UCET Annual Conference 2026

Workshop Sessions' Abstracts

Conference Theme: *The role of university-led teacher education in a changing world*

Session Block A

A1

Not so loud but becoming increasingly proud! Persistent, Steady Hope and Quiet Resistance through Autoethnographic Vignettes to support primary school teachers in England to navigate LGBTQ+ inclusivity and representation in their schools

Based on my doctoral thesis-in progress, this session will explore my positionality as a gay male researcher and educator conceptualising my lived experience as vulnerability but also knowledge within heteronormative educational settings. Through the lenses of Critical Pedagogy (Freire), Pedagogy of Hope (Freire, 1992) and Symbiotic Autoethnography (Beattie, 2022) colleagues will be invited to explore how autoethnographic vignettes based on personal and professional experiences can support a critical approach towards enhancing LGBTQ+

inclusivity in primary education through reflection and praxis. Colleagues will be engaged in dialogue (Freire) with the vignettes and each other to identify emerging hope within the narratives and this can be embraced to bring about meaningful inclusive representation to improve the lives of young people. I will challenge the out, loud and proud approach. Through this challenge, I will theorise quiet resistance as active, relational and possibility thinking in the context of LGBTQ+ inclusive and representative primary education.

A2

The Experiences of Academics in English ITE, 2021-2026: 'There hasn't been a normal year since the pandemic.'

It can be argued that ITE academics are a unique group, in that they must negotiate bureaucracy due to competing external and internal demands of the Department for Education (DfE), the inspectorate (Ofsted) and their own higher education institutions, including research, as well as the needs of their school partnerships. This is also an under-researched group of people in the UK and internationally, where research tends to focus on pre-service teachers or on teacher education pedagogy (Quickfall & Wood, 2025a).

In this workshop, we will share findings from our five-year longitudinal mixed-methods research on the experiences of academics working in ITE in England, covering the period 2021 – 2026. Our research is a concerted effort to gather the thoughts and experiences of this overlooked group during a period of uncertainty and instability (Ellis & Childs, 2024) over a period in which we have experienced the pandemic, CCF and ITTECF (2019, 2024), the Market Review (2021), accreditation (2022) and the new Ofsted Framework (Ofsted, 2025).

Over the last five years, we have conducted a national survey of ITE academics (reaching around 12% of the cohort) with follow-up semi-structured interviews with 15 – 20 participants annually (see Wood & Quickfall, 2024; Quickfall & Wood, 2025a, 2025b). Our survey covers a range of topics, including support at team and institutional levels, wellbeing, recruitment of students, creativity at work, Ofsted and accreditation, research and scholarship and future plans.

Our workshop will present an overview of the quantitative and qualitative data from the study, including quotes from the participants, and opportunities to discuss findings. We will then focus

on patterns we have seen in responses over the last five years. We will share key trends over the last five years and invite our audience to consider what these findings mean for the health of ITE in universities, and the future for teacher educator academics.

A3 (1)

Embedding mathematical thinking in further education: the role of university-led teacher education in a changing landscape

In response to persistent challenges in mathematics attainment and confidence across further education (FE), embedding mathematical thinking within vocational and technical curricula has become a key priority. This workshop examines how university-led initial teacher education (ITE) supports trainee teachers to integrate meaningful maths within their subject specialisms. Drawing on practice from a university-based FE teacher education programme, it explores approaches to developing trainees' pedagogical confidence, contextualisation skills, and curriculum design strategies for embedded maths.

Situated within a shifting policy landscape—shaped by functional skills requirements, GCSE resits, and employer expectations—the workshop highlights the distinctive contribution of higher education in connecting research, pedagogy, and practice. It considers how ITE curricula can foreground evidence-informed approaches, including contextualised learning and disciplinary pedagogy, to support teaching across diverse vocational contexts.

The session also reflects on partnerships with FE colleges and industry in shaping responsive provision aligned with workforce needs. It argues that university-led teacher education provides a critical space for developing reflective, adaptive practitioners capable of improving learners' engagement, confidence, and attainment in mathematics within complex and evolving FE environments.

A3 (2)

The importance of local in ITE curriculum development

Even in a large city, ITE can play an important role in fostering socialisation, belonging, and well-being among student teachers. Through curriculum design, students can develop an adult sense of self, place, space and identity, encouraging them to understand their own geographical and situated historical perspectives. Undergraduate programmes, in particular, provide space to explore these dimensions, creating connections that support both personal and professional growth. ITAPs can be a positive space for this, so I will share how these have helped to support us by creating a local focus to our curriculum linking to their everyday experience.

A4

From Firefighting to Forward Planning: Reimagining Placement Procurement

This workshop explores how one university-led teacher education partnership has responded strategically to the growing challenges of placement procurement within a rapidly changing educational landscape. Nationally documented pressures, including increased demands on schools through ECT mentoring, reduced placement capacity, and changing student demographics, have significantly affected the sustainability of school placements in initial teacher education.

Drawing on our respective roles as Partnership Manager and Placement Manager within a large geographical teacher education partnership, we will share how our partnership has moved from a reactive approach to placement allocation towards a more strategic and relationship-driven model of placement procurement. The workshop will outline practical approaches we have implemented to strengthen school engagement, enhance communication with partnership schools, and increase placement capacity while remaining responsive to local contexts and challenges.

Particular attention will be given to how we have adapted provision to support increasing numbers of international students and students with limited transport options, while ensuring equitable access to high-quality placements across diverse settings.

The session will be highly interactive, combining short presentations with small-group discussion and collaborative problem-solving. Participants will be invited to consider the placement procurement challenges facing their own institutions, exchange examples of effective

practice, and work together to identify practical strategies for strengthening partnerships, increasing placement capacity, and responding to emerging sector challenges. Delegates will leave with actionable ideas that can be adapted to their own local contexts to support more sustainable and resilient partnership working within university-led teacher education.

A5

Using Q Methodology to understand the efficacy of feedback on student teacher's engagement and progress

Teacher education programmes are still dominated by feedback procedures which aim to support improvement in both academic study and professional practice. However, Price et al. (2010) highlight persistent challenges, noting that students may not engage with their feedback, may struggle to understand it, and frequently fail to implement the advice provided. Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that effective feedback requires engagement with three key questions: Where am I going? (feed-up), How am I going? (feedback), and Where to next? (feed-forward). Ensuring that student teachers can understand and apply their feed-forward is vital to ensure they become confident and competent professionals.

This workshop shares the key findings from a collaborative project between two universities. Phase One involved a thematic analysis of reflective narratives from five teacher educators over a six-month period. These discussions revealed a shared concern regarding tensions between assessment for system accountability, assessment against professional teacher standards and assessment for learning principles. Phase Two employed a Q-sort methodology (Brown, 2004) with 30 student teachers in each institution. The findings deepen our understanding about students' beliefs on the role of written feedback and recognise a mismatch between the perceptions of lecturers providing the feedback and the students receiving it.

During the workshop, delegates will engage in a Q-sort methodology and have an opportunity to reflect upon how this approach can help teacher educators ensure that feedback can be made meaningful for student teachers.

A6

The positioning of teacher education in higher education institutions

University-based teacher education in England has faced growing pressure externally from the expansion of school-based routes (Training Teachers in Schools, SCITT), the National Institute of Teaching, the 2021 ITE Market Review, and internally from HE accountability frameworks (REF, KEF, TEF). These forces have undermined initial teacher education in universities and left teacher educators' professional identity caught ambiguously between academic and practitioner roles.

This workshop presents three linked phases of research from a UCET sub-group. Phase one (Hoult et al., 2024) surveyed UK teacher educators, finding that universities offer significant institutional value, regional anchoring, pedagogic expertise, reputation and research, but face political interference, unsupportive cultures, and difficulty demonstrating value through standard metrics.

Phase two involved interviews with senior leaders in universities across all four UK nations. It revealed a more collegiate atmosphere in the devolved nations compared with England, where the Market Review's impact was strongly felt. Senior leaders acknowledged teacher educators' broad responsibilities but often lacked direct awareness of the pressures they face, with them being increasingly identified as "pracademic" rather than purely academic.

Phase three (Durrant et al., 2026) used visual elicitation methods at BERA 2023 to explore hopes for the field's future. Participants used rich metaphors, “guardians" and "gardeners," but also "boxed in" and fighting a losing "battle", alongside hopeful, ecological images of regeneration and regrowth, showing a desire for organic, values-led change.

Together, the studies generate recommendations: better collaboration between leaders and teacher educators, greater autonomy for innovation, clearer REF/KEF/TEF guidance, and sustained advocacy with the Department for Education to challenge misconceptions about teacher educators' roles. The presentation contributes to international debate on teacher educator identity and offers practical guidance for HEIs seeking to recognise, sustain and reimagine the value of university-based teacher education.

A7

Developing communities of readers – a book club workshop to consider why reading matters and how we might do more of it in ITE.

This workshop will take the unusual format of a book club. Those joining will be given short extracts of texts from fiction or literary non-fiction pertaining to aspects of teaching, teacher identity or schools. Together they will generate questions and hold rich discussions about what the texts throw up for them, working in the spirit of knowledge being both contested and contestable. Towards the end there will be opportunity to reflect together on what purpose the reading of fiction might have in a teacher education landscape dominated by research and a top-down ITE curriculum? We will ask what changes when we read and think together and does this develop us as epistemic agents? How might including reading within our ITE curriculums better prepare our students for promoting a love of reading in their own future classrooms?

Levels of reading for pleasure among young people aged 16-18 appear to be increasing, (Literacy Trust Survey 2026), offering us scope for cautious optimism but it is clear that longer form reading is a pursuit under threat. In a short presentation I will consider how and why reading for pleasure is important for our future teachers and outline some possible ways to find space for reading and collective reflection. Drawing on the work of the Open University's Reading for Pleasure groups Reading Teachers work, I will argue that reading teachers develop both their own empathy (Kidd and Castano 2013) and identity and are ultimately much better equipped to become teachers who develop reading in their own classrooms.

A8

A mirror, not an oracle: using Orwell, Huxley and Le Guin to build beginning teachers' critical trust in AI

An algorithm is a mirror, not an oracle — it reflects the data, assumptions and histories we hold up to it. As generative AI moves into classrooms, beginning teachers need more than technical competence. They need critical trust: the judgement to know when these systems are useful and when they should simply not be used. I argue that this kind of judgement is one of the things university-led teacher education can still do distinctively well.

The workshop draws on a session I have developed with foundation week teaching and school outreach at the University of Warwick. Trainee teachers approach algorithmic bias through the dystopian imaginaries of Orwell, Huxley and Le Guin. These literary lenses are paired with documented real-world cases, including the Amazon recruitment algorithm, the 2020 A-level grading controversy and facial recognition misidentification. The aim is to show how humanistic and critical inquiry can sharpen teachers' engagement with technology across subject areas, not only in computing.

Participants will experience a condensed version of the trainee session, beginning with a deliberately playful diagnostic quiz before moving into a discussion built around Weizenbaum's distinction between deciding and choosing — which judgements should never be delegated to machines? The closing plenary invites colleagues to consider how criticality about AI might be embedded across ITE curricula, and why the intellectual basis of university-led teacher education is worth defending.

A9

Workshop: Educating for Tomorrow: The Role of ITaPs in Developing Adaptable, Research-Informed Teachers

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) must prepare student teachers not only to apply evidence-informed practices, but also to think critically, adapt confidently, and respond thoughtfully to complex classroom contexts. This workshop explores how Intensive Training and Practice (ITaP) have been designed within University-led teacher education to cultivate reflective, research-informed professionals equipped for the challenges of a changing world.

Drawing on our implementation and evaluation of ITaP's at the University, the workshop will demonstrate how a structured, inquiry-led approach to professional learning enables student teachers to

move beyond compliance towards the development of adaptive expertise. At the heart of our approach is seeing each ITaP as an individual research project, that encourages trainees to interrogate evidence, examine their decision-making, and connect theory with classroom practice. This process is underpinned by Brookfield's Lenses (2017), which provides a framework for critical reflection through consideration of personal experience, learner perspectives, colleague insights, and relevant research.

Participants will explore how these reflective structures have been embedded throughout ITaP cycles to support deliberate practice, professional dialogue, and evidence-informed enquiry. Through examples from our programmes, we will illustrate how trainees are encouraged to engage critically with research, evaluate the impact of pedagogical decisions, and develop a sustainable disposition towards reflective practice.

The workshop will be of interest to teacher educators, leaders, and mentors to strengthen the integration of practice, research, and reflection within ITE. The workshop will offer a practical model for using ITaP to develop student teachers who are not only classroom-ready, but also future-ready: knowledgeable, autonomous, critical, innovative, reflective, and research-informed practitioners in line with our Institute of Education vision.

Session Block B

B1

‘OK, but what do I do now?’: student teacher wellbeing in practice

UCET describes teaching as ‘a challenging, complex, intellectual and ethical endeavour’ (UCET, 2020). In our research with student teachers, we have found this is intensely and profoundly true during initial teacher education. Our participants, across multiple studies, have shared their stories about the impact initial teacher education can have on student teacher wellbeing and mental health (Connolly, 2026; Quickfall et al., 2025; Wood et al., 2025), and in this workshop we centre the student teacher perspective (Douwes et al., 2023).

The workshop examines this in more detail by exploring;

- A case study that focused on worry among undergraduate student teachers, and how this changed over their first year at university, alongside the implications of the key findings such as intersectionality of individual students (Malone et al., 2024). The study also considered how initial teacher education providers and training establishments can more effectively and proactively support student teacher wellbeing.
- A national study on student teacher wellbeing, which sought advice from student teachers themselves, early career teachers and mentors in focus group discussions about wellbeing and protecting student teachers. Themes included the reality shock of beginning a teacher education programme, the impact of workload, financial pressures and caring responsibilities, and the power of peer and mentor relationships.

Workshop attendees will have opportunities to share, reflect on, and critically discuss their own practice in relation to supporting student teacher wellbeing, enabling a collaborative exchange of strategies and approaches across different contexts. We will also share some of the video resources created as part of one of the projects, which are open access and free to use.

B2

Conditional belonging: autistic beginning teachers experiences of ITE in a changing world

As the teaching profession responds to increasing calls for inclusion and workforce diversification, the experiences of neurodivergent beginning teachers remain underexplored. This session presents initial findings from an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of semi-structured interviews with 15 autistic beginning teachers in university-led initial teacher education (ITE). Informed by the neurodiversity paradigm, the study centres autistic perspectives on participation, identity, and professional belonging.

