INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION: WHAT MATTERS MOST AND WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

High-quality teaching is the most important within-school factor influencing pupil achievement, especially for less advantaged pupils.[i] *Yet, in England, policy experiments in the diversification of providers has generated regressive inter-local competition, sector instability and contributed to recruitment and retention challenges. Equity in education for children is ill-served by inequitable access to teachers of quality.*

Introduction

Teacher education is receiving unprecedented attention in national policymaking due, in large part, to the now widely accepted notion that high-quality teaching is the most important within-school factor influencing pupil achievement, especially for less advantaged pupils.[ii] As a result, there has been a shift in policy focus from the structural reform of education systems to teacher quality. Strengthening teacher education is regarded as a prerequisite for high-quality teaching, learning, and the development of the profession. The success of strategies to improve educational outcomes ultimately depends on the teachers who carry it out and thus on the dispositions and attributes of those attracted to the field, and the quality of their professional learning and development. Despite heightened policy attention there has not been a systematic programme of research to support innovation in teacher education policy and practice.[iii] The body of evaluative research to inform policy and programme development is growing, but limited. The aim of this chapter is to make a case for context-sensitive and evidence-informed deliberation on what matters most and has worked well in strategies to promote teacher development. To achieve this aim, it is first necessary to examine how teacher education has been framed as a policy problem, and how different conceptualisations of teaching lead to radically divergent policy alternatives. Some consequences of recent policy choices are illustrated in a review of the impact of reform on the sector in England. The chapter concludes with consideration of seven options for future policy direction.

Part 1 The politics of teacher education

When assessing alternatives strategies to enhance teacher quality it is important to remember that the idea of 'quality' – and how to measure it – are context-driven concepts shaped by competing interests and the governance structure in a particular locality. Teacher education is the product of contestation. Policy interventions are not simply responses to self-evident problems but set the terms of reference for thinking about an issue. Policy pronouncements build collective understandings of how things are and what really matters with the public and those employed in an education service. An examination of international trends in policy talk and academic discourse reveals a series of recurring dichotomies that illustrate the various ways in which the teacher quality problem has been framed in different countries. These frames are underpinned by different notions of teacher expertise and give rise to different accountability mechanisms. Attention to framing is particularly pertinent in the context of the politicisation of teacher education in recent decades as competition between countries to achieve highly in the OECD PISA tests casts a spotlight on teaching.

For the purposes of illustration, competing positions in the struggle to influence teacher education can be summarised as follows:

- The professional project (professional capital) and the new modernisers (business capital)[iv]
- The research literate professional and the 'classroom ready' new teacher[v]
- Models that proceed from a 'strong' or 'thin equity perspective'[vi]

The professional project starts from the premise that teaching is a complex and intellectually demanding professional undertaking, and consequently seeks to make strong teacher preparation and induction universally available. The professional project is evident in support for clinical practice

models of teacher education; the promotion of professional learning across the career course; the cultivation of an enquiry disposition; an understanding of the need for critical and culturally responsive pedagogy, and capacity building for curricular and pedagogical innovation. From this perspective, beginning teachers need to develop an understanding of pedagogical content knowledge *and* policy and research literacy in order to operate as informed agentic and activist professionals.[vii] In contrast, the new moderniser approach reflects the encroachment of market discipline and the promotion of alternative 'fast track' routes to qualified teacher status, or indeed the removal of the requirement for state maintained schools to employ qualified teachers. The emphasis is less on career-long professional learning than classroom readiness at entry, training while teaching, and the use of compensatory funding mechanisms to attract teachers to high needs schools and shortage subjects. Both approaches tackle the issue of equity in education. However, while the new modernisers focus on the recruitment of high calibre entrants and financial incentives, those seeking to advance the professionalisation agenda draw attention to the need to create conditions where new teachers can teach well and thrive in learning communities committed to their continuing professional growth. From a strong equity perspective, deliberation on the quality of provision extends beyond narrow notions of teacher effectiveness to include consideration of wider social justice goals.

