forms of partnership and which may involve as Zeichner (2010) has proposed 'academic and practical knowledge coming together in new, less hierarchical ways in the service of teacher learning.'

What the new structural arrangements and different forms of partnership may enable is the generation of professional knowledge about the learning of trainees and experienced teachers at both the initial and subsequent stages of their education in relation to the needs of their pupils. This would shift the epistemology of teacher education to one in which a wider range of expertise is valued and all involved are able to theorise their own learning and contribute to that of others. The dangers are, however, that present and further cuts in HEI places may render ITT provision unviable leading to the loss of the very staff whose expertise could be vital to the success of newly configured provision.

In the face of policy steers in the past which were thought to threaten teacher education departments, they proved to be resilient and adaptable. Already there are examples of institutions working closely with schools in ITT and CPD and which respect and value the professional commitment, research capacity and knowledge-creating capacities of teachers.

Evaluation of TDA funded Postgraduate Professional Development (Seaborne, 2008) showed how school-based research and professional learning communities have had positive benefits for those involved, and have helped reinvigorate them as they come to better understand and work to improve their practice. Examples of this kind are indicative of future possibilities.

The new reforms – if implemented gradually, appropriately financed and in ways that can better utilise the key and distinctive strengths of both HEI and school based teacher educators – could hold the promise of a transformed profession with a more holistic approach to teacher education and development.

There are therefore threats as well as some real opportunities in this changing landscape.

Author details

Joan Whitehead is a Visiting Professor at the Department of Education at the University of the West of England, Bristol where she was Associate Dean and then Dean. Prior to that she held posts in teacher education at Goldsmiths College and Newton Park College. She has been active in the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) including holding the post of Policy and Liaison Officer and has undertaken consultancies for the British Council and the World Bank. Her research has focused on aspects of teacher education policy and practice.

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Review, review, review: teacher education in Scotland



Ian Menter, University of Glasgow

One reading of the impact of the turn of the century political devolution on teacher education in Scotland is that it has been remarkably insignificant. The overall trajectory for the development had been established well before the referendum on devolution in 1998 or the subsequent establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. For example, the move towards a university base for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the creation of a series of standards were well in train during the 1990s. Nevertheless, this trajectory is a distinctive one within the UK and the current provision includes some very particular features which are worthy of discussion. Furthermore, the very recent publication of the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education in Scotland (RTES) provides an excellent opportunity for discussing both that distinctiveness and for making comparisons with elsewhere, especially following so soon after the publication of Michael Gove's White Paper in England.

Context

By the close of the 20th century, Scotland was reaching the point where all of ITE was being led from and largely provided by seven universities (Kirk, 2003; Menter, 2008). The transition from provision by a larger number of largely monotechnic colleges of education was almost complete. The move had the general support of all of the major stakeholders in education, including the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) established in 1966, the teaching unions and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe). However, some of those working in the colleges as teacher educators did express concern about the potential loss of specialist professional expertise and the possible 'submergence' of teacher education within the much larger and diverse universities (see Menter, Brisard and Smith, 2006; Menter, 2011).

Where we have seen 'rationalisation' in Wales, a protracted process of review in Northern

Ireland and the development of diverse routes – including significant expansion of school-based training – in England, in Scotland we have seen the consolidation of ITE in the university sector. However, the most recent developments may be seen to confirm those anxieties that were expressed about ‘submergence’, but we will return to that later.

Where there has been a more common pattern of development in line with other parts of the UK has been in the development of a series of standards, now including the Standards for Initial Teacher Education, for Full Registration, for Chartered Teacher and for Headship (see Christie, 2008; Kennedy, 2008). Although the standards have been the subject of some criticism, especially in the early stages of their development, it can be seen that, in all of them being based on the triumvirate of Values, Skills and Knowledge and, in their underpinning orientation towards social justice and research, they are quite distinctive, especially in contrast to the English standards (see Hulme and Menter, 2008).

The picture relating to post-qualification professional development is somewhat more complex. Following the agreement on teachers’ pay and conditions reached in 2001, ‘A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century’ (known in Scotland as ‘TP21’ or as the ‘McCrone Agreement’ from the name of the chairperson of the committee which drew it up), an innovative Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) was launched. This ensured that everyone successfully completing their ITE programme was guaranteed a year of continuous

employment but with only a 0.7 classroom commitment, with the remaining 0.3 of their time being available for developmental activities, supported by an in-school mentor, who was allocated 0.1 of their timetable for this work. The McCrone Agreement also gave rise to the development of the Chartered Teacher (CT) Scheme, again an innovative programme for supporting the development of teachers who did not wish to follow a management route in their career development. Both the TIS and the CT schemes have encountered some difficulties of various kinds and are currently subject to changes, but they do both demonstrate a sustained commitment within Scotland to systematic support for post qualifying professional development.