The analysis is framed by the concept of *conditional belonging*, capturing how inclusion is experienced as contingent and negotiated within participants' lived experiences of ITE. Autistic beginning teachers describe encountering pervasive ableism, misalignment, and ambiguity as they navigate normative constructions of professionalism. This includes pressures to conform to neurotypical expectations, secure forms of medical legitimacy, and interpret implicit requirements and inconsistent routines. Participants recount managing visibility and misrecognition through strategic disclosure, masking, and the articulation of autistic strengths,

alongside experiences of social dissonance and persistent misunderstanding. These accounts highlight the fragility of inclusion and its implications for recognition within ITE.

Building on these findings, the session will adopt an interactive workshop format, inviting teacher educators to critically engage with implications for policy and practice. Ethical approval for the study, including workshop data collection, has been granted by the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cambridge*. With informed consent, participant contributions will inform ongoing research.

By foregrounding autistic voices alongside practitioner perspectives, the session highlights the role of university-led teacher education in modelling neurodiversity-affirming practice in a changing world. *Ethical approval is currently in progress.

B3

Place matters: teacher education in educationally isolated communities

Teacher recruitment and retention continue to dominate policy discussions, yet workforce challenges cannot be understood independently from the places in which teachers live, train and work. Recent policy developments emphasise stronger local teacher pipelines, community engagement and place-based approaches to educational improvement (Department for Education, 2026), whilst the Independent Inquiry into White Working Class Educational Outcomes highlights how educational experiences are shaped by locality, opportunity, belonging and access to services (Carr et al., 2026). Alongside this, research on coastal and rural disadvantage has drawn attention to the concept of “Pretty Poverty” and the hidden place-based inequalities that characterise many communities across England (Ovenden-Hope & Passy, 2019).

This workshop creates a collaborative space to explore and discuss the emerging concept of educational isolation as a lens for understanding place-based teacher workforce sustainability and the role of university-led teacher education. Using England's East Coast as a stimulus, participants will engage in collaborative mapping and discussion activities to examine how

geography, transport, housing, labour markets, digital connectivity, educational opportunity and community identity shape teacher recruitment, preparation and retention. Through dialogue, participants will critically consider the opportunities and challenges presented by university partnerships, apprenticeships, online and blended provision, and iQTS, exploring how teacher education can support sustainable local futures whilst responding to changing workforce needs.

Together, participants will contribute to the development and critique of an emerging framework for understanding educational isolation, considering how university-led ITE providers understand, respond to and articulate contextual factors within their partnerships at a time when context is increasingly recognised within teacher education policy, accountability and inspection. Participants will leave with practical insights and examples for applying place-based perspectives to teacher education, workforce sustainability and educational equity.

B4

Ready to teach? rethinking employability in university-led teacher education

This interactive workshop explores the contribution of university-led teacher education to supporting student teachers as they move from initial teacher education (ITE) into employment. At a time when teacher education is subject to increasing policy direction and accountability, universities continue to play a distinctive role in developing teachers who are not only competent against professional expectations but also critically reflective, adaptable and equipped to navigate the complexities of contemporary schools (Ellis, 2023; Furlong, 2013; Mutton & Burn, 2024). This raises important questions about what it means to be ready to teach and how that readiness can be developed throughout an ITE programme.

Recent research highlights the importance of understanding the factors that shape entry into the teaching profession and the need to prepare beginning teachers for both recruitment and the realities of professional practice (Gorard et al., 2022; Theodotou et al., 2025). In response, this workshop draws on the development of a suite of employability initiatives within a Primary PGCE programme to examine how universities can better support student teachers as they transition into the profession.

The workshop will showcase the design and implementation of a range of employability initiatives, inviting participants to consider how ITE programmes can support student teachers to become not only classroom-ready, but also career-ready.

Using three complementary lenses, participants will explore:

- **Programme Readiness** – How we know our programmes prepare student teachers to enter the profession.
- **Barriers and Enablers** – The factors that shape the journey from initial teacher education into employment.
- **Curiosity or Compliance** – What schools and employers expect of beginning teachers.

Through the sharing of practice, discussion and collaborative problem-solving, participants will examine approaches to preparing student teachers for recruitment while exploring what it means to be ready to teach in today's educational landscape. Together, we will consider readiness as extending beyond demonstrating competence against the Teachers' Standards (Department for Education, 2024) to include professional judgement, confidence, adaptability, agency and the capacity to navigate the complexities of early career teaching.

B5

Ecological **a**pproaches to **s**upporting **e**ducator **r**esilience: moving beyond the **i**ndividual teacher – introducing the **EASIER** toolkit

There are growing concerns about the wellbeing and retention of both pre-service and in-service teachers both nationally and internationally. In the UK, 77% of education staff experience poor mental health (Education Support, 2025) and 41% of teachers intend to leave by 2028 (2023). Pre-service teachers often experience disillusionment when they are confronted by the reality of contemporary teaching, leading to a risk of attrition and poor wellbeing (Malone et al., 2024).

This workshop presents findings from a three-and-a-half-year ESRC-funded project exploring which factors influence teachers' capacity to thrive (or not) within the profession. A social-ecological approach to teacher resilience was adopted (Ainsworth et al., 2026), allowing investigation of both individual and environmental factors that influence resilience-related outcomes – namely, wellbeing, job satisfaction and risk of burnout (Ainsworth et al., in press). A mixed-methods design was used, which included a large-scale survey of 2,943 teachers in

England and a three-year case-study strand, where we worked collaboratively with eight project partner schools to explore the possibilities for promoting teacher resilience across the social-ecological system. The findings have been used to shape a freely available, interactive teacher resilience toolkit, designed to be used by student teachers, teachers and teacher educators. The EASiER toolkit is made up of modules exploring influences on teacher resilience at the self, school, social, system and society levels. The workshop will explore how this toolkit might be embedded into both school-based and university-based support for student teachers to help them prepare for their placements and later careers.

B6

Teacher apprenticeships –a contemporary offer for the university ITE system?

Teacher Apprenticeships are the newest addition to the variety of ways to gain QTS in England. Evidence so far suggests that Degree Apprenticeships have a role in growing talent pipelines, diversifying the workforce contributing to improvements in social mobility (Nawaz et al., 2023)

Since their launch in 2024, the Teacher Apprenticeships have already been subject to revision and change but they are underway. This symposium sets out to share initial experiences and the emerging knowledge and understanding from a group of universities who are some of the first to add these routes to their existing university portfolios. It will also provide a brief overview of the origins of the teacher degree apprenticeship, now split into Teacher-undergraduate and Teacher-postgraduate apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship routes into teaching have in addition to the existing DfE compliance and Ofsted ITE framework, separate regulations and quality requirements that apply to all apprenticeships, which many universities may not be familiar with. All of these quality and compliance requirements must additionally integrate into the existing university systems and protocols for degrees and post degree qualifications.

This creates a complex system for the teacher educators, involved in the design and delivery of these new pathways, to navigate successfully. This symposium will consider some of the

challenges and how different universities have successfully managed these and why they have felt it is important to do so.

There are many benefits to the apprenticeships which met the needs of different types of learners, not attracted or in some cases not able to access traditional routes offered by many universities. The benefits that have been identified by the group are also shared before an open discussion about the wider significance of apprenticeships as an addition to universities ITE portfolio.

B7

Playful teacher mentoring: developing a card game for early career teachers (including playtesting!)

Many scholars would agree that play is a serious business, even in adulthood. Play promotes creativity, encourages engagement, and helps individuals explore uncertainty (Whitton & Moseley, 2019). Such skills are often viewed as important in a changing world and we believe this is to be true in teacher development. However, the ITTECF has shifted early career teacher development towards a narrow set of competencies often resulting in didactic ways of mentoring (Daly et al., 2023).

This workshop reports on a British Academy funded project which sought to resist such policy implementation, through the co-design of a card game for new teachers focused on teacher professional identity. The game utilised the Delphi Panel method (Keeney, Hasson & McKenna, 2011) to engage 15 expert panellists, with a range of expertise, in iterative online discussions, during 2025/6 academic year.

This workshop will be led by Kathryn (principal investigator) with Caroline, Elizabeth and Lucy (expert panellists). It will involve an interactive playtest. We want to hear your feedback on the cards and how they could be used in universities and schools! The workshop will be organised as follows:

1. **Introduction to the project (30m)**

Kathryn will explain the theoretical framework and innovative research methods utilized in the project. Following this, Caroline, Elizabeth and Lucy will reflect on the experience of being expert panellists.

2. **Playtesting (20m)**

Workshop participants will be invited to playtest different 'games' which were developed during the project.

3. **Plenary (10m)**

Feedback on the card games and contributions to their ongoing development. This involves the opportunity to discuss how the research method and output align with the conference themes.

B8 (1)

Challenging trainee teachers' fears of LGBTQUIA+ inclusive practice and working towards transformational change

In Warwick's Centre for Teacher Education (CTE) trainee teachers have regularly shared feelings of 'fear' about teaching LGBTQUIA+ RSE curriculum content specially in relation to 'getting things right' for LGBTQUIA+ children and/or families and 'getting things wrong' with non-LGBTQUIA+ families, heteronormative school doxa and school colleagues. In response to my previous research project which explored the attitudes of trainee teachers towards LGBTQUIA+ inclusive practice in primary schools (and my own attitudes as an LGBTQUIA+ teacher educator), this current research project aims to explore trainee teachers' attitudes but move beyond recognition towards transformational change. To do this, the research project aims to give a voice to Primary and Early Years trainee teachers through body maps and focus groups and, more specifically, to explore opportunities for transformational change.

In the UCET presentation, trainee teachers' attitudes to LGBTQUIA+ inclusive practice and heteronormative doxa will be shared, alongside CTE's ITE Inclusion Curriculum which has been designed to respond to these. The Inclusion Curriculum design presents an opportunity for transformational change in developing teacher confidence and competence by:

- enhancing theoretical knowledge through academic research, high-quality resources and critical interrogation of policy;
- and, exploring academically rigorous and practical tools which include reflection, reflexivity and positionality (within CTE's teacher-identity curriculum content) alongside the Warwick Teacher Values (WTVs) of Social Justice, Intellectual Curiosity and Creativity.

The purpose of the presentation is to share a snapshot of where we have come from, where we are now, and where we intend to go in our efforts to transform.

B8 (2)

Knowledge and action: critically exploring a teacher's role in the advancement of social justice

This presentation will draw on the presenter's ongoing doctoral research into how teachers can use literature-based practice to develop a critical understanding of racialised issues in the primary classroom, alongside work on embedding critical exploration of professional identity, values, and ethics into undergraduate ITE. With a focus on 'Knowledge and Action', the session will share reflections and practical strategies that have emerged from the action research with teachers and programme design for student teachers. These include approaches for facilitating critical professional discussions, methods for supporting teachers in reflecting on their positionality, and principles for programme design that support the development of competence and confidence in enacting socially just practice.

Acknowledging the current political pressures that can constrain the advancement of social justice, the presentation will explore ways in which teachers and student teachers can navigate these tensions, offering a way forward for sustaining critical, values-driven practice.

B9

How do teacher educators come to care about social justice? critical moments, professional formation and the role of university-led teacher education

As teacher education responds to educational reform, social inequality, political polarisation and increasing pressures towards standardisation, questions arise about the distinctive contribution of university-led teacher education. This workshop explores how commitments to social justice develop over time in leaders of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), focusing on the personal and professional experiences that shape ethical orientations and professional identities.

Drawing on a collaborative autoethnographic study (Murtagh & Dawes, 2022), the research examines the lives of three ITE leaders in England within an increasingly prescriptive policy context. Rather than treating social justice as a set of competencies, as teacher education responds to educational reform, social inequality, political polarisation and increasing pressures towards standardisation, questions arise about the distinctive contribution of university-led teacher education. This paper explores how commitments to social justice develop over time in leaders of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), focusing on the personal and professional experiences that shape ethical orientations and professional identities.

Drawing on a collaborative autoethnographic study (Murtagh & Dawes, 2022), the research examines the lives of three ITE leaders in England within an increasingly prescriptive policy context. Rather than treating social justice as a set of competencies, the study investigates how commitments to equity are formed, sustained and reimagined across the life course.

Methodologically, the study combines Fuller's (2020) "7 Up" intersectionality life grid with collaborative autoethnography. Participants mapped significant experiences across agreed time intervals, attending to personal, professional and socio-political influences. These life grids informed iterative, dialogic reflection, foregrounding reflexivity, ethical accountability and emotional labour.

Thematic analysis identified three interconnected themes: foundational disruptions, recognition moments and professional transformations. Early experiences of unfairness or exclusion challenged assumptions about meritocracy and opportunity. Later encounters with difference and privilege prompted reflection on positionality and inequitable systems. Over time, these experiences became integrated into participants' identities as teacher educators and leaders, shaping commitments to supported challenge, voice, agency and resistance to deficit and dehumanising practices.

The findings highlight collaborative autoethnography as both a research method and a form of professional learning. The study argues that university-led teacher education remains uniquely positioned to foster collective critical consciousness, providing the intellectual and relational spaces necessary for interrogating assumptions, engaging with complexity and developing professional identities grounded in commitments to equity and social justice.

B10 (1)

Teacher education for social justice: An inclusive learning design framework for preventing gender-based violence

Teacher educators are increasingly challenged to prepare future teachers to address complex social issues while fostering inclusive, equitable learning environments. Responding to the growing need for research-informed approaches to teacher education, this interactive workshop introduces an inclusive learning design framework developed through a Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funded mixed-methods study involving over 30,000 young people across India, Jamaica, Uganda and the United Kingdom. The research examined diverse forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including gender bias, child sexual abuse, child marriage and intimate partner violence, exploring how educational interventions can support prevention through transformative, context-responsive learning.

Drawing on critical pedagogy, ecological approaches to human development, intercultural therapeutic practice, and creative and performing arts pedagogies, the workshop demonstrates how teacher educators can translate research evidence into inclusive learning design within teacher education and continuing professional development programmes. Participants will engage with context-specific case studies from the four countries and examine how inclusive practice can support critical reflection, empathy, agency and social responsibility.