> *A strong equity perspective assumes that teachers and schools alone cannot achieve equity; rather, it requires educators working with policymakers and others in larger social movements to challenge the intersecting systems of inequality in schools and society that produce and reproduce inequity. Working from a strong equity perspective also includes focusing directly on creating the conditions for high-quality teaching, such as supports for teachers and students, stable and supportive leadership, intensive interventions to close opportunity gaps for students in the early grades, and well-supported teacher induction programs* (Cochran-Smith et al. 2016:4)

Table 1 Underpinning policy logic of teacher education reform strategies

Professional project Central regulation of provision University-led Emphasis on pedagogy, professional knowledge base	**New modernisers** De-regulation Multiple sites, early entry/fast track routes Emphasis on subject matter preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2005)
Strong equity perspective Teacher education for social justice Aligned with wider social policy Democratic evaluation, professional accountability "Inequality [is] rooted in and sustained by long-standing systemic societal inequities" Intersecting systems of inequality reproduce inequity in education	**Thin equity perspective** Teacher-as-problem. Focus on workforce development Results-based accountability "School factors, especially teachers, are the major sources of educational inequality". Inequity created by unequal access to good teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016:17)

Professional capital "Getting good teaching for all learners requires teachers to be highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other to maximise their own improvement, and able to make effective judgements using all their capabilities and experience"	**Business capital** "A teaching force that is young, flexible, temporary, inexpensive to train at the beginning, un-pensioned at the end (except by teachers' self-investment), and replaceable where ever possible by technology. Finding and keeping good teachers then becomes seeking out and deploying (but not really developing or investing in) existing human capital – hunting for talented individuals, working them hard, and moving them on when they get restless or become spent. (Hargreaves, 2013: 293-4).
Highly qualified Teaching as complex activity, Focus on career-long professional learning, Development of research literacy among teachers, Impact of ITE programmes on diversity & social justice goals. (BERA-RSA, 2014)	**Differently qualified** Classroom ready, Focus on performance, teacher effectiveness Knowledge of 'what works' Evidence of impact on measures of student attainment.

Part 2 Policy options - the English political experiment in 'disruptive innovation' post-2010

Teacher education in England currently operates a pluralistic model that retains features of an enduring 'professional project' alongside diversification of providers and routes. Over two decades the sector has undergone radical change. In 1999, 75 higher education institutions provided the professional preparation required for England's prospective schoolteachers. By 2019, over 240 providers offer multiple pathways to qualification in a state regulated market. Despite the pace of change, and the proliferation of providers and pathways to qualification, state-led marketisation processes in teacher education in England have attracted little attention among policy researchers. The theory of quasi-market competition in the public sector rests on three suppositions: that competition will produce efficiency gains as providers focus on performance measures; that unpopular under-achieving providers will withdraw from the market; and, that providers will become more responsive to service users/clients.[viii] The following section addresses these assertions in relation to the introduction of market-like competition in teacher education in England.

First, if it is a market, it appears skewed and ineffective at addressing either of the key performance areas of teacher supply and teacher quality. The confusing array of routes impairs the operation of a market driven by informed consumer choice on price, quality, or location. It is not a self-regulating market. Centrally controlled financial incentives and sanctions discipline provision. Schools have been protected from the risks of entering the market. Within School Direct[ix] partnerships schools recruit candidates but the higher education institution (HEI) is accountable to Ofsted for student performance. If schools withdraw a School Direct place, the HEI, as provider of the postgraduate academic component (PGCE), must accommodate the wash-back. School Direct is intended to be responsive to local needs but 57 per cent of state-funded schools (over 11,000 schools) are not involved in the programme. Rural primaries and secondary schools in areas of high deprivation are least likely to be involved.[x] Teaching Schools were established on a funding model of diminishing returns - £150,000 over three years. Although intended to be self-supporting after five years, funding

to support roles in teacher development and school-to-school improvement was extended. The required Ofsted Outstanding rating for the hub school in Teaching School alliances was dropped to at least Good to provide greater stability. Even so, smaller providers have found that incentives do not match the investment required and have sought additional income by moving into the market for the supply of continuing professional development (CPD) services. Where competition between providers is high clusters of schools have fixed the price of services, skewing the local CPD market.