The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) has provided a strong training for many intending headteachers. It is a challenging professional development programme offered by regional consortia comprising universities and local authorities (there is no equivalent of the English National College for School Leadership in Scotland). The SQH programme has had a very strong work-based learning element with an enquiry focus.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), other than that within the programmes mentioned above, has seen the involvement of a number of players. There is a national CPD team established under the aegis of the association of local authorities that has provided some leadership. The Scottish curriculum agency, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), has also played a role in supporting professional

development, not least in supporting the recent introduction of major curriculum reform (Curriculum for Excellence). But the availability and provision of CPD for teachers has become somewhat tenuous following the creation of a 'Concordat' between central government and local authorities, introduced some three years ago, which brings a formal decentralisation of decisions and dispersal of resources from the centre to local authorities. Very little central resource for the provision of CPD for teachers is now held by the Scottish Government. However, at the same time as local authorities have taken on these responsibilities they have also been faced with major staffing difficulties and a need to recruit more teachers in order to keep class sizes down. It seems therefore that CPD provision has become somewhat patchy as a result of these changes.

The first two reviews

There have been three major reviews of teacher education in Scotland over the past ten years (as well as a number of smaller reviews of particular elements of provision). TP2I led to a two stage review of (largely) ITE. In the wake of the agreement a consultancy firm was employed to undertake the first stage of the review. They reported in 2002, offering a 'topography' of ITE in Scotland, essentially a summary of the existing provision, as well as suggesting a number of areas that were in need of further development, such as training in classroom management and responding to special needs among learners. Subsequently, in order to undertake the second stage review, a committee was appointed by the Scottish Executive to carry out a more discursive

analysis of the nature of provision. This reported in 2004 and called, among other things, for better partnerships between providers, local authorities and schools. This did lead to some improvements in the communication and organisation of, for example, school placements in ITE. However it would be fair to say that neither stage of this review of ITE led to radical changes in provision. Indeed both reviews did indicate that, by and large, the quality of ITE provision was strong in Scotland.

The Donaldson Review

It is not entirely clear what it was that actually led to the establishment, late in 2009, of the Donaldson Review. This was to be a much wider ranging review than the earlier ones, covering all aspects of teacher education and development. Graham Donaldson had just retired from his position as Senior Chief Inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe), when the Cabinet Secretary for Education invited him to undertake this review.

Donaldson's terms of reference were wide-ranging and he established a highly consultative process by which to undertake the review, emphasising his desire to base his report on 'evidence'. This evidence included his own visits to various stakeholders within Scotland, as well as inviting formal submissions from any interested parties. There was an online questionnaire for completion by teachers and a literature review on teacher education in the 21st century was commissioned from the University of Glasgow (Menter et al, 2010).



Donaldson also drew on a number of overseas visits during the period of the review in order to ground his report in the widest possible understanding of policy and practice in relevant settings. Donaldson's report was published in January of this year (Donaldson, 2011) and has been generally welcomed as a very positive statement about the current provision but also as an important contribution to the further development of teacher education in Scotland. The fact that it was published just four months before a Scottish Parliamentary election means that there is currently a period of significant limbo in which it is far from certain what influence the report will actually have on government policy. Nevertheless a number of stakeholders are responding to it through reviewing their current activities and seeking to position themselves in such a way that they can be ahead of the game, if and when policy changes are announced.

What the report says about teaching

Responses from professional bodies to the report have been very positive in most cases. This is perhaps not surprising given the very strong emphasis on teaching as a profession based on high quality provision. There is no

doubt whatsoever about the key role that universities have to offer in the development of teachers – and here there is a strong contrast with the English White Paper. Teaching is seen as a complex and challenging occupation which requires a strong and sophisticated professional development framework throughout every stage of the career. Another interesting emphasis is the link between teaching and leadership. Donaldson says that good quality education is based on both, and again emphasises this is throughout a teacher's career.