Through collaborative activities, discussion and analysis, participants will reflect on strategies for embedding inclusive learning design within teacher education provision. The workshop highlights the role of teacher educators as facilitators of critical dialogue, and agents of social change. Participants will consider how evidence-informed approaches can be adapted across diverse institutional and cultural settings.

Participants will leave with an inclusive learning design framework and strategies that may contribute to strengthening teacher education programmes and support the development of safer, more equitable and socially just learning communities.

B10 (2)

Growing confidence, growing curriculum: school gardening and growing as transformative ITE pedagogy for nature connection

School growing and gardening can positively influence children's learning across all areas of the curriculum, their connection, understanding and response to the natural world, and their physical and mental health and wellbeing (Walshe et al, 2024). This presentation shares how embedding school gardening within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) can help new teachers to recognise its potential as a powerful cross-curricular pedagogical approach. Drawing on a partnership between the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and UCL IOE's Primary PGCE programme, we will demonstrate how structured engagement with gardening at university and in school can enable student teachers to understand its potential for supporting children's learning in multiple curriculum areas.

Evidence from this collaboration demonstrates a positive impact on student teacher understanding, confidence and practice. Following in-school workshops this year, the proportion of student teachers likely to incorporate gardening into their teaching increased from 47% to 93%. Student teachers described a marked shift from initial uncertainty – 'I don't know enough about plants and gardening' to greater confidence, describing gardening as 'easy to incorporate' and inherently 'cross-curricular'. Sessions provided opportunities to experiment with pedagogy in practice and were described as engaging, collaborative and accessible. New teachers began to recognise gardening as an inclusive and practical approach suitable for diverse school contexts, including those without dedicated outdoor space (RHS, 2026).

In this session, you will hear how student teachers incorporated gardening and growing into their teaching across a range of primary curriculum subjects (UCL, 2024) and be invited to reflect on your own ITE provision and consider how gardening and growing might be meaningfully embedded within the curriculum. The UCL-RHS approach is proposed as a scalable model to support this work nationally and internationally - strengthening teacher confidence, enriching learning, and cultivating environmentally conscious teachers and learners.

Session Block C

C1

Designing teacher education for Equity: What principles should shape Initial Teacher Education?

This workshop explores how initial teacher education can be designed for equity from the outset complementing rather than relying solely on accommodations in response to learner difference. While teacher education increasingly recognises diversity, there is an opportunity to move beyond reactive adjustments towards inclusive programme design. At the same time, we recognise the complex and competing demands currently shaping teacher education which can make designing for equity both more challenging and more necessary.

This workshop brings together three connected lightning talks to integrate how equitable practice might be embedded at the level of programme design focusing on inclusion in teacher education, support for multilingual learners (EAL), and reasonable adjustments for student teachers. Central to the talks is the proposition that inclusion should be designed into the everyday practices and learning environments for student teachers to apply in their classrooms. Rather than treating inclusion, language diversity, and disability-related adjustments as separate domains, the symposium identifies common challenges and emerging principles for rethinking curriculum design, pedagogy, student support and assessment in initial teacher education.

The session will conclude with a structured plenary discussion inviting participants to consider the implications of these design principles for their own contexts. Attendees will be asked to identify key assumptions underpinning current practice and to contribute to a shared set of principles for equitable teacher education, with the aim of informing ongoing cross-institutional dialogue and development.

C2

Teaching *with*, rather than *to* students: the role of university-led teacher education in promoting creative classroom pedagogies

In a rapidly changing world, one in which mis and disinformation is increasing, and young people are increasingly disaffected towards pressing global issues – promoting both critical thinking and engagement in schools has, arguably, never been more important. At the same time, classroom pedagogies often discourage student engagement, favouring passive learning environments that prioritise knowledge accumulation over discursive and creative pedagogies. Drawing on preliminary research from the presenter, this workshop will advocate for the importance of stimulating creative pedagogical approaches; ones that encourage teaching to happen *with* rather than *to* students. Following a brief introduction to the issue, discussions will be invited around provocations such as:

- What role can university-led education play in promoting creative pedagogies that stimulate discussion and critical engagement?
- How can university-led teacher education recognise the importance of children's lived experiences in the classroom?
- How can universities navigate challenges in schools to carve out spaces for creative pedagogical practices?
- What work have colleagues already done in university settings to support school-based colleagues to stimulate critical and creative pedagogies?

C3

What beginning teachers tell us about the role of university-led teacher education

University-led Initial Teacher Education is increasingly expected to prepare beginning teachers for a profession characterised by complexity, uncertainty and continual change. Whilst much contemporary policy and practice continues to emphasise the development of individual knowledge, skills and resilience, what do beginning teachers themselves tell us about the role universities play in their professional development, and what might we need to rethink? Our study explores not simply how beginning teachers develop, but what their experiences reveal about the distinctive contribution of university-led teacher education in creating the conditions in which beginning teachers learn and develop.

This workshop draws on emerging findings from a longitudinal mixed-methods study across two university-led Initial Teacher Education programmes, encompassing Early Years, Primary and Secondary phases. The findings invite a shift in focus from viewing teacher development primarily as individual acquisition, to considering how universities, working in partnership with schools, can intentionally create the intellectual, relational and organisational conditions through which beginning teachers learn and develop across multiple professional contexts. In doing so, the study explores the distinctive contribution that university-led teacher education can make within strong university-school partnerships.

Following a concise presentation of the emerging findings and the key questions they raise for university-led teacher education, participants will engage with a series of tensions emerging from the study. Through facilitated discussion, delegates will consider what distinctive intellectual, scholarly and partnership contributions universities are uniquely positioned to make, what depends upon the complementary expertise of universities and school partners, and how these insights might inform the future design of university-led ITE programmes.

The workshop concludes by inviting participants to develop a collective response to the conference's central question: What is the role of university-led teacher education in a changing world? In doing so, it places beginning teachers' experiences at the heart of the conversation about the future of university-led ITE.

Delegates will leave with research-informed insights, practical ideas for programme development and mentoring, and opportunities to reflect on how these findings resonate within their own institutional contexts.

C4

Supporting trans/gender diverse student teachers in ITE

We know from research that trans people are four times more likely than cisgender people to experience violent crime (Flores et al., 2021). From an even more recent large-scale study of LGBT+ people across Europe, we also know that trans people experience more discrimination and violence than cisgender lesbian, gay or bisexual people (Evje et al., 2026). Specifically in the UK research indicates that 62% - 73% of transgender people have experienced harassment and violence because they were identified as transgender. This included verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, physical and sexual assault. However, despite high rates of hate crime or incidents towards transgender people, a high proportion goes unreported (CPS, 2026)

Trans *exclusion* has arguably become a centrist position in the UK (Thurlow, 2026), so what is the role of university-led teacher education in this changed and changing world? This workshop introduces some findings and recommendations from research undertaken in 2025-2026 on how providers of ITE are supporting trans and gender diverse student teachers. 85% of respondents to that research were aware of trans and gender diverse (TGD) student teachers in their setting, yet 81% stated that there were 'no guidelines' to support TGD student teachers on school placements or that they were 'not sure'. The workshop will therefore provide colleagues with space to consider the development of policy and practice that might best support trans and gender diverse student teachers in ITE.

C5

Creating the conditions for all beginning teachers to thrive: a work in progress

The transition into teaching is widely recognised as a critical period in professional development, with beginning teachers facing multiple challenges as they navigate complex classroom, organisational, and professional expectations.

While support mechanisms for early career teachers have expanded in many contexts, less attention has been given to those entering the profession with different needs. Neurodivergence, learning differences, physical disabilities, and long-term health conditions often impact these teachers' experiences of initial teacher education programmes.

Many beginning teachers demonstrate resilience and draw upon personal strengths associated with their identities and experiences. Despite this, they often encounter barriers related to disclosure, perceptions of competence, workplace expectations, and inconsistent support across settings.

This workshop invites you to consider how systems of support can be designed to ensure that all beginning teachers, regardless of differing needs, are able to participate fully and succeed in their professional journey.

We aim to share how we support beginning teachers with different needs across our partnership, both before and during their ITE year, including;

- an exploration of strategies to encourage appropriate disclosure;
- approaches to negotiating and fostering an understanding of reasonable adjustments;
- appropriate support strategies during placement.

We invite you to join us to consider how teacher education programmes can create conditions in which all beginning teachers can thrive.

C6 (1)

What do we want to know that they know? Designing assessment on the new Teaching Degree Apprenticeship (TDA)

The introduction of the Teaching Degree Apprenticeship has created a rare opportunity to design a brand new approach to assessment. Rather than asking how existing assessments could be adapted, we began with a different question: *What do we want to know that our apprentices know, understand and can do?* Followed by, *how can they best demonstrate this to us?*

The four-year Teaching Degree Apprenticeship is now entering its second year, across both Education and Mathematics modules, assessments have been designed to authentically evidence learning and understanding without the use of traditional examinations. Instead, apprentices demonstrate their knowledge through creative, practice-focused assessments that integrate academic study with workplace learning.

Drawing on reflections from the first year, this session aims to explore how authentic assessment can support apprentice teachers to connect theory with classroom practice while maintaining academic rigour.

C6 (2)

More than learning on the job: rethinking how experienced practitioners become qualified

This workshop shares findings from the ongoing evaluation of a School Based Employee PGCE within the Cardiff Partnership for Initial Teacher Education.

The programme was developed in response to repeated calls from secondary headteachers for an alternative route to QTS for experienced but unqualified teachers already working in schools.

It builds upon the Partnership's clinical practice model, seeking to “facilitate and deepen the interplay between different kinds of knowledge generated and validated within different context of school and university” (Burn and Mutton, 2015, p. 219).

A key innovation is the Individual Learning and Development Plan (ILDP), a diagnostic tool that enables the university to create personalised learning pathways that recognise prior experience whilst supporting continued professional growth.

Analysis of outcomes and ILDP targets suggest that some aspects of the teaching standards, particularly those associated with establishing positive learning environments and professional relationships, are often well developed prior to programme entry. Other areas, including adaptive teaching, challenge, higher order questioning and learner independence, require more sustained conceptual development through university mediated enquiry and practice.

C7

Learning to Plan: What do new teachers need to know and how can we structure and promote that learning?

This cross-institution symposium draws on research and development initiatives underway in two quite different institutions (varying in size and the range of ITE programmes offered, and equipping teachers to work within contrasting curriculum models) yet wrestling with the same fundamental challenge:

How can new student-teachers be given appropriately structured support, guidance and scope to learn to plan when partner schools have such different approaches to planning/lesson preparation and mentors’ time is tightly constrained?

The symposium combines four short talks with scope for discussion of participants’ own contexts and strategies:

- The first presentation shares findings from two development days held by Cardiff Met, seeking first to establish a shared understanding of the factors that make it difficult to support student-teachers in learning to plan.
- The second input focuses on the principles that Cardiff Met then agreed at the start of a year-long course development focus on improving the quality of student-teachers’ planning.

- The third and fourth presentations draw from two parallel projects undertaken within Oxford's PGCE partnership: a detailed study within one subject (history) examining how lesson planning or preparation is now understood in different schools, from the perspectives of student-teachers, mentors, heads of department and senior leaders; and a cross-subject survey and series of interviews with mentors and school-based ITE coordinators.

The findings of both projects (highlighting differences in approach within, as well as between, schools) were debated in different forums across the partnership to explore the scope for establishing new shared expectations of both the university and the schools.

C8

Empowering pre-service teachers through collective creative pedagogies for social-emotional learning, inclusion and ethical action

Global policy agendas emphasise the need for teacher education that prepares future educators, across diverse identities, cultures and contexts, to navigate rapidly transforming social, ecological and technological futures (OECD, 2025). Teacher education must therefore move beyond narrow technical models to cultivate professional imagination, relational practice and ethical agency (Stephenson et al., 2025).

The Empowering Pre-service Teachers Project responds to this imperative through a three-year, seven-country international study examining how collective creative pedagogies can foster professional imagination, critical consciousness and socially engaged change-making. This symposium shares findings from the first year of the project. Using co-participatory action research and arts-based methodologies, the project places youth and pre-service teacher voice at its core. Echoing Hooks' (1994) conception of education as a participatory and transformative practice, social-emotional learning is positioned as a key professional disposition developed through dialogue, reflection and action.

Young people and pre-service teachers across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and Iceland acted as co-creators of knowledge, shaping and evaluating creative pedagogies grounded in lived experience. Through arts-based inquiry, young people generated recommendations for teacher education which informed the design and implementation of creative pedagogies across initial teacher education programmes within the consortium. Findings explore how these creative, collaborative and reflective learning

experiences supported pre-service teachers' social-emotional development, professional imagination, ethical judgement, cultural responsiveness and capacity to engage productively with complexity and change.

This symposium positions teacher education as a site of possibility, ethical struggle and collective transformation. It shares emerging international findings and creative outputs from the first year of the project and asks: What becomes possible when youth voice informs teacher education? How might creative pedagogies support the development of socially, emotionally and ethically-responsive educators?

The symposium/workshop begins with a cross-national policy analysis of initial teacher education across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and Iceland, examining how teacher agency, social-emotional learning and professional development are positioned within contemporary policy frameworks. It then shares youth perspectives and recommendations generated through arts-based inquiry before presenting how these recommendations were embedded through creative pedagogies within teacher education programmes across the consortium. Collectively, the symposium/workshop illuminates the impact of youth-informed creative pedagogies on pre-service teachers' social-emotional development, professional imagination, inclusion and ethical action, whilst identifying implications for future policy and practice.

C9 (1)

University-led teacher education: Developing research-informed teachers and problem solvers for a changing world

The focus of the conference is vital as teacher education is increasingly facing uncertainties due to a lack of thorough consultation with the epistemic agents involved in education. The UCET Intellectual Basis of Teacher Education (IBTE) (2019) consider teacher education as a collective, co-constructed endeavour to which each partner brings unique forms of expertise and perspectives that are subject to change in an ongoing collaborative and dynamic process. For example, evidence from research by university-led teacher education suggest ways to promote

inclusive and inquiry-based learning, curricular reforms, sustainability and AI use to prepare teachers and students to deal with real-world problems. One such example of inquiry-based learning resulting from research is implementing problem-based learning (PBL) pedagogy in university-led teacher education (Magaji, 2012; Magaji, Adjani & Coombes, 2024) to develop teachers and students who can solve real-worlds problems and develop lifelong learning skills.

