

The contribution that teacher education as a sub-discipline makes to higher education institutions

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Aims of the project

The aim of the research is to develop a stronger understanding of (teacher) education as a discipline in UK higher education and the way that it is able to survive and thrive in a policy framework which emphasises research, knowledge exchange and teaching metrics.

Strategic Aim: Demystification of the significance of teacher education as a sub-discipline in order to articulate and accentuate the contribution made to key areas.

Context

National landscape

Change of gear from 2016 onwards *Higher Education: success as a knowledge economy* (white paper) – emphasis on performativity and accountability

Teacher education specific context around market review

Office for Students requirements for TEF/REF and KEF versus OFSTED and Department for Education's requirements for ITE and Early Career Framework NPQ in England, and regional differences apply too

A Methodological Conundrum

- 32 - completed
- 365 - clicked into the link
- 42 - clicked in and gave consent

?

What does this mean?

"(W)e need to understand, first, that late liberalism is a social project – it is a metadiscourse that aggregates aspects of the social world – and we need to understand, second, how this aggregation occurs through and across other social projects and their material supports."

". . . a key means by which late liberalism aggregates social worlds is through configurations of tense, eventfulness and ethical substance."

Elizabeth Povinelli (2011). **Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism**, Durham and London: Duke University Press. p.11

Teacher Educators

- Czerniawski (2018, p. 9) points out that the term 'Teacher Educator' is used here as an inclusive term to encompass all who are professionally engaged in the initial and ongoing education of teachers, including those who work in universities, colleges and schools.'
- For the purpose of this study the term 'Teacher Educator' will be used in a similar way.

Teacher Educators (Continued)

- The complex development of the Teacher Educator's identity needs to be acknowledged, as they are often experienced and seasoned senior leaders joining the Teacher Educator workforce and need to work through the 'painful reconciliation process experienced by many teacher educators, as they shed their former identity as a teacher and develop their novice identity as a teacher educator.' (Czerniawski, 2018, p. 9).

Teacher Educators (Continued)

- Second order practitioners
- Working with first order practitioners
- And the complexity of being first order practitioner in their own HE contexts, and being experts in teaching and learning

(Murray, 2002)

Varying Communities of Practice

(Wenger, 1998)

- Teacher Educator's work across a variety 'order fields' as outlined by Murray (2002)
- Czerniawski, (2018) points out that due to the **complexity of the role**, and teacher educators' identity development, they **also work across a variety of 'communities of practice'**
- The **variability of the role** is also a **key factor** to consider, and is 'well documented' for example:
 - Coaching
 - Mentoring
 - Curriculum development
 - Research
 - Critical inquiry
 - Writing
 - Gatekeeping
 - Assessment
 - Collaboration between stakeholders/ partnership development
 - Pedagogic expertise

Differing UK contexts of Teach Education

Complexities and variations of contexts:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Common ground – lack of representation in HE Senior leadership from ITE backgrounds
- Does this mean ITE is not respected/valued?

How did this group come to be...

- UCET presentation by David
- Invitation to contribute to the project led to the group being formed
- More than a mutual investigation, but something of a call to action
- There was a **clear gap in the body of research** regarding this issue, and it became a good opportunity to make a positive contribution to the field.

Research Questions:

- 1) How does (or could) an education department or faculty contribute to the University's strategic aims?
- 2) What can Universities add beyond the ITT/ITE core content of teacher education discipline courses, programmes, or qualifications?
- 3) What does a resilient* education department/team look like in a UK university? i.e. which departments/teams are able to thrive in terms of the ITE accountability measures and the wider HE accountability measures as well as containing happy, well supported colleagues?
- 4) What are the key characteristics of the teacher education discipline?

Method

Online Survey

Ethics

Open Questions

Analysis completed by the Research Fellow, who is neutral to the issues explored by the group.

Funding available to recruit a neutral Research Fellow.