What the report says about teacher education

There are several overarching themes in Donaldson's view of how teacher education should develop. First he emphasises the importance of the continuum of teacher development. He concurs with the view that there are currently some unhelpful discontinuities in current provision. He suggests, for example, that the induction phase should be better linked with ITE, perhaps through greater involvement of universities in that phase. Second – and this is clearly linked to the first point – he calls for much greater partnership between stakeholders. This has been a longstanding issue



in Scottish teacher education, and while a number of initiatives have been undertaken, some at national and some at local level, it is confirmed that there is great scope for a more systematic and inclusive tackling of this issue. Third, he does see teacher education itself as needing to be informed by evidence. Teaching itself is seen as a research-linked occupation, but so too is teacher education. He goes so far as to say that every teacher is a teacher educator and that all teacher educators should be supported by systematic CPD.

The report does make some critical suggestions about ensuring the levels of literacy and numeracy are high for all entrants to the profession and, perhaps unsurprisingly, this is one element that the national press focused on, using it to imply that current standards are inadequate. Whilst proposing pre-entry tests in these aspects, Donaldson is careful to emphasise that these should be diagnostic and not be used to exclude people from entry if there is evidence that they can become effective teachers.

He is also keen to ensure that all sectors of the community should have access to entry into the

teaching profession and praises existing provision of part-time and distance learning approaches to ITE. There is in Scotland a particular issue about provision for teacher education in more remote areas, such as the Highlands and Islands, but also in the south west of the country. However, in encouraging further developments along these lines he does not suggest the introduction of employment-based routes per se. He is insistent that theory and practice must contribute to all forms of teacher education and therefore the contribution of higher education is always fundamental.

One important idea which is promoted in the report, but that has some political sensitivities, is the notion of 'Hub Schools'. Indeed there is a brief appendix to the report setting out this idea more fully. Based on arrangements in medical education (such as 'the teaching hospital') there is a suggestion that particular schools may develop a specialism in the provision of professional training, which would include ITE and subsequent CPD. This appendix mentions current pilot schemes which seek to adopt some of these clinical practices. The main resistance to such notions in Scotland will come from local authorities and unions who are

traditionally very averse to any suggestion that some schools may be more favoured than others. There has been great opposition to academy type projects in Scotland. Even the relatively modest 'Schools of Ambition' policy introduced under the former Labour-led administration in 2005 encountered some resistance. It may be more politically acceptable to develop an inclusive approach to these matters – almost 'every school a hub school' or at least every school a training school, in line with the 'every teacher a teacher educator' vision that is already in the report. Indeed there would seem to be some inherent tension between these two concepts, hub schools and every teacher making a contribution, both advocated in the report.

One element that is causing some consternation in at least some of the ITE providers is the suggestion that the current B.Ed. for primary teachers should be phased out to be replaced by a different kind of degree programme that more fully exploits the university location of ITE. Donaldson suggests that since the move into the university sector, the potential to draw on provision outside education departments has not been fully exploited and that the suggested weakness in the subject knowledge of some beginning teachers could be avoided if the programmes offered more scope for study elsewhere in the university. It is interesting that this notion is not one that emerged from the literature review but seems to be based on some of the evidence provided by headteachers and others in their submissions directly to Donaldson.

What the report does not say

There are some who had hoped that the report would come out strongly advocating a move to an 'all Masters profession', as is now the case in some other parts of the world and seems to be emerging in Wales and NI. While Donaldson does emphasise the importance of higher qualifications, he avoids urging a uniform move to this position, perhaps (although this is not stated) mindful of the resource implications of such a development. Similarly the idea of an integrated two year postgraduate route where the training year and the induction year are constructed as a single programme is not explicitly proposed. However, neither of these possibilities is excluded and so it may be that when a new government is installed, it may take the view that these are logical developments from what Donaldson does say.

Teach First, the English fast track scheme that has expanded fairly rapidly over the past five years and now involves 14 universities, had made representations to Donaldson during the course of his review. They had also approached the GTCS and at least one university provider. In the report, Donaldson only offers the suggestion that consideration should be given to the contribution that Teach First might make in Scotland. Certainly, and as mentioned above, there has been resistance to employment-based routes and while Teach First is increasingly engaged with the university sector, it remains in essence an employment-based route. Its major selling point would be the claim that it might attract graduates who would not consider entering teaching through the existing



conventional route of the one year PGDE. It has to be said that the somewhat elitist discourse of the scheme in England does not rest easily in the more universalist language of Scotland.

The other significant silence in the report concerns the issue of rationalisation of provision. Although provision for ITE is now reduced to only a small number of universities, the fact that three of them are located close together in the west of Scotland (the Universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and the West of Scotland) has sometimes been suggested to be economically questionable. There is some reference to the potential development of centres of excellence in the future and that could be seen to suggest the possibility of the number of providers being reduced in the future.