The insertion of market relations has produced 'gaming' i.e. opportunistic behaviour unrelated to quality enhancement. Schools are free to select ITE providers each year. Some HEIs pay more for student placements per head than others. Enterprising headteachers can wait until the start of the school year before accepting a student teacher to extract a higher price from a pressured HEI. (This can be the difference between £1,000 per student placement to £3,000). Local economies of differential trainee value have emerged. School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programmes offering a range of curriculum areas may temporarily reduce their SCITT provision to subjects within the English Baccalaureate (EBACC) (English, maths, a language, science and history or geography) to protect employability data, which is returnable to Ofsted. Opportunities for new teacher employment are typically higher in EBACC curriculum areas. Such tactics help to protect SCITT records for 'outstanding practice' in high stakes Ofsted appraisals. Providers receiving positive Ofsted inspection grades (in a six-yearly cycle) were rewarded by protected or increased allocations of student teachers. Their income varies with the number of students.

There is little evidence that recent reforms have secured public value. The cost of training new teachers exceeds £700 million per annum. The Public Accounts Committee (2016:3) observed that, 'The Department has been introducing new methods for recruiting teachers for some years but many of its plans are experimental, unevaluated and still evolving. Its approach is reactive and lacks coherence'. Moreover, 'the Department was unable to provide good evidence that the hundreds of millions of pounds spent on training routes and bursaries, some of which have been in place for a number of years, are resulting in more, better quality teachers in classrooms' (ibid). In 2016/17, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) provided over £244 million funding in the form of grants and bursaries to incentivise recruitment (tax-free payments paid in instalments ranging from £3,000 to £30,000 depending on subject and degree class).[xi] There is no way of discerning whether applicants who received financial incentives had always intended to be teachers or chose teaching with an equivocal, or unassured commitment. The National Audit Office (NAO) report (2016:11) confirms, 'The Department has not assessed the impact of bursaries on applicants' success or the number who go on to qualify and teach…The longer-term impact should also be explored through qualitative research, along with the risks, for example that successful applicants may have applied anyway, regardless of the bursary'.[xii] Future Teacher scholarships (to attract teachers in science, technology, engineering and maths) were introduced in 2017 without an explanation of how this would increase recruitment beyond what would otherwise be achieved. Basic salaries for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are now below the training bursaries received by some candidates. The cost to schools of under recruitment is considerable. Spending on supply staff rose from £918 million in 2011-12 to £1.2 billion in 2014-15.[xiii]

There is growing concern about teacher shortages in England, stimulated by rising pupil numbers, shortfalls in recruitment, and increases in the proportion of teachers considering leaving the profession.[xiv] Target numbers for new trainees have not been met each year from 2013 and fall below the level needed to maintain future teacher supply in the state sector. The allocation process of training places has not supported efficient workforce planning. The allocation methodology in 2012 gave HEIs a maximum annual allocation that was not guaranteed; in contrast, schools were given a minimum guaranteed number. In November 2015, the allocations methodology for 2016/17 was changed with little warning to allow school-led providers to recruit freely until recruitment targets

overall were achieved, while HEI numbers remained capped. All HEI recruitment closed when the *national* quota for subjects was close to being achieved, irrespective of whether candidates had been called for, or indeed were in the process of attending interview. As the pace of the admissions process accelerated, candidates were accepted who might have been rejected in previous rounds, and providers were unable to re-open admissions when candidates who were offered places later withdrew. In the absence of strategies to safeguard against attrition, the number of applicants starting in September 2016 fell by 7 per cent; primary undergraduate admissions fell by 16 per cent. In the face of an impending teacher shortages, in April 2017 NCTL took the unprecedented step of allowing providers that had recruited 90 per cent of their annual allocation to request an increase of up to 25 per cent above their original allocation, except in Physical Education and undergraduate courses. Then in September 2017, recruitment controls for most postgraduate courses for 2018/19 were lifted.

In short, diversification of providers has generated regressive inter-local competition and sector instability. Moreover, the consequences of teacher shortages are being felt most acutely in schools judged by Ofsted to require improvement and often serving the most disadvantaged communities. Schools and universities are entangled in ever more complex and precarious relations of 'co-opetition'.[xv] In response to projected teacher shortages, attention is now turning from an overriding concern with diversification of routes and pathways towards early career support and retention.[xvi] Although such recalibration will be welcome by school leaders and teacher educators, prospects for genuine reflection and policy learning are likely to be restricted by the circular logic that has informed recent education reform: when markets fail to enhance service provision, market mechanisms need to be strengthened.[xvii] Thirty years of such 'ratcheting of policy' has circumscribed public debate within narrow parameters.[xviii] Edupreneurs within market-oriented think tanks (such as Civitas, Reform, Policy Exchange) act as lobbyists, pushing the case for reform, undermining opposition and excluding alternative voices (e.g. senior civil servants, local government representatives and university faculty). They occupy a key role in the brokerage of radical policy ideas, preparing the ground, helping to render ideas thinkable. Boundaries become blurred with personnel moving between lobby groups and official positions in a tight-knit community of reformers. Such 'bounded density' between policy actors and opinion shapers presents challenges to deliberative democracy.[xix] In a highly polarised and politicised environment, systematic research-based evaluations of outcomes are needed to appraise the relative effectiveness, costs and benefits of education policy alternatives, including different routes to professional qualification.