This presentation will share outcome from research involving PBL in a university led teacher education and how it has transformed learning. The PBL research was informed by Vygotsky's social constructivism allowing teachers and students to make meaning of the world around them through solving problems designed by PBL framework.

Data were collected through lesson observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and revealed various attributes associated with PBL such as modelling and eliciting feedback, applying prior knowledge and collaborative learning opportunities. This PBL pedagogy situates university led teacher education as a contributor of research informed knowledge and exchange allowing teachers to contribute to their professional knowledge base by implementing such pedagogy in their classrooms.

Recommendations from the study will be shared during the presentation and how this has transformed teaching and learning in schools because of the input from university-led teacher education.

C9 (2)

Why university led teacher education matters in Early Years (EYITT)

High-quality early years education is fundamental to children's long-term learning, development, and wellbeing. Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) plays a vital role in preparing practitioners to meet the complex needs of children from birth to five. This presentation argues that university-led teacher education is essential in ensuring depth, rigour, and professional credibility within the early years' workforce.

University-led EYITT programmes uniquely integrate research-informed theory with professional practice. Trainees engage critically with key areas such as child development, play-based pedagogy, inclusion, and assessment, enabling them to make informed decisions in diverse educational contexts. Access to interdisciplinary expertise within universities

strengthens understanding of language development, family engagement, and social justice, supporting holistic approaches to early learning.

Furthermore, universities play a crucial role in shaping reflective practitioners and developing professional identity. Through academic study, mentoring, and partnerships with early years settings, trainees are encouraged to question practice, engage with evidence, and become advocates for high-quality provision. This is particularly important in a sector facing increasing accountability and complexity.

The presentation also considers the broader implications for policy and workforce development. Sustaining university involvement in EYITT is key to raising standards, addressing workforce challenges, and promoting equity in early childhood education. Ultimately, university-led teacher education fosters knowledgeable, reflective, and research-engaged professionals who are equipped to improve outcomes for young children and their families.

Session Block D

D1 (1)

‘There are days when I just feel like jacking it all in’: exploring resilience in pre-service teachers using participatory approaches

Greenfield’s model of teacher resilience (Greenfield, 2015) situates teacher resilience within a socio-ecological framework which, arguably, shifts the responsibility for resilience away from individual teachers and directs attention to the influence of relationships, school cultures, neoliberalism and discourses of performativity. In line with Roffey (2017), we critique limited conceptualisations of resilience which emphasise ‘bouncing back’ from adversity and theoretical frameworks which fail to identify the broader systemic factors which impact on resilience.

Given the high rates of attrition of early career teachers in England (Maisuria et al., 2023), concerns about teacher burnout (Nguyen et al., 2020) and job satisfaction (Madigan and Kim, 2021), we argue that greater attention needs to be given to enhancing resilience in pre-service teachers. Although pre-service teachers experience unique challenges, a significant research gap is evident in this field.

Initial teacher education courses in England are subject to stringent regulation by Government and the inspectorate. Government mandated curricula for teacher education does not include specific content which supports pre-service teachers and school-based teacher educators to understand more about resilience and how to navigate the daily realities of teaching.

This study explores the factors which influence resilience in pre-service teachers. Specifically, the study explores the following research questions (1) How do pre-service teachers conceptualise resilience? (2) What factors, positively or negatively influence resilience in pre-service teachers? Sixteen participants were recruited to the study from undergraduate and postgraduate teaching training programmes across primary and secondary phases.

To investigate the research questions, a range of creative and participatory research methods were utilised including photo-elicitation, timelines, drawings, objects, reflective journals, audio diaries and semi-structured interviews. We adopted a participatory approach through situating the pre-service teachers as co-researchers, allowing them to decide on themes for discussion and involving them in the process of analysing data.

Findings are synthesised into broad themes. These include agency, power, wellbeing and identity. We extend Greenfield's framework of teacher resilience by proposing an original framework which addresses resilience in pre-service teachers. We argue, through actionable recommendations, that this proposed framework can be utilised by pre-service teachers and university and school-based teacher educators to enhance resilience in pre-service teachers.

D1 (2)

Developing (critical) system thinkers: Supporting beginning teachers to understand educational complexity.

Educational systems are increasingly characterised by complexity, uncertainty and interconnected social challenges. However, the ITTECF presents practice through simplified or

linear models of improvement, potentially limiting beginning teachers' capacity to understand how factors such as poverty, community contexts, policy, curriculum and school culture interact to shape educational experiences. This paper explores the potential contribution of Critical Systems Thinking (CST) within teacher education.

Drawing on doctoral research in progress, the paper examines how engagement with critical systems thinking can support beginning teachers to recognise and critically analyse the complex adaptive systems in which they work. Particular attention is given to how beginning teachers can be supported to move beyond deficit explanations of educational inequality and develop a richer understanding of the relationships between schools, families, communities and wider socio-economic structures.

It argues that Critical Systems Thinking offers a valuable lens through which beginning teachers can understand educational complexity whilst maintaining a commitment to social justice. It concludes by considering the implications for curriculum design within ITE and the development of teachers who are able to navigate complexity, engage with diverse communities and make informed professional judgements in challenging educational contexts.

D2 (1)

Developing an ethnocentric approach to the Initial Teacher Teacher and Early Career Framework to better support the integration of international trainee teachers in the English education system

This presentation examines how university-led teacher education can respond to global mobility and cultural diversity by rethinking the ethnocentric foundations of the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF).

As Cushing (2023) and Lander (2014) highlight, the framework reflects predominantly British-White norms of pedagogy and professionalism. Drawing on Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and mentor training research at St Mary's University, the study explores how culturally-responsive mentoring can transform these assumptions. It shows how mentors develop ethno-relative collaboration, intercultural empathy and adaptive communication through structured CPD. The findings position universities as catalysts for inclusive mentoring practice, embedding belonging, global perspectives and equitable integration for international trainee teachers within a changing educational landscape.

D2 (2)

Identity as pedagogical resource: What South Asian heritage teachers tell us about diversity, expertise, and university-led teacher education

Who teachers are shapes how they teach. This presentation draws on *Living Identities*, a PhD study at the University of Cambridge following 17 South Asian heritage primary teachers in London, trained across eight different university-led Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. The research explores how identity, encompassing class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and family history, functions not as personal backdrop but as active pedagogical capital.

These teachers did not separate who they were from how they taught. Their relationships with students and families were rooted in who they were. Their approaches to curriculum, diversifying texts, surfacing hidden histories, and embedding representation as a year-round commitment, grew from lived experience. Their identities were not incidental to their pedagogy. They were its foundation.

This matters for teacher education because identity is formed long before trainees arrive in ITE. What teacher education does with that, whether it recognises and develops those experiences or asks trainees to set them aside, shapes the kind of teachers they become and whether they stay in the profession. Where mentoring is strong and identity is valued, teachers flourish. Where they are asked to bracket lived experience as unprofessional, something is lost.

While grounded in the experiences of one group, the questions raised here belong to all of us. Every trainee arrives carrying an identity already rich with pedagogical potential. The presentation will share key findings and practical implications for university-led ITE, before opening into a structured discussion. Attendees will leave with concrete questions to carry into their own practice.

D3 (1)

Shared Vision: Developing trainee agency and dispositions for change through scaffolded and blended experiential opportunities

The session aims to share how the curriculum has been constructed to provide opportunity for personalisation and shared co-construction of content across University and School attachment through CoP's. This leads to agreed shared opportunities to experience leading change and reflective activities.

The curriculum is based upon trainees having the opportunity to bring about their vision for the curriculum. Through shared experiences, trainees then develop an understanding of contextual barriers, levers for change and opportunities to strategically redefining subject curriculum provision.

The spiral curriculum encourages trainees to reflect and is based upon distributed leadership. Content is designed to challenge trainees' perceptions of the curriculum and experience leading change in context. The presenters will share reflections of how this change has been constructed and lead, and furthermore, clarify the key areas for consideration for ITE provision.

Opportunities for attendees to reflect and consider how aspects of the discussed provision (Mentoring, Curriculum, Triad Mentoring) will be facilitated throughout the session.

D3 (2)

Negotiating BECOMING: Exploring beginning teachers' professional identity construction in Primary Education

Beginning teachers' professional identities (BTPI) are widely recognised as influential in shaping teachers' wellbeing, practice and career trajectories. However, limited attention has been paid to how beginning primary teachers negotiate and respond to the influences that shape their identities. This session explores BTPI as a dynamic process of negotiation, drawing on findings from a doctoral study that examined the factors affecting BTPI and how BTs respond to them.

Drawing on a Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices methodology, the study combined a retrospective self-study with collaborative self-studies involving seven beginning teachers. Narrative methods, including interviews, writing workshops and journal writing were utilised to generate biographical accounts of participants' experiences; these were then analysed through a hybrid framework inspired by narrative analysis and constructivist grounded theory.

The session will examine how BTPI emerges through a complex ecology of factors, arguing that the influence of these factors is not deterministic or uniform, but mediated by each beginning

teacher's ideals, values and beliefs, their perceived agency, and the socio-political-cultural contexts in which each factor emerges. From this perspective, BTPI is conceptualised as a complex, dynamic, emotional, agentic and dialogical process through which beginning teachers continually negotiate who they are, what they value, who they hope to become, and what they perceive the education system allows them to be.

Building on this conceptualisation, the session introduces two original conceptual frameworks—the Identity Negotiation and Response Framework and the BTPI Ecology Framework—which together offer a nuanced account of the micro- and macro-level processes shaping BTPI. The session then explores the implications of these findings for Initial Teacher Education, highlighting the need for more explicit, identity-attentive approaches to supporting beginning teachers' professional learning.

D4 (1)

Knowledge exchange within a multi-player teacher education landscape

The challenges facing the recruitment, preparation and retention of teachers are far from satisfied by the impacts of falling rolls on teacher supply. Current trends (NEET, pupil absenteeism, increasing home schooling, attainment inequalities, teacher attrition within 5 years and from schools serving the poorest communities) suggest that both new teachers and their pupils deserve profoundly renewed educational purpose and greater fulfilment from their time in school. This session examines the challenges and sector benefits that can be brought about by universities participating in strategic knowledge exchange with school-led providers, national teacher education organisations and school networks.

The Initial Teacher Education and Training Network, co-convened between the Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research (UCL IOE) and the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) is discussed as an example of frank cross-sector exchange. The aim is to increase organisational bravery and policy focus based on disruptive, constructive dialogue around research evidence, for diverse organisations to make changes in the goals of teacher education for all new entrants. Listening to the voices of new teachers, alongside diverse leaders of teacher education, is core to the network's way of working and provoking policy dialogue.

University perspectives play a crucial part in bringing together wide-ranging expertise and collaboratively re-thinking and redesigning experiences for new teachers. This is much needed as they learn what it means to join, and hopefully stay in, the profession that is in need of extensive support to meet the needs of both teachers and pupils to make things better in a deeply unequal society.

D4 (2)

The role of teacher-educators in supporting teacher agency through community of practice and collaborative curriculum and assessment design

Curriculum and pedagogies are increasingly defined by a narrow conceptualisation of learning, prescriptive approaches and scarce opportunities for teachers to exercise professional agency with regards to curriculum design.

However, there is also evidence that collaborative communities of practice can support local curriculum making and foster greater teacher agency, and that teacher educators/researchers can play a significant role in this, through theoretically-informed, close-to-practice-research.

Building on an existing thriving local community of practice, teacher educators/researchers at the University of Nottingham facilitated a pilot collaborative curriculum and assessment design project for local language teachers, Culture and Language Integrated Classrooms (CLiC).

Through a series of workshops and the use of a flexible toolkit, teachers worked collaboratively to create locally responsive curricula which enabled them to reconcile with the 'bigger picture' of teaching their subject, while also sharing good practice through the creation of case studies and the co-planning and co-hosting of a regional dissemination conference for other teachers in the region.

This presentation shares the findings of the CLiC project and its impact both on our well-established community of practice, and on the way it helped amplify the voices of secondary language teachers in our region - (re)igniting their sense of critical professional agency and providing a valuable example of "bottom-up teacher inspired curriculum development" (Parker & Leat, 2021, p.151), and demonstrating the potential of trusted, collaborative communities of practice facilitated by teacher educators/researchers to effect wider change.

D5 (1)

‘What should I do?’ : How collaborating with others can expand a teachers’ sense of what is possible in their teaching

Teaching is a demanding professional activity, and the intense, interactive reality of the classroom means that teachers do not simply need to be able to do certain things; they also need to be able to identify which possibilities can and should be actualised – the domain of ‘practical wisdom’. Therefore, professional learning should encourage teachers to develop and deepen their reflective practices so they can respond flexibly and thoughtfully to the diverse situations they face.

My research investigates how collaborative learning can provide opportunities for teachers to develop more sophisticated judgements grounded in the insightful interpretation of events, disciplined deliberation and continuous reflection. In this session, I will discuss the outcomes of a Lesson Study project which explored the judgements teachers made when engaging with issues of practice, and the factors which prompted them to move beyond notions of good practice to consider whether their actions were educationally meaningful.

However, not all collaborative groups are equally generative of teacher learning and so, using a difference-within-similarity approach, I compared the representations of practice presented by each group to investigate the capacity of these discussions to transform learning for the children. I also considered how the beliefs and dispositions of individual teachers towards professional learning impacted on their sense of agency in relation to the issues of practice they encountered.

Indeed, this will be an opportunity to reflect on how engaging with a broad range of repertoires for practice through varied professional learning opportunities could help teachers expand their sense of the possible.

D5 (2)

Talking teaching: Dialogic encounters in Teacher Education

Student teachers spend a significant proportion of their training in schools, working collaboratively with mentors. Post-lesson dialogue therefore represents a crucial site for the intellectual work of teacher education.

This study examines how dialogic approaches to feedback can cultivate student teachers as epistemic agents and professionals who engage critically with research, evidence and practice.

Following formal lesson observations, student teachers and mentors are encouraged to engage in enquiry-rich conversations that connect classroom practice with research-informed perspectives.

However, such dialogue does not always emerge organically. Power dynamics within mentor–mentee relationships can inhibit critical reflection, reducing feedback to didactic transmission rather than collaborative knowledge construction.