What next?

No aspect of the Donaldson report and its recommendations has been explicitly costed and we have an election coming. What is widely agreed is that the report does set out a positive view of teacher education across the career course that is progressive – if not radical – and forward looking. It provides opportunities for

creative and imaginative responses. Whether it will actually bring about significant change across the national system, though, is currently unclear.

However, comparing the underlying philosophy of this report with the underlying philosophy of the English White Paper – written by civil servants and produced by politicians – shows a significant gulf in thinking and in language. It does make Scotland a more positive place to be working in and researching teacher education. But it does not necessarily mean that working in teacher education in Scotland is any more secure than working elsewhere in the UK. There were very significant job losses in several of the Schools of Education over 2009-10, following the sudden national reduction in ITE student numbers and consequent reduction in funding, that have left some departments struggling to fulfil their commitments. Nor does it actually mean that those of us who are working here can be satisfied that the system is fit for the future. We now have a situation where most of the university education departments are but one school within a wider college, for example of Social Sciences. This tends to mean that key resourcing decisions in education are now taken

by senior managers who are not necessarily education specialists. Those who feared that teacher education might become invisible or submerged may now be feeling that their predictions are coming true.

It is to be hoped that the strong relationships between practitioners, policymakers and researchers can be used to build upon the opportunities created in the ideas of the Donaldson report so that there are significant advances in the years ahead. There are some innovative pilot schemes under way at present, with Government support. The importance of basing future developments on systematic evaluation of these and of other research into teacher education cannot be underestimated. Scotland remains fortunate not only in sustaining the university base for teacher education but also in the level of research activity that is undertaken in those schools and faculties of education, by contrast with the situation elsewhere (Christie and Menter, 2009).

Author details

Ian Menter, AcSS, is Professor of Teacher Education in the School of Education, University of Glasgow. He has been President of the Scottish Educational Research Association, serves on the Executive Council of the British Educational Research Association and is Chair of the Research and Development Committee of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers. His research concerns teacher education policy and practice, with a particular interest in comparisons within the UK.

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Concluding remarks

Like it or not, we live in interesting times. As Menter noted in his paper, we have seen 'rationalisation' in Wales, a protracted process of review in Northern Ireland and the development of diverse routes – including significant expansion of school-based training – in England, and the consolidation of ITE in the university sector in Scotland. To those reading the preceding papers it must seem as if there is a pendulum swaying between a technicist view of teaching and one where, as described by Whitehead, "all involved are able to theorise their own learning and contribute to that of others" in each country, but one that appears 'out of sync' with the other countries in the UK.

Nonetheless, Parkinson reported that one of the significant outcomes of the changes in Wales is the way in which institutions have taken a fresh look at the way they work with schools and how they can improve partnership arrangements. Partnership and collaboration, whether with schools, with other higher education institutions (HEIs) or with local authorities is clearly a common ground for action as already suggested by Murray in her introduction to this discussion series. However, the role of collaboration via professional bodies is less clear and we would do well to bear them and their potential to support teacher educators in mind.

This discussion series itself arose from a symposium ESCalate chaired at the 2010 UCET conference; UCET (the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers) is an independent, professional organisation funded solely by its member institutions, ie universities and university-sector colleges in the UK involved in teacher education, all of which are represented on its Governing Council and its Standing

Committees. UCET acts as a national forum for the discussion of matters relating to the education of teachers and to the study of education and educational research in the university sector. Its mission is to represent the UK's higher education based professional educators who provide research-informed and formally accredited education, training and development opportunities. There are also other relevant professional bodies such as the General Teaching Councils for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the British and Scottish Educational Research Associations, the Teacher Education Advancement Network and the British Educational Studies Association to name but a few. So how can they help?

Fullan (2008) notes the importance of building a learning community and connecting peers as two of his six secrets of managing change. Indeed, ESCalate has worked for many years to develop such a community across Education programmes within the UK higher education sector – but now faces cessation of its funding from the Higher Education Academy. Therefore, in the current climate of uncertainty we strongly recommend that teacher educators work closely with these professional bodies, including UCET, to keep abreast of and even influence the further waves of change which appear to be on the horizon.

Jocelyn Wishart
ESCalate Assistant Director
University of Bristol, April 2011

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ESCalate

University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education
35 Berkeley Square
Bristol BS8 1JA UK

Tel: 0117 331 4291

Email: heacademy-escalate@bristol.ac.uk

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