Part 3 Policy options for the future

This final section draws on the competing reform agendas outlined in Part 1, and the consequences of the English policy experiment outlined in Part 2, to identify seven policy options for teacher education in England.

Policy Option 1: ***Maintain the status quo***
Continue to accelerate moves towards a schools-led system with multiple routes. Further fragmentation of the sector will not address growing concern in regard to the recruitment and retention of high calibre candidates and the provision of equitable access to high quality training experiences across the sector.

Policy Option 2: ***Create a stable policy context*** **-** Accelerated moves towards a schools-led system of teacher education in England in recent years has not provided a stable context for service enhancement or evaluation. Providers must navigate a complex landscape in which change is a constant feature. Different official bodies (Ofsted, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) make multiple accountability demands. Incentives for robust evaluation and review of provision contract when change is instigated with such regularity and such speed at policy level. Promotion of

an increasingly diverse market, particularly in times of challenging recruitment, leaves providers vulnerable to financial non-viability. This is most acute among (modern/post-1992) university departments of education where teacher development is their core business. As universities continue to provide the majority of training places, further de-stabilisation would be a particularly high-risk strategy.

Policy Option 3: ***Orientate teacher recruitment for teacher quality*** - Workforce planning and recruitment strategies have not proven effective in matching supply and demand. Financial incentives for applicants have produced 'bursary tourism', with insufficient evidence of longer-term effects on retention and effectiveness. Allocation mechanisms have incentivised providers to recruit quickly (before national numbers were capped) rather than focus on a selection process to assure quality. Teacher supply should not be reduced to *getting* teachers (recruitment) but *developing* teachers of quality, including opportunities for lead practitioners to become mentors, curriculum specialists or school leaders.[xx]

Policy Option 4: ***Support professional learning across the career course*** **(See Chapter xx) -** Teacher learning is properly understood as a process of development that continues across the career course: through initial teacher education, induction, peer mentoring, in-service professional development and professional collaboration. Effective induction experiences are those that support new teachers to thrive and achieve in professional learning communities that lay the foundations for career-long professional growth. Extended periods of professional preparation are evident in moves towards two-year qualifying programmes e.g. MTeach. Collective responsibility for system improvement is evidenced in the development of immersive residency models e.g. cohort-placement hub schools. The redesign of teacher education and reconceptualisation of schools as learning organisations is a more ambitious enterprise than the crude instrument of deregulation.[xxi]

Policy Option 5: ***Look beyond new teachers for improvement*** - Change processes need to engage educators. Change strategies informed by a theory of collective improvement focus on schools and regions rather than individual teachers or initial teacher education. That is not to say that recent entrants to the profession have no influence on professional culture, but this is limited if new teachers do not stay. Developing expertise takes time and experience across a range of employment settings. In England, much school improvement is seen through the lens of improving individual teachers driven by National Teaching Schools. School-to-school support is overly reliant on geographical reach and relationships with those organisations.

Policy Option 6: ***Build research capacity in teacher education*** - Research engagement is likely to be strongest where the university connection in strong. Research policy can do more to support impactful close-to-practice educational research and to build capacity in the sub-field of teacher education research. Teaching Schools have struggled to fulfil a research role. Research Schools, and schools in designated 'opportunity areas', need to draw on a broader base of research to support professional growth and grow capacity or risk adopting a thin version of evidence-based practice. The guidance report, *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*, goes some way to redress the pedagogical re-positioning (and marginalisation) of the profession in debates on evidence-based education in recent years.[xxii] The Chartered College of Teaching has an important role here.