Positioning teacher education as a collective and intellectually grounded endeavour, this study explores how ITE educators can support mentors and student teachers to develop dialogic, research-informed practices. It analyses the impact of dialogic versus didactic feedback on student teachers' perceptions of themselves as both professionals and intellectuals within the profession.

Findings highlight that structured, dialogic engagement fosters confidence, criticality and professional agency, enabling student teachers to interrogate practice and draw on diverse forms of evidence.

The presentation concludes with examples of effective approaches to preparing mentors and student teachers to embed reflective, ethical and enquiry-oriented practices within their professional relationships, contributing to a more collaborative and intellectually robust teacher education ecosystem.

D6 (1)

Pre-service primary teachers’ informal use of Generative AI on school placement

This project explores preservice primary teachers reported uses of and views on Generative AI tools on school placement towards the end of a one-year PGCE programme. An online survey (143 respondents) and focus groups (6 participants) carried out in the summer term in 2026 were used to explore use patterns including frequencies, types of activities, tools used, and views on the benefits and risks of generative AI and how these can be realised or managed.

Focus groups allowed a deeper exploration of examples of uses and pre-service teachers' experiences of challenges and opportunities as well as their perceptions of how their learning was shaped by generative AI use.

Findings suggest that while the majority of student teachers are using AI, most are still doing so sporadically and in a relatively exploratory way, primarily to support planning and resource creation or their subject knowledge for teaching. Focus group participants were cautiously optimistic about the potential of generative AI to save them time and felt that it had either no effect or a positive impact on their learning. Preservice teachers’ views on sources of support were also explored. Implications for teacher educators hoping to support student teachers to make critically reflective and ethical choices about how, when and when not to use generative AI in this rapidly changing space are explored.

D6 (2)

AI and the developing teacher: Exploring the use of artificial intelligence by trainee teachers

Generative artificial intelligence has become rapidly embedded within teacher education, yet little is known about how trainee teachers are using these tools as they develop their

professional practice and teacher identity. This presentation shares emerging findings from ongoing research at the University of Warwick Centre for Teacher Education, exploring how trainee teachers engage with AI during their initial teacher education.

Drawing on data collected from the past 2 years cohorts of trainee teachers, the presentation examines the purposes for which AI is being used, including lesson planning, resource development, subject knowledge enhancement, differentiation, administrative tasks, and professional learning. It also considers the factors influencing trainees' decisions to use, or avoid, AI, alongside the opportunities and challenges these technologies present for developing confidence, professional judgement, and teacher identity.

The presentation argues that AI should be viewed neither as a threat to professional expertise nor as a universal solution to workload, but as a tool whose value depends on thoughtful, critical, and ethical use. Particular attention will be given to issues of accuracy, bias, safeguarding, academic integrity, and the role of teacher educators in supporting AI literacy within initial teacher education.

By presenting findings from our ongoing study, we aim to contribute to the growing evidence base surrounding AI in teacher education and offers implications for teacher educators, mentors, and institutions seeking to prepare future teachers for an increasingly AI-enabled profession.

D7 (1)

University teacher education as democratic curriculum-making: lessons from an ESRC-funded history education partnership

This workshop explores the role of university-led teacher education in supporting democratic curriculum-making in a changing educational landscape. Drawing on an ESRC-funded project, 'A Time for Change: Integrating Social Justice-Orientated Citizenship Education into Key Stage 3 History', it examines how university–school partnership can create space for teachers to think critically and collectively about curriculum purpose, subject knowledge and pupils' civic learning.

The project brings together university-based teacher educators and secondary history teachers to co-design a Year 8 enquiry focused on freedoms, rights and equality in nineteenth-century Britain. Rather than positioning teachers as deliverers of pre-designed materials, the project

treats curriculum-making as a form of professional knowledge work: interpretive, deliberative and responsive to school contexts. In doing so, it asks what becomes possible when teacher education foregrounds professional agency, disciplinary thinking and democratic educational purpose.

The paper will share insights from the co-design process, considering how teachers negotiated the relationship between historical enquiry and Social Justice-Orientated Citizenship Education, and how university-led teacher education can support ambitious, subject-specific curriculum development. It will argue that, in a changing world, university teacher education has a distinctive contribution to make: not only preparing teachers to enter the profession, but sustaining the intellectual, ethical and democratic work of teaching itself.

D7 (2)

Character education through philosophy: why? and how?

There is growing clamour within the UK education system regarding the mismatch between rigid, exam-driven school curricula and the contemporary societal need for individuals capable of navigating the increasing rapidity and fragmentation of modernity. One convincing response to this is *character education* (Arthur et al., 2015), which not only promotes the holistic development of character but has been shown to improve students' attainment (McLoughlin, Bartram & Harrison, 2026) and mental health (McLoughlin and Kristjánsson, 2024). With such evidence in hand, it is reasonable to contend that the higher education system has a duty to spearhead calls for policy revision and practical change, as championed by the 'Framework for Character Education in Schools' (Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues, 2022).

Whilst such a framework should be commended for its detailed curricula proposals for character education, the argument in this presentation is that extant teachings from ancient and modern philosophy *already* comprise the pedagogical means of cultivating virtuous character for contemporary flourishing. Moreover, it will be shown that the *process* of philosophising entails increased scope for teacher-student collaboration, in such a way that social bonds are strengthened (Sarabin, Gillebaart & De Ridder, 2025) and character – inclusive of attainment and wellbeing – can be further enhanced.

On these foundations, a prospective philosophy-based curriculum will be presented alongside implicit pedagogical principles that are relevant to initial teacher education. The outcome is an

example of a ready-made opus of resources that can complement, or replace, existing teaching practices.

D8 (1)

Netherlands traineeship: Experience, reflections and next steps

At Sheffield Hallam University, the Enhanced Traineeship Programme enables student teachers to undertake a teaching placement in participating Dutch dual-language primary, secondary, or further education settings. During their traineeship, students continue to follow our curriculum while planning, teaching, and assessing learners within their host schools. Most recently, trainees completed their Inclusive Practice Intensive Training and Practice (ITAP) in these international settings. Alongside their professional development, students are immersed in Dutch culture and educational practice.

The programme offers significant benefits for student teachers, Dutch partner schools, and home placement settings. Through experiencing a different education system, trainees develop their adaptability, confidence, and understanding of diverse teaching approaches, while partner schools gain from international collaboration and the exchange of ideas and practice.

One student reflected:

“The traineeship helped shape my professional identity by building my confidence, broadening my understanding of different teaching approaches, and encouraging me to become a more reflective, adaptable, and inclusive teacher.”

This presentation will explore the experiences of student teachers and programme partners, reflecting on the opportunities, challenges, and learning gained through the initiative. It will also consider how these insights are informing the programme’s future development and sustainability.

By sharing our reflections and next steps, we aim to demonstrate the value of international traineeships in enhancing teacher education and preparing future teachers to work effectively in diverse and inclusive educational environments.

D8 (2)

Championing teacher education within international contexts: nurturing subject knowledge and reflective practice through iQTS PGCE programmes

This workshop provides critical insights into adapting a campus-based teacher training PGCE into an international distance learning framework. As global educational landscapes shift, university-led provision must adapt to diverse settings while maintaining rigorous standards.

Programmes must move beyond operational delivery to examine how distance learning models cultivate deep professional identity amidst diverse and shifting cultural contexts. Attendees will gain an understanding of how international cultural differences and varied teaching pedagogies impact policy enactment within Primary and Secondary iQTS programmes.

The workshop explores how teacher educators act as facilitators to help trainees contextualise pedagogical theory within their diverse classrooms. Central to this discussion are innovative assessment methods, such as dialogic assessment, that explicitly promote reflective practice within an international context. Trainee teachers are challenged to critically evaluate their own practice, transforming assessment into an ongoing, collaborative professional conversation between school-based mentors and university-based teacher educators.

The workshop will examine the development of subject knowledge, rooted in Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), to reach individualised learning goals. Programmes utilise facilitator-led learning to guide trainees to identify, audit and systematically address gaps in their subject-specific knowledge on the Primary and Secondary programmes. Ultimately, this workshop will demonstrate how universities can champion teacher education in a changing world. By reframing distance learning from passive delivery into a meaningful space for contextualised practice, institutions can deliver high-quality teacher training that respects and thrives within global educational realities.

D9

ReNeW: Leading inclusion to prepare tomorrow's teachers through cross-institution collaboration

The rapidly evolving landscape of initial teacher education demands new ways for teacher educators to collaborate, respond to policy change and sustain high-quality provision. Against a backdrop of ITE reform, increasing expectations around inclusion and SEND, changing inspection frameworks and growing pressures on the profession, this workshop showcases the value of a cross-institution Community of Practice that has created a trusted space for collaboration, professional learning and mutual support.

Bringing together colleagues from **Re**ading, **Ne**wman and **W**orcester (**ReNeW)** this informal network has enabled the leaders of SENDI to share expertise, critically reflect on practice and develop collaborative responses to common challenges. Contributors will illustrate how collective working has influenced curriculum development, strengthened approaches to teaching adaptive practice, supported preparation for Ofsted inspection, and enhanced the experience of student teachers and teacher educators alike.

Alongside practical examples of how the CoP has further enhanced our strategic approach, presenters will reflect honestly on the opportunities and challenges of working across institutional boundaries, including differing systems, priorities and programme structures. The symposium will demonstrate how psychological safety, shared purpose and reciprocal professional dialogue have fostered resilience, reduced professional isolation and generated sustainable collaborations extending into joint research, publications and future initiatives.

The session concludes with an opportunity for delegates to reflect on their own contexts and consider how similar communities of practice might be established to strengthen university-led teacher education.

Session Block E

E1

Reconstructing the teaching profession: A critical examination of educational reform in northern ireland through transformed ni

TransformED NI: Transforming Teaching and Learning: A Strategy for Educational Excellence in Northern Ireland (DE, 2025) has initiated one of the most significant processes of system-wide reform in Northern Ireland for decades. This workshop critically examines how TransformED NI reimagines teacher education as a central mechanism for system improvement, exploring the implications of reform across the professional continuum from initial teacher education (ITE) through to experienced school leadership. It considers the extent to which these developments represent a transformative approach to professional learning or reflect wider international trends towards performativity, evidence-based governance and the regulation of teacher expertise.

The workshop focusses on key aspects of the strategy including: the New ITE Framework; the curriculum reform agenda; bursary provision for shortage subjects; Teacher Professional Learning programmes; and emerging leadership pathways. Particular attention is given to the changing conception of the teacher within reform discourse: from autonomous professional to evidence-informed practitioner operating within increasingly structured frameworks of knowledge, competence and accountability.

Drawing on comparisons with England's reforms over the past fifteen years, the presentation interrogates the transferability of reform models across different educational contexts. It explores tensions between professional empowerment and policy prescription, between local educational traditions and international policy borrowing, and between aspirations for teacher status and increased regulation of professional practice.

The workshop argues that TransformED NI provides both opportunities and challenges for teacher education. While it offers the possibility of a more coherent, career-long model of professional learning, its success will depend on whether teachers, teacher educators and schools are positioned as partners in reform rather than recipients of externally defined solutions.

E1 (2)

Alternative perspectives: Challenging the Global Education Reform Movement in ITE

Across England—and increasingly in Northern Ireland—teacher education is being reshaped by the technicist agenda of the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) (Sahlberg 2020). GERM is characterised by performativity, competency frameworks, accountability, and evidence-based practice, reducing teacher autonomy and professional judgement (Ellis & Childs2024). Against this backdrop, this workshop asks whether in adhering to DfE 2024 principles Initial Teacher Education courses are able to critique GERM principles and discuss alternative educational traditions which offer a more humane and democratically responsible vision for twenty-first-century education.

The workshop brings the educational philosophy of Charlotte Mason into dialogue with contemporary educational theory particularly the work of Gert Biesta, Nel Noddings, and Hannah Arendt, to provide a compelling critique of the GERM (Sahlberg 2020).

Mason's principle that "children are born persons" (Mason, 1906) offers a fundamentally different conception of education from the performative agenda. Her emphasis on the intrinsic worth of the child, moral formation, and relationships with others, the environment, and God resonates with Biesta's (2022) concept of subjectification and Noddings' (1992) ethic of care. These philosophical and spiritual foundations are notably absent from much contemporary English educational policy. Drawing on recent case studies of Charlotte Mason pedagogy in practice (Van Pelt, Millar and Elton-Chalcraft, 2026), we critically examine the continuing relevance of her ideas for twenty-first-century education.

The discussion is further developed through Hannah Arendt's conception of education as the space between the private and public worlds (1954). Building on Kloeg (2022) and Kloeg and Noordegraaf-Eelens (2021), the workshop argues that schools should function as an "ambiguous zone" in which teachers and students negotiate the relationship between private development and public responsibility. This perspective challenges educational policies that prematurely politicise childhood or position children primarily through discourses of vulnerability and securitisation, another shortcoming of GERM.

We argue for ITE courses which promote a privileging of teacher agency, professional judgement, and educational practices rooted in care, democratic responsibility, and the flourishing of the child. But to what extent do ITE providers want to challenge technicist educational reform and reimagine the purposes of education when they themselves are located within the performativity context?

E2 (1)

Elegance in Expertise: A framework for making visible subject-specific pedagogies across the primary foundation subjects

Despite recent changes in primary schools leading to broader, more ambitious teaching (Ofsted, 2025), research on learning to teach the foundation subjects in university-based ITE remains limited. Studies tend to focus on individual disciplines, overlooking the holistic nature of primary teaching (Pope, 2019) and the extensive expertise required across multiple subjects (Davis & Boerst, 2014). Ofsted's *Curriculum Research Reviews* (2021-2024) consistently emphasise the importance of primary teachers having a deep understanding of their subjects. Compared to the core subjects, primary student teachers typically have lower prior knowledge and less curriculum time in the foundation subjects (Duncombe et al., 2016), compounding the challenge of developing expertise across the curriculum. Consequently, university-based ITE faces a significant challenge: supporting the development of substantive, disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge across multiple subjects, whilst maintaining a conception of teaching as an intellectual activity rather than knowledge transmission.