Survey Open Questions:

- What benefits does teacher education bring to your university?
- What do you feel are the most significant challenges for university teacher education?
- How do you negotiate and resolve the challenges identified in the previous question?
- How can university metrics (i.e. published measures of accountability) capture the value of teacher education?
- Are there benefits of teacher education that are currently not captured by these metrics, but are captured elsewhere? If so, how else can these benefits be demonstrated?
- How does teacher education contribute to your university's regional, national and global agendas?
- Can you identify examples of excellence in which teacher education contributes strongly towards the achievement of your university's strategic aims?

Number of Respondents:

- 32 - completed
- 365 - clicked into the link
- 42 - clicked in and gave consent
- How do you interpret this?
 - Complexity of questions
 - Time allocation

influencing policy/politics

research opportunities
increasing marketisation
financial contribution
difficult to quantify

engage in dialogue

resolving challenges

changing perceptions

partnership access
demonstrate needs met

Ofsted

collaboration

knowledge exchange

research opportunities
increasing marketisation
financial contribution
difficult to quantify

teaching as foundation

research profile
finding placements

increase teacher supply

review needed

negotiate with key stakeholders

up-to-date knowledge

develops educators

local recruitment

funding sources

frameworks

capture added value

critical thinking

social justice

pressure on staff

reputation

government interference

pressure on staff

reputation

critical thinking

social justice

pressure on staff

reputation

Emergent Themes

- Mixed identity
 - *This is only going to come from being clear about the more complex identity of teacher educators, recognising their specific knowledge and skills, but also its unique place in school and university wide growth. [...] Teacher educators have come from one profession to another (for the most part), and this dual identity and classroom oriented starting point means that support and progression for teacher educators looks different to teachers and more traditional academic roles. Greater understanding of the difference, and support to understand and nurture the development of this important and unique role.*
- Community links
 - *The ITE programme gives a direct link between the University and local schools. The partnership is more than simply the placement of students in schools as our lead schools contribute to the content and management of the programme. It gives us a presence in the wider community.*

Emergent Themes (Continued)

- **Internal challenges**
 - *Many university metrics, infrastructures and priorities actually actively undermine and/or **marginalise teacher education**. Greater involvement of teacher educators/leadership in strategic discussion and in changes to infrastructure are needed to identify where these metrics might be obstructive.*
- **External challenges**
 - *Remaining autonomous in the future. The **current proposals appear to threaten how we use our resources and infrastructure effectively and efficiently** to meet the education skills needs of the region. Market review model proposed will introduce constraints with too much focus on Lead providers and TSHs having control over provision but not the capacity or quality processes to lead the changes leaving HEIs to support the system change so that 'students' don't suffer as a result.*

Main Learning So Far

- There is a **central tension** – between *educator* and *researcher* – in the role of teacher educators within the university setting:
 - This **mixed identity** produces an **uneasy relationship** with the REF, which consequently leads to **an undervaluation** of the **contribution of Education**
 - There is a **paradox** here because the **partnerships** that are **cultivated** by **teacher education programmes** allow for increased **opportunities** for **research and knowledge exchange**
- There is a **pervasive sense of uncertainty** regarding **government policies** that affects **funding and assessment frameworks** and everything in between:
 - The tendency might be to engage in **dialogue** with **senior management** (e.g. department heads, vice chancellors), but they **rarely have a background** in **Education** so rely on the **metrics** that we know cannot adequately capture ITE's benefits

Questions for Discussion

- 1) Do you agree with the findings so far?
- 2) Are there any areas which have not yet emerged in the data?
- 3) How do you interpret the data?

Directions for Future Research

Phase two originally understood as interviews? Worthwhile?

What else would be useful?

How to use the study strategically

1) Institutionally

2) Nationally

3) Locally

Other Comments

Contact us with other contributions:

<https://dundee.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/an-exploration-of-the-contribution-that-teacher-education>



Reference List:

- Czerniawski, G. (2018), Teacher Educators in the Twenty-First Century: Identity, knowledge and research. UK: Critical Publishing.
- Murray, J. (2002) Between the Chalkface and the Ivory Towers? A Study of the Professionalism of Teacher Educators Working on Primary Initial Teacher Education courses in the English Education System Collected Original Resources in Education (CORE), 26 (3): 1 - 530.
- Elizabeth Povinelli (2011). Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism, Durham and London: Duke University Press. p.11
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