Policy Option 7: ***Advance collaborative professionalism*** - Rather than repeat the teacher-as-problem narratives of the past, policy deliberation might adopt a nuanced approach to evidence of impact. Outcomes-based approaches to educational evaluation must attend closely to the question of impact, specifically impact on what? For whose benefit? Evaluation and competency frameworks can benefit from the input of multiple stakeholders with diverse experiences in establishing what matters most. Collective dialogue can promote shared understanding among stakeholders, and serves to emphasise

that preparing competent new teachers goes beyond building their subject and pedagogical knowledge. Effective ITE also requires providers to foster collaborative professionalism that values academic, practitioner, and community-based knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter has explicated policy choices for teacher education. It has suggested that the marketisation of teacher preparation in England has not achieved its intended outcomes. Attrition rates indicate that many early career teachers are under-prepared for the demands of the role or the contexts in which they teach. The structural and conceptual fragmentation of teachers' professional education is a barrier to progress. The well-rehearsed division of theory and practice has been deployed by new modernisers advocating alternative pathways to qualification. Such rhetoric denies the relations of partnership that are at the centre of professional preparation. Strengthening teacher preparation requires intensive mentoring through close and proactive relationships with partner schools – moving beyond 'placement' schools and unguided practice to exploration of theory through practice. A strong equity perspective further demands that prospective teachers consider barriers to educational equity and reject deficit thinking. Educational equity for children demands equitable access to effective teachers. This, in turn, requires universal access to coherent and integrated professional preparation programmes followed by properly resourced mentored induction throughout the early career phase. The long-term public and personal cost of poorly prepared teachers should feature prominently in deliberation on the economics of early career support.

Part 4 Further Reading and resources

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Initial Teacher Education (ITE): Summary of Optic

Principles/Key facts/Definitions:

- Definition: 'Instruction' is the transfer of factual knowledge, not to be confused with 'teaching'. Teaching involves planning of learning and includes the understanding and application of pedagogical approaches, including the identification and removal of barriers to learning.
- University role: research base to be generated by teacher educator researchers. There are few incentives for aspiring researchers to specialise in the field of teacher education research.
- Costs: high quality professional learning and development for teachers is resource intensive.
- Schools' core business is pupil learning. Few schools seek to emulate clinical practice models of workforce development applicable in other settings.
- Retention: Reduced attrition and turnover (leaving and moving) is essential in establishing optimal learning environments and protecting teacher and pupil wellbeing.
- Recruitment: Targets for training places have not been met for successive years since 2013 contributing to projected teacher shortages.

Quality and Standards:

- ITE quality is regulated through national Teacher Standards. There are no formal Standards for teacher educators. The Department for Education provides statutory guidance on the criteria that organisations must meet to provide initial teacher training. Ofsted inspects ITE. Cost-benefit appraisal should be used to ensure inspection processes are sensible and offer fair comparison across diverse settings. High stakes inspection suppresses critical appraisal, innovation and development.
- Unintended consequences: Care should be taken to evaluate the impact of innovation, especially interventions premised on addressing the problem of teacher supply in the short-term over teacher development and retention in the long-term.

Opportunities:

- Be part of developing international teacher standards to support UNESCO SDG4.
- Collaborate to develop research-based knowledge to strengthen ITE worldwide

Main Options	Consequence/s	
Option 1. Continue to accelerate moves towards a schools-led system with multiple routes. Diversity in • Providers: over 240: school only, school/HEI partnership, plus others; • Models: teacher as technician: short/shallow learning or teacher as thinking evidence-based professional: long/deep learning e.g. 3 or 4 yr. BEd QTS/BA QTS. The PGCE route as a foundation year followed by 1 to 2-year induction.	• Complexity of routes deters applicants • Bursaries/funding is unclear • Lack consistency of trainee experience • National Audit Office concerns about costs and retention rates • Fragmentation and variation in early career support • Insufficient attention to teacher educator workforce development	• The has • Eros Edu • Opp syst • ITE • Eros

Option 2. Simplify routes: • school/HEI partnerships (integration of practice and theory) • Schools-based/HEI assessment only: with salary for experienced candidates	• Potential for improving recruitment and retention • Efficiency savings if teachers stay longer • Application process easier to navigate • Easier to ensure consistency of trainee experience • Transparency of funding • Consistency of accountability models • building a strong professional evidence base	• Faci tead • High beir und • Cha • One syst

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