In university ITE, the foundation subjects are often timetabled as a single module but taught discretely (Catling, 2017). This presentation explores how, within such contexts, the pedagogical and disciplinary reasoning that gives subject-specific pedagogies their coherence and elegance can be made visible. A framework is shared, developed through the collaborative work of two university-based teacher educators, making subject-specific pedagogies more explicit within primary history. The framework is then discussed for its potential to support the identification and development of subject-specific pedagogies across other foundation subjects. Participants will be invited to use the framework to evaluate their own practice in supporting student teachers' holistic development across the foundation curriculum.

E2 (2)

'A walk in the park?' How FESS Teacher Educators' subject-ness navigates 'generic' FESS ITE delivery models within university-led contexts

Over the last three decades, numerous policy reforms have significantly shaped how teacher professionalism is conceptualised in the Further Education and Skills Sector (FESS). In 2025, the Department for Education renewed its emphasis on subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge, identifying these as central to the quality and purpose of post-16 education. This shift is reflected in the *Delivery Guidance for Courses of FE Initial Teacher Education (ITE)*, which reasserts the importance of subject expertise within university and college-led FESS ITE courses. However, limited attention has been given to how FESS teacher educators' own subject-ness is understood, valued, and mobilised within university-led ITE programmes, current ITE accreditation frameworks, and wider sector expectations.

This gap has informed the development of the present project, which explores the lived experiences of FESS teacher educators navigating 'generic' FE ITE delivery model within a university-led context. Duo-autoethnography, alongside reflexive walking conversations, was adopted to foster dialogic and introspective engagement with the lived experiences of two FESS teacher educators from diverse subject pathways. The analysis draws on a range of theoretical frameworks (e.g. Shulman, 1986, 2005; Brooks, 2016; Sennett, 2008; Loo, 2019, 2024; Springbett, 2018; Thomason, 2025) to examine how FESS teacher educators' subject-ness shapes their epistemic, ethical, and pedagogical commitments within current FESS ITE structures.

The findings reveal our 'wiggly' journey of becoming FESS teacher educators, highlighting how our subject identities and ethics of care enable us to navigate accountability. We also challenge the false binary between subject-specific and generic pedagogy, emphasising instead the importance of developing reflexive practitioners who can adapt their practice meaningfully across diverse and challenging educational contexts. These insights led to the development of a theoretical framework that captures the complexity of FESS teacher educator identity and offers potential to shape university-led FESS teacher educator formal and informal professional development, supporting teacher educators in navigating the current, shifting ITE policy landscape.

E3

From Idea to Impact: A Practical Workshop on Writing for the UCET Teacher Education Blog

The UCET Teacher Education Blog is intended to provide a platform for colleagues to connect, collaborate and contribute to knowledge and practices, related to key educational issues, that

will contribute to the field of teacher education. Academic blogs offer a powerful and accessible means of sharing ideas, engaging diverse audiences, and contributing to contemporary debates. Beyond their value as a dissemination tool, blogging can also serve as a productive space for developing, testing, and refining ideas that may later inform larger scholarly outputs.

This interactive workshop will explore the distinctive features of effective academic blog writing through the analysis and deconstruction of published examples of blogs. Participants will consider not only how successful blog posts are structured, but also why academics choose to write them, including their potential for extending reach, enhancing professional visibility, rehearsing arguments for potential research.

Drawing on these insights, participants will be supported to develop their own blog concepts through a structured peer discussion activity. Working in pairs, attendees will articulate an idea for a potential blog post by considering audience, intended impact, topical relevance, key messages, argument development, and a compelling call to action – all hopefully reflecting the Intellectual Basis of Teacher Education (UCET 2020)! Through this process of verbal rehearsal and collaborative reflection, participants will generate a practical framework and notes that can serve as a springboard for writing a UCET Teacher Education Blog.

E4

What matters most in Initial Teacher Education? Exploring signature pedagogies

What should initial teacher education (ITE) look like in the years ahead, and what pedagogies are needed to realise that vision? This workshop brings together insights from two complementary projects undertaken at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge: The Future of Initial Teacher Education in England (Brooks et al., 2025–26) and a forthcoming edited volume, edited by Clare Brooks and Gosia Marshall, exploring the signature pedagogies that characterise ITE at Cambridge.

The Future of ITE project brought together stakeholders from across the teacher education sector to identify priorities for the future of ITE. Across diverse groups, there was strong consensus around the need for approaches that move beyond compliance-driven models to foreground teacher agency, professional judgement, relational practice and more personalised pathways into the profession. Alongside this, the Cambridge Signature Pedagogies project brought Faculty colleagues together to identify and articulate the pedagogical approaches that

we identified as most significant in supporting the development of beginning teachers, resulting in a shared articulation of the principles that underpin our approach to ITE.

Drawing upon these projects, this workshop explores key aspects of our signature pedagogies that we argue will be increasingly important in shaping contemporary and future approaches to initial teacher education. Through examples from the Cambridge Primary PGCE, participants will consider how ITE curricula can be tailored to the diverse experiences and developmental needs of beginning teachers, how genuinely reciprocal partnerships with schools can enrich professional learning, and how professional wellbeing can be developed as a core professional capability. Drawing on practical strategies and case studies, the workshop will invite participants to discuss and reflect on the pedagogical approaches they consider most significant in preparing beginning teachers for the future of the profession.

E5

Who teaches the teachers? Co-producing inclusive Teacher Education with adults with learning disabilities

Recent updates to Initial Teacher Training guidance emphasise that high-quality teaching for pupils with SEND is high-quality teaching for all learners and encourages providers to embed SEND throughout teacher education, including through Intensive Training and Practice (ITAP). These developments present an opportunity to reconsider not only *what* future teachers learn about inclusion, but *who* they learn from.

Drawing on an ongoing participatory doctoral study with adults with learning disabilities, this workshop argues that lived experience should be recognised as a legitimate source of professional knowledge within university-led teacher education. Through examples from the Sunflower Project, participants will explore how communication beyond speech, belonging, relationships and collaborative knowledge production challenge traditional assumptions about expertise and inclusion.

The workshop suggests that if ITAP is intended to deepen the integration of theory and practice, it also provides an opportunity to integrate lived expertise. Interactive activities adapted from participatory research will invite delegates to experience co-produced learning, reflect on assumptions about communication and participation, and consider how adults with learning disabilities can contribute directly to the education of future teachers.

Participants will leave with practical, transferable ideas for embedding co-produced approaches within teacher education and will contribute to a wider discussion about how university-led teacher education can respond to a changing world by recognising adults with learning disabilities not simply as learners or as placement experiences, but as educators whose knowledge can strengthen inclusive practice.

E6 (1)

Digital readiness of English Initial Teacher Education Trainees: The role of university teacher educators in preparing teachers for Education 4.0

Rapid technological change is reshaping schools, society and the workforce, placing new expectations on university-led ITT. As education responds to the opportunities and challenges of Education 4.0, teacher educators play a pivotal role in preparing teachers who can develop pupils' digital capability for lifelong learning and participation in an increasingly digital society. Professional digital competence is a complex, multidimensional construct encompassing digital knowledge, skills, understanding, habits, attitudes and behaviours. Although digital competence and digital integration are not explicitly articulated within the ITTECF (DfE, 2024) or Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011), it is increasingly recognised as fundamental in teaching practice and for workforce readiness.

Research demonstrates that teachers' technology self-efficacy and perceptions of the educational value of digital technologies significantly influence classroom integration and learners' digital competence (Fraillon et al., 2013; Fraillon et al., 2019; Backfisch et al., 2021). Consequently, teacher educators have a critical responsibility in shaping trainees' TPACK (Mishra and Koehler, 2006) and their readiness to teach in digitally-rich learning environments.

This workshop explores how provision at University of Wolverhampton has responded through an ambitious, research-informed ITT curriculum that integrates evidence, theory and practice. Drawing on the presenter’s expertise within this field, and findings from their doctoral thesis, a longitudinal multiphase mixed-methods study of trainees, it demonstrates how research can inform curriculum design to develop digitally competent teachers. The workshop will argue that research-informed teacher education is essential for preparing reflective professionals capable

of leading digital innovation in schools and responding to the educational challenges of a rapidly changing world.

E6 (2)

Artificial Intelligence pedagogy analysis

AI pedagogy is an emerging field. GenAI models are 'taught' using semi-supervised 'learning', but have those pedagogical words been usurped? What are the pedagogical implications of GenAI misuse, environmental harm, bias, and 'hallucinations'? How can pedagogy analysis address participant AI 'misconceptions' like GenAI anthropomorphism, teacher disposability, AI 'emotional intelligence' overestimation, and underestimating human oversight requirements?

We demonstrate how teacher reflection theoretical models aid AI pedagogy analysis. The models emerged in studies over 17 years, involving 159 pupils (7-to-16-years-old), twelve teachers, and fourteen educational researchers. Video-based methods were lesson analysis, teacher verbal protocols, pupil group verbal protocols, and focus groups. This Grounded Theory research was underpinned by Symbolic Interactionism and Frame Analysis. Illustrated vignettes are used to demonstrate how the models are useful in AI pedagogy analysis. Is 'robot proof' education (Aoun, 2017) possible or even desirable with these fascinating, ubiquitous and abstruse technologies?

E7 (1)

Mentor development at scale: tensions, templates and transformations

The UCL Institute of Education (IOE) partners with over 500 London schools, working with approximately 1,000 mentors each year. This scale affords specific opportunities and challenges for designing and implementing development programmes for mentors.

In this workshop, I will report on our approach to designing a mentor development curriculum centred on educative mentoring and share initial indications of how this is shaping the work of mentors across our primary and secondary partnerships. This includes analysis of mentor evaluation data from academic year 2024/25, the first of the new programme following the Market Review.

This data offers rich insights into mentors' experiences during a time of significant change and pressure on their work, providing a powerful stimulus for further discussions about how we work with partners to develop them as agentive, school-based teacher educators.

Key themes emerging from mentors' experiences highlight: (i) the importance of structure/frameworks in guiding their work; (ii) the challenges of simultaneously navigating multiple identities as teacher, mentor, and learner; and (iii) the transformational nature of learning that reframes the mentor-mentee relationship.

Despite widely accepted logistical constraints on mentors' work, these themes offer hope for the potential of educative mentoring approaches to enrich mentors' experiences and practices, and suggest possible ways forward for leaders designing or evaluating mentor development programmes.

E7 (2)

The 'quality assurance' of PGCE mentoring: ensuring consistency or building community?

University-led teacher education provision involves both the privilege and the challenge of working in partnership with a range of institutions, supporting the work of in-school PGCE mentors across diverse school contexts. Ofsted's 2025 ITE framework uses the language of 'quality assurance' to describe the responsibilities of ITE providers in supporting in-school mentors. As Ellis (2018, p.3) suggests, this is an ambiguous term with 'connotations of both standards and excellence'. This research seeks to explore how both these facets of 'quality assurance' might be achieved within the complex, continually shifting contexts of ITE

partnerships, where in-school mentors are typically time-poor and under-recognised (Wilkinson, 2024).

Through surveys and focus groups involving in-school mentors, student teachers and university-based colleagues, this study reveals tensions inherent in the concept of 'quality assurance' in relation to ITE. How far is the implementation of consistent approaches possible across diverse institutional contexts? Further, how far is it desirable, where a body of diversly-skilled mentors work to meet an increasing number of individual student teacher needs? This research proposes an alternative form of 'quality assurance' built through engagement in an ITE partnership community over time. It also seeks to examine how in-school mentors' own experiences of professional development and understandings of good teaching practice influence their successful engagement with PGCE mentoring.

E8 (1)

From shared resources to effective practice: Developing lesson planning lesson expertise for secondary trainee teachers

As schools increasingly adopt shared and centralised planning models to reduce teacher workload (DfE, 2023) and improve consistency, an unintended consequence has emerged for some trainee teachers: reduced engagement with the lesson planning process. In some settings, where pre-prepared lessons are already "on the system" (Crooks, 2026), trainees have fewer opportunities to develop the professional reasoning and pedagogical decision-making that underpin effective teaching. This raises important questions for ITE providers about how trainees learn to plan effectively when planning is often perceived as already completed.

This presentation explores the challenges created by contemporary planning practices and their implications for developing teacher expertise. Drawing on the experience of one higher education ITE provider, it examines how programme design has been adapted to ensure trainees continue to develop planning knowledge and skills within contexts where shared resources are commonplace.

The session outlines three key developments: a revised approach to teaching lesson planning, updated documentation that promotes critical engagement with existing materials, and clearer expectations regarding planning during school placements. Attention is given to redefining co-planning between mentors and trainees. By encouraging mentors to make their planning decisions explicit through "thinking aloud", trainees gain insight into how experienced teachers

adapt resources, anticipate misconceptions, sequence learning and respond to the needs of specific classes.

The presentation invites ITE providers to reflect on how they balance the efficiencies of shared planning systems with the need to develop reflective, adaptive and professionally informed teachers who can ultimately plan independently and effectively for pupil learning.

E8 (2)

“It feels like you're walking off a cliff edge”: A multi-method qualitative study of work-related stress in early career teachers

Early career teachers (ECTs) experience disproportionately high levels of work-related stress, with consequences for their mental health and retention. Considering the evolving pressures of the profession, this raises critical questions about how preparation and early career support can better equip new teachers for the realities of the role. Drawing on perspectives of ECTs, senior leaders and initial teacher training providers, this study aimed to: (1) understand key stressors faced by ECTs in England and their experiences of accessing support, and (2) identify opportunities for intervention development.

A multi-method qualitative design was used across two sequential phases: an online survey (N=46, including 22 ECTs) and semi-structured interviews (N=22, including 12 ECTs). Data were analysed using Thematic Framework Analysis informed by Job Demands–Resources and Coping-Competence-Context models. Four themes were generated: the environmental context as both burden and buffer; a profession stretched beyond its preparation; individual coping and personal resources; and support as a sticking plaster on a structural wound.

Stress emerged from interacting individual, interpersonal, community and structural factors, intensified for ECTs by training requirements, unfamiliar school processes, and belief-based barriers to help-seeking. Existing support was often misaligned with these demands. Participants wanted support that is trusted, tailored to career stage, and flexibly accessible. The study identifies clear foundations for co-designed ECT interventions, with opportunities to strengthen preparation, such as enabling peer support and to embed help-seeking and personal resources as a professional norm before trainees enter the classroom—supporting a more resilient transition into the profession in a changing world.

Session Block F

AI supported Simulations for Teacher Education.

While AI is increasingly being used to support teaching and learning in schools, its potential for teacher education remains relatively underexplored. University-led teacher education continues to depend heavily on learning and experience in real classrooms, where opportunities to rehearse complex professional decision making can be limited by the high-stakes nature of practice.

This project explores how generative AI can enhance existing simulation-based teacher education. Building on a suite of low-tech simulations already used within our ITE provision, we are developing AI-driven scenarios that enable authentic, real-time responsive interactions between teachers and virtual stakeholders which support rehearsal, reflection and professional dialogue. Working with local school partners, our co-designed simulations are based on genuine classroom challenges and professional dilemmas identified by practitioners.

We will share the project design process, emerging insights from stakeholder collaboration, and the opportunities and challenges of using AI-enhanced simulations in teacher education. The workshop will be of particular interest to teacher educators seeking innovative approaches to practice-based learning, professional development and school-university partnership working.

F2 (1)

Voices of Initial Teacher Education in turbulent times: An Appreciative Inquiry exploring the perspectives of student teachers, school mentors and university teacher educators

Partnership between universities and schools has been central to initial teacher education (ITE) in England since the mid-twentieth century, with collaboration embedded in policy since the 1990s. Despite its prominence and positioning as critical to theory-practice integration, ITE partnership remains under researched, with limited insight into the practices professionals use to strengthen school-university relationships (Risan, 2022). At the same time, ITE has been subject to a 'perpetual cycle of government review and reform' (Mutton, 2023), with

responsibility for new teacher learning increasingly shifting towards schools, reshaping partnership contexts.

This workshop reports on doctoral insider research conducted within England's largest HEI-led ITE partnership. This small-scale study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating rich qualitative focus group data with quantitative questionnaires to capture depth and breadth of perspectives from student teachers, school mentors and university teacher educators. Adopting a strengths-based Appreciative Inquiry approach, the research sought to identify partnership strengths before considering how these might inform future partnership development.

Findings illuminate six interrelated themes revealing the lived experience of partnership and demonstrating how successful partnership depends on trusting, reciprocal relationships; shared understandings of new teacher learning; and school cultures that value and invest in mentoring. Student teacher voices expose stark inequalities in placement and mentoring experience, highlighting both the promise and fragility of partnership work. These experiences position student perspectives as a powerful catalyst for programme and partnership development within an appreciative school-university 'Third Space', demanding a more intentional, listening-led approach to collaboration.

This workshop invites participants to reflect on research insights which hold national and international relevance for Initial Teacher Education and Training.

F2 (2)

Nurturing professional curiosity and the cultivation of research-informed practice: Evidence from a SEND school case study

This session reports on the findings from work that examined the relationship between embedded practitioner enquiry and teacher professional agency in a special education school in the northeast of England.

Working with the school as part of a research practice partnership we co-constructed the notion of 'professional curiosity' in this particular context and defined as a sustained professional investigative orientation, connecting externally generated research evidence with the localised demands of specific classroom contexts. We use this as the foundation for understanding how the school culture fosters genuinely research-informed practice.

F3 (1)

From vision to reality: leading inclusive teacher education communities

Creating a truly inclusive Initial Teacher Education (ITE) community requires more than good intentions. It depends upon purposeful leadership, coherent systems, and a culture in which equality, diversity and belonging are actively championed at every stage of the student journey. Recent external recognition of the University of Winchester's commitment to celebrating, recognising and promoting equality and diversity provides an opportunity to reflect on the leadership approaches, partnership practices and organisational structures that have contributed to this culture.

This workshop explores how leaders can build and sustain inclusive communities across the whole ITE lifecycle, from recruitment and admissions through to placement experiences, programme completion and graduate outcomes. Drawing on examples from university and partnership practice, we will consider how inclusion is embedded within our strategic planning, quality assurance processes, mentor development, curriculum design, student support, and stakeholder engagement to remove barriers to participation while maintaining high expectations for all.

The session will examine how a values-led approach, combined with data-informed decision making, can support equitable experiences and outcomes for student teachers. We will also reflect on the importance of nurturing a sense of belonging and collective responsibility across the University and school partnerships.

Participants will be encouraged to consider how leadership can move beyond compliance towards creating genuinely inclusive learning communities in which diversity is recognised as a strength and every student teacher is supported to thrive, contribute and succeed in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

F3 (2)

A case study of implementing inclusive academic assessment practice for trainees in an employment-based ITE programme

This case study explores the implementation of inclusive academic assessment practices within an employment-based Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme. In response to evolving sector guidance on reasonable adjustments and inclusive assessment, the programme introduced a systematic approach that provides trainee teachers with choice and agency in how they

demonstrate their learning. Key features include alternative assessment formats, proactive and anticipatory support, staff development, and a commitment to authentic assessment practices.

Drawing on programme implementation and emerging outcomes, this research outlines the principles underpinning this approach and reflects on its contribution to improving accessibility, trainee wellbeing, retention, and academic success. The case study offers practical insights for ITE providers seeking to embed more inclusive and equitable assessment practices while maintaining academic rigour.

F4

Making connections. Enabling teachers to engage with evidence of inquiry-rich practice generated through postgraduate study and shared through MESH guides

Postgraduate study can provide a variety of different ways to co-construct knowledge, informed by research, direct experience, peers and other sources of evidence. Those undertaking educational research in this way enhance their professional learning through participatory engagement, reflective activities, focused critique from peers and critical friends and engagement with extended communities of practice. However, the research undertaken by educators is not always routinely accessible to the wider profession. This workshop explores the potential impact of evidencing practice and making professional thinking visible to a wider audience.

The research undertaken by educators can influence collaborative learning dialogues through networks and partnership engagement. The importance of networking by carving a space through the everyday business of learning is recognised by teachers. They successfully navigate a move from position taking to position making; use online spaces for dialogue; build an academic identity which enhances the culture and working relationships within the profession. However, making connections to engage with the research community remains elusive.

Hargreaves & O'Connor (2018) highlight the significance of collaborative professionalism in that it provides a safe learning environment within which concepts can be explored and interpretations can be shared. However, this process is dependent on educators having open access, and updatable and trusted research summaries. MESH guides potentially aid the design of learning based on research, context, and student characteristics. Summarising the research contained in postgraduate study and other evidence-based sources could make a significant contribution to securing the intellectual base of teacher education.

F5

Boundary crossing and identity change: weaving tapestries of scholarship and partnership in educational practice

This workshop brings together two developing examples of activity in university education departments which aim to create opportunities out of what have long been perceived as deficits around initial teacher education. This is a familiar context within the teacher education community in the UK and beyond: a history of misrecognition in relation to practice-oriented scholarship and collaborative partnership, in universities where competitively awarded, highly funded research seems preeminent. Yet contradictions are also evident in wider university discourse, where the need for an 'impact agenda' speaks to the limitations of highly prized research which fails to influence either policy or practice.

Into this space of contradictions, we will introduce the Teacher Education and Professional Learning Research and Scholarship Group (TEPL) and the Community of Educational Inquiry and Practice (CEIP), from the Universities of Manchester and Nottingham respectively, exploring the ways in which these groups are beginning to shift both internally held and externally projected perceptions of value around practice-oriented scholarship and enquiry in our partnerships. Notions of enquiry, boundary crossing and identity change are central to exploring key questions: what institutional opportunities have been harnessed? What kinds of resources have

been recruited and contributed, and what challenges navigated? What is changing in terms of assumptions about community, scholarship, practice, partnership and university?

The workshop incorporates time for exploration of these themes and examples, and those which participants bring from their own institutions and contexts. The intention is to contribute actionable possibilities to weaving a richer and broader tapestry of inquiry-based teacher education.

F6

Whose engagement counts? student and staff perspectives on active learning in higher education

Active learning is increasingly promoted within higher education as a means of enhancing student engagement, participation and learning. However, assumptions that active learning is inherently inclusive are rarely interrogated and there remains limited understanding of how such approaches by different academic staff are experienced by different learners.

This workshop presents findings from a university-wide scoping study exploring staff and student understandings and experiences of active learning at the University of Warwick.

Drawing on focus groups and interviews with academic staff and students from a range of disciplines, the study examines how active learning is conceptualised, implemented and experienced in practice. Using reflexive thematic analysis, the research identifies areas of alignment and tension between staff intentions and student experiences. While participants frequently associated active learning with increased engagement, collaboration and deeper learning, findings also highlight important considerations relating to confidence, accessibility, belonging and participation. Students reported varying preferences for active learning approaches, with some valuing opportunities for interaction and discussion, while others identified barriers linked to anxiety, group dynamics and perceptions of participation.

The research finds that active learning should not be viewed as a universally inclusive pedagogical approach. Instead, its capacity to support equitable participation depends on how activities are designed, facilitated and adapted to meet diverse learner needs. By bringing together staff and student perspectives, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about inclusive pedagogy in higher education and offers insights for teacher educators seeking to create learning environments in which all learners can meaningfully participate and succeed.

F7

Autistic worldbuilding: Reimagining the transition from Teacher Education to employment

This workshop provides an affirming and engaging space to learn about the lived experiences of autistic teachers' transition from teacher education into employment. The session begins by hearing about a global study that focuses on autistic individuals' transition from professional education into work. Information will be shared on how teacher research participants imagined their professional career and how they describe the reality of this work environment.

Attendees will reflect on their own imagined and experienced professional working worlds and through this assimilated learning, begin to reimagine these worlds as neuroinclusive and neuroaffirming. Participants are guided to challenge current beliefs and practice around the role of universities in career preparation and support for autistic student teachers, including the role mentors can play as autistic individuals navigate the realities and unexpected challenges of entering the teaching profession. Practical steps for ITE providers and employers will be key takeaways.

F8 (1)

GenAI and new ITE students teachers: what knowledge, use and understanding of GenAI do they bring to the course?

Generative AI is commonplace in education (Ofsted, 2025). The DfE strongly asserts that teachers should be utilising GenAI to support them with the workload of being a teacher (DfE, 2025). However, to use AI ethically, professionally and effectively, teachers need to have a strong understanding of what it is and how it works (UNESCO, 2024).

This is existing within a higher education sector that is also grappling with how students can ethically and responsibly use GenAI. As well as acknowledging that schools and workplaces are also grappling with educating about AI (Hillman, et.al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to note the knowledge and skill starting point of new-to-ITE students. To ensure university-based ITE programmes are effective in preparing future teachers to utilise AI in their roles, lecturers must teach the students about AI, as well as how best to use it.

This research explores students starting their ITE journeys at St Mary's University (at Level 4 and 7) and their understanding and current uses of AI that they bring with them. This research is qualitative in nature, valuing the importance of student voice in shaping impactful approaches that enable lecturers to future-proof their teaching practices and recommendations for curriculum discussions regarding AI integration for ITE.

F8 (2)

Developing student teachers' awareness of the ethical use of generative AI in secondary education

This workshop will share the evaluative findings of the introduction of a seminar on the Ethical use of Generative AI within the Professional Studies module of a Secondary PGCE programme. It will discuss the development of this session over two academic years, highlight key points of learning from the evaluation process and reflect on the role teacher education has in the development of student teachers' ethical awareness of a key technological advancement.

The workshop has a particular focus on the development of student teacher awareness with regards to environmental, epistemological and data protection concerns, and this presentation will share the outcomes of ongoing evaluations and feature the reflections of staff involved with the design and teaching of the seminar.

Session Block G

G1 (1)

Towards inclusive placements in Further Education: Co-Creating reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent student teachers

The increasing participation of neurodivergent students in higher education has prompted growing attention toward the inclusivity of university learning environments, support systems, and graduate employability pathways (e.g., Chalmers et al. (2026); University of Southampton and Lancaster University (2024); Vincent (2020). Within Initial Teacher Education (ITE), this issue is particularly significant, as student teachers must simultaneously navigate academic expectations and the professional demands of teaching practice placements (Eastgate et al., 2024).

Neurodivergent student teachers, including those with dyslexia (Griffiths et al., 2025), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (McInnes, 2026), autism spectrum condition (ASC) (Chou, 2025), dyspraxia (Norell, 2024), dyscalculia (Staller et al., 2025), and related cognitive differences (e.g., Mahak et al. (2025); Chris and Stephanie, 2025), often encounter structural, interpersonal, and institutional barriers throughout their teacher education journeys (Salisbury et al., 2025). Although widening participation policies have improved access to teacher education programmes, inclusion within placement settings remains uneven and under-researched (Yip and Ji, 2024). Existing support structures frequently fail to account for the complexity of placement environments, where neurodivergent student teachers are expected to perform professionally while managing disclosure decisions, workplace expectations, and the emotional demands of assessment and observation (e.g., Vieira, 2025; Kalmanovich-Cohen and Stanton, 2025). This study aims to address this gap by investigating the barriers and enablers

shaping placement experiences for neurodivergent student teachers across London South Bank University's further education (FE) teacher education programme and its partner FE colleges.

Grounded in Universal Design for Learning, the project adopts a co-creative qualitative approach, utilising photovoice and focus groups to foreground the perspectives of neurodivergent student teachers, teacher educators, and placement leaders. Through this participatory process, it aims to co-produce practical, evidence-informed guidelines for reasonable adjustments. The outcomes are intended to enhance the accessibility of placements, reinforce institutional support mechanisms, and more effectively prepare neurodivergent student teachers for graduate employment within the sector.

G1 (2)

Between the margins: The experiences of working-class neurodivergent trainee teachers in Teacher Education

This research explores the intersection of social class and neurodivergence within initial teacher education. While widening participation and neurodiversity have gained increasing attention in higher education, the experiences of trainee teachers who identify as both working class and neurodivergent remain largely underexplored. This study examines how these trainees may encounter a 'double barrier', navigating overlapping forms of marginalisation that shape their sense of belonging, professional identity, and access to support during teacher training.

The research considers how institutional and policy expectations, particularly the fixed nature of the Teacher Standards, can limit the scope for meaningful reasonable adjustments. As a result, trainees whose identities, experiences, or ways of working diverge from dominant professional norms may experience additional layers of 'otherness' within teacher education. To explore these dynamics, the study may draw on theoretical perspectives from Bourdieu, using concepts of power, discourse, habitus, and capital to examine how structures within teacher education shape trainee experiences.

The presentation will focus on the rationale for the study and its significance. I may also, if allowed, invite discussion around methodology, seeking colleagues' perspectives on creative and inclusive approaches to gathering data and presenting participant experiences.

G2 (1)

Accounting for practice: making sense of early career teachers' classroom experiences

This presentation will articulate the engagement of a teacher educator with hermeneutic phenomenology to better understand teachers' early experiences in the profession. The study arose from several concerns; current teacher education policies that construe practice as unproblematic and something to be controlled, and models of teacher development that are applied in deficit ways, often neglecting the experiential nature of practice.

An "accounts of practice" methodology, was used to collect phenomenological data on a small group of science teachers over the first four years of their careers. The data consisted of recordings of teacher study meetings, along with transcripts obtained from interviews that captured teachers' perspectives on their practice. Phenomenological text was generated for each teacher in the form of an account of their practice. The meanings of these experiential accounts were then used to develop an elaborated version of an existing teacher growth model (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002).

This model was able to elucidate experiential influences, and potentially help teacher educators, in working with teachers, to make sense of these experiences and contribute to more effective supporting of teachers at the start of their careers. Changes in practice were characterised, revealing the importance of teachers having a domain of stability and developing their own theoretical frameworks. A notion of the teacher educator being a phenomenological researcher was established, where they share the experiential journey of early career teachers, and the value of co-teaching was highlighted in supporting teachers to understand the complex links between theory and practice.

G2 (2)

"Ready, set, teach: Levelling the playing field through practical induction in ITT"

Ready, Set, Teach: Levelling the Playing Field Through Practical Induction in Initial Teacher Education

How can ITT providers ensure that all trainees, regardless of subject, background or financial circumstance, begin their professional journey with the tools and confidence needed to thrive?

In response to this challenge, we have developed *Ready, Set, Teach*, an induction event and resource package designed to provide all secondary trainees with a common foundation for classroom practice. Every trainee receives a set of practical tools—including a laser presenter, whiteboard pens, wall planner and clipboard—which are then intentionally integrated into our curriculum and modelling of evidence-informed approaches to teaching and learning.

While simple in conception, the initiative is rooted in a commitment to equity and inclusion. Many of our trainees are first-generation graduates and come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the differential availability of subject bursaries can create unequal access to professional resources and experiences. Research consistently highlights how inequitable access to resources can reinforce disparities in educational participation and outcomes, particularly where socio-economic background constrains access to the material and cultural capital required to succeed. By providing a universal entitlement to the tools of teaching, we seek to remove unnecessary barriers, support professional identity formation, and ensure that every trainee begins with a level starting point. [frontiersin.org]

Crucially, the initiative recognises the relationship between **material resources and classroom practice**. While pedagogical knowledge is central, classroom enactment is mediated by what teachers *have available to them* in practice. Evidence from teacher education research highlights that effective teaching is not simply the product of theoretical understanding, but of the integration of pedagogical knowledge, routines and enabling conditions within the classroom environment. In addition, access to structured, practical resources supports teachers

in implementing evidence-informed strategies—for example, tools that enable modelling, explanation, feedback or behaviour routines—rather than leaving these to abstract understanding alone. More broadly, research on teacher development emphasises that professional learning must translate into *enactable practices* within specific classroom contexts, where resource availability and constraints shape decision-making and implementation. [education.gov.au] [niot.org.uk]

Alongside this, the programme foregrounds the role of **induction in shaping classroom practice**. Induction is widely recognised as a critical phase in bridging the gap between theoretical preparation and the realities of classroom teaching. Early career teachers often struggle to translate knowledge into practice without structured support, contributing to variability in classroom effectiveness. A substantial body of research indicates that high-quality induction—including structured guidance, modelling and mentoring—positively influences teachers' instructional practices, classroom management and responsiveness to pupils, with knock-on effects for pupil outcomes. More recent studies further emphasise that induction programmes can strengthen teachers' self-efficacy and instructional decision-making by providing systematic support and opportunities to rehearse and refine practice. By embedding practical tools within a coherent induction experience, *Ready, Set, Teach* seeks to make this transition from theory to practice more explicit, supported and equitable. [jstor.org] [ijlter.org]

This session will explore:

- How practical induction can support trainee confidence, belonging and classroom readiness.
- The relationship between material resources and the enactment of evidence-informed teaching techniques.
- How universal provision can help address inequities arising from socio-economic background and subject-specific funding disparities.
- Reflections on implementation, impact and scalability for ITT partnerships.

As the sector continues to focus on recruitment, retention and widening participation, this workshop invites delegates to consider how seemingly modest interventions can have a significant impact on trainee experience and professional development. Participants will leave with practical ideas for embedding equitable, curriculum-aligned induction practices within their own contexts.

G3 (1)

Practice with purpose: Preparing student teachers for Inclusive Teaching Through ITAPs

Intensive Training and Practice (ITAP) opportunities in Initial Teacher Education provide purposeful experiences centred on core areas of practice. ITAPs offer student-teachers lower-stakes assessment opportunities to intensively focus on foundational and pivotal themes in 'specific fundamental areas' (DfE, 2022, p.26). This workshop considers how ITAPs (specifically focusing on EAL and SEND) as *approximations of inclusive practice* aid student-teacher development as they undertake a three-year undergraduate Primary Education degree at a university in the North of England. In our research to be presented in the workshop, we will focus on structured university experiences and placements in diverse schools, chosen for their demographic, cohorts or specialisms, student-teachers engaged with five dimensions (introduce, analyse, prepare, enact, assess) within their ITAPs in a process of applied critical analysis to put theory into practice and gain feedback (NIoT, 2023). Our research examines the impact of these experiences on student-teacher confidence, drawing on survey and personal reflection.

Participants at the workshop will engage with core theory, research and practice around inclusion, by including practical activities and discussions. Following the activities we will engage in critical reflective dialogue to consider how ITAPs can support student teachers to develop as reflective practitioners to meet the needs of diverse pupils.

G3 (2)

Exploring the potential for dialogue within ITaPs for encouraging teacher agency, professional identity formation, and subject-specific understanding

This presentation will explore the position of universities as vital spaces for fostering professional dialogue for entrants to the teaching profession in an increasingly standardised and accountability-driven policy landscape. Within the English initial teacher education (ITE) context,

the ITTECF promotes structured, content-led models of training that risk positioning trainee teachers as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in meaning-making. This presentation outlines my ongoing doctoral research which explores the potential of dialogue for encouraging teacher agency, professional identity formation, and subject-specific understanding.

The presentation will explore how the Intensive Training and Practice (ITAP) modules within a secondary PGCE programme can enhance the opportunities for dialogue and will consider the effect this could have – not only on trainee teachers but also on teacher educators and school-based mentors. The presentation will outline current research which has asked participants to journal during ITAPs leading to creation of composite narratives which explore how university-based spaces can create opportunities for trainees to act as critical co-investigators in their own professional learning.

The findings presented will explore tensions between ambition for dialogue and the challenges and realities of this when working in partnership with schools, where capacity constraints often limit opportunity and time for research-informed dialogue. Universities occupy a unique and necessary position in ITE: as sites where dialogic practices can be modelled, protected, and sustained to ensure democratic and reflective teacher education continues.

G4 (1)

Disruptive and hopeful: Gen Z voices on professionalism and Initial Teacher Education

Gen Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, are often characterised as lacking professionalism and struggling to adapt to traditional workplace expectations (Knight, 2024). Gen Z now constitute approximately half of students enrolled on primary and secondary initial teacher training programmes (DfE, 2025), making it timely to consider how professionalism is understood, enacted and consequently, how it can be taught in our programmes.

This workshop explores the implications of generational change for professionalism in teaching, guided by two questions: how do Gen Z student teachers interpret professionalism and how might differences in understanding, be treated as sites for critical discussion and learning rather than deficits to be corrected?

Our thinking draws on Sachs' (2001) distinction between managerial professionalism, emphasising hierarchy and accountability, and democratic professionalism, foregrounding collaboration and agency. Emerging evidence suggests younger professionals prioritise adaptability, inclusivity, and relational

practices (Pruaño et al., 2025), a pattern echoed in nursing and other caring professions (Hee and Yeojin, 2024).

We examine tensions arising in our own provision around working hours, attendance, communication styles, and wellbeing boundaries, and outline pedagogical adaptations including flexible and asynchronous learning and scenario-based professional dilemmas. Rather than framing Gen Z behaviours as evidence of declining standards, we propose a reflexive response, inviting participants to consider how these tensions manifest in their own contexts and possible educative responses to these.

The workshop invites us to consider how we as teacher educators can develop responsible professionals, recognising our students as epistemic agents supporting *effective* practice as opposed to *established* practice.

G4 (2)

Threading the needle: ITTECF, NPQs, and the managed formation of the critical teacher

The introduction of the ITTECF and the suite of National Professional Qualifications has significantly restructured English teacher education. Government policy presents these reforms as a coherent "golden thread" of evidence-informed professional development extending from initial preparation through to school leadership. This paper interrogates that metaphor, asking what forms of teacher knowledge, professional identity, and educational purpose are produced through its enactment.

Drawing on Bernstein's theory of pedagogic recontextualisation, Bourdieu's conception of field, and Foucauldian understandings of subjectification, the paper deploys a complementary analytical framework centred on fixers, fixes, fixing, and fixabilities. This framework enables examination not only of policy instruments but also of the actors who define educational problems, authorise interventions, and determine which aspects of professional practice are rendered visible, measurable, and improvable.

The paper argues that the golden thread functions less as a developmental continuum than as a mechanism of epistemic closure. Through the recontextualisation of educational research into policy frameworks, a particular conception of the teacher is privileged: the technically competent, evidence-consuming practitioner. Alternative professional imaginaries, including the teacher as intellectual, curriculum theorist, or democratic/critical professional, have become increasingly marginal to official constructions of expertise.

Against this backdrop, the paper identifies the PGCE (non-QTS) as a site of possibility. Positioned outside the formal regulatory architecture governing qualified teacher status, it occupies a structurally distinct location within the field. In Bernsteinian terms, it represents a more weakly classified space, permitting stronger pedagogic voices and broader intellectual engagement.

The paper concludes that university-led teacher education occupies a precarious but intellectually vital position, and that the future of critical teacher formation may depend upon preserving institutional spaces that resist being rendered fully fixable.

G5

Supporting neurodiverse trainees: One university's approach

This workshop will show how one institution drew together the strands of professional placement support and existing university-based support for both trainees and mentors, and how this process was analysed in a small-scale study undertaken by an academic member of the team. It will in particular focus on the findings as they relate to neurodiverse trainees.

The workshop will give colleagues the opportunity to see how the presenters undertook the development and generation of new knowledge to ensure that the support we give neurodiverse trainees is informed by existing evidence and driven forward by new evidence we are creating. It will give participants the opportunity to share both support principles and strategies for this own neurodivergent trainees, as well as reflecting on potential opportunities within their own institution, informed by this reflexive research process.

G6 (1)

Becoming a teacher, becoming *the* teacher: Storying the journey of teacher development for beginning teachers

Teachers' biographies are crucial to their identity, as the investment of 'self' in teaching shapes their practice. This presentation explores the concept of teacher identity development and how it relates to teacher training. It will present ideas for teacher training and the potential for the explicit inclusion of identity development within teacher training programmes.

The presentation delves into the importance of supporting trainee teachers in discussing their practice and understanding their role through the lens of their own development. It investigates the phenomenon of becoming a teacher and making sense of the self through the stories of the trainees themselves. The presentation highlights how themes such as gender, class, and ethnicity intersect as trainees experience becoming teachers while also training to teach in schools. The concept of 'self' is vital when examining identity, as it encompasses the life stories and experiences that form the basis of identity.

The presentation explores how trainees' stories evolved over time, how they narrated their experiences, and how they told their private, personal and professional stories. It captures the emergence of themes through the trainees' thoughts, feelings, and opinions from their own story telling as they experienced becoming teachers.

G6 (2)

Inclusive mentoring in a changing ITE Landscape: Insights from a global scoping review

This workshop examines inclusive mentoring within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) as a critical mechanism for advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in a rapidly changing policy landscape. While mentoring is central to teacher development in England, dominant models often reflect assessment-led, hierarchical practices aligned with “judgementoring” (Hobson and

Malderez, 2013), potentially marginalising more relational approaches. Drawing on social justice perspectives, as both an ideology and a tool to challenge systemic inequalities (Duckworth and Maxwell, 2014), the workshop reframes mentoring as a practice that can disrupt power imbalances and support diverse student teachers.

Preliminary findings from a systematic scoping review (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Tricco et al, 2018) map global literature on inclusive mentoring (2014–2026). The review highlights varied conceptualisations, including culturally responsive, anti-racist, neuro-inclusive, and psychologically safe approaches, while identifying gaps across contexts and populations. These findings are reinforced by Vickers-Hulse (2025), whose study—drawing on Bourdieu (1986)—demonstrates how unequal distributions of capital within mentoring relationships shape student teachers' confidence, agency and sense of belonging, often reproducing inequalities where provision is not individualised.

Building on Duckworth and Maxwell's (2014) notion of mentors as "change agents for social justice," the workshop situates inclusive mentoring within current reforms, including the ITTECF and Ofsted's focus on inclusive provision. Participants will engage with implications for programme design, mentor development and partnerships, considering how university-led ITE can move beyond compliance toward adaptive, equity-informed mentoring cultures that better support and retain a diverse teaching workforce.

G7

Teacher Educators getting their research published in an academic journal: Meet the Editors

A workshop suitable for colleagues wanting to get their teacher education research published in an international journal. There will be a short talk on how to navigate the various gatekeepers and catch the eye of the editorial board. This will be followed by discussion and advice on any work in progress or nascent ideas. Colleagues are encouraged to bring any unpublished writing or data to the session to see how to progress it towards publication.

G8

Developing inclusive principles in university-based ITE – using case studies to explore partnership opportunities in creating more inclusive teacher education that meets the needs of the next generation of new teachers

Beginning teachers occupy a unique space between the supportive environment offered to university students with well-developed approaches to support (e.g., UCL, 2023) and the professional duties of care expected of teachers (e.g., NEU, 2025). For teacher educators and beginning teachers, this can create a challenging transition which needs to be both supportive and realistic of expectations on beginning teachers. In many cases, these challenges are heightened by beginning teachers' vulnerabilities.

This workshop starts from a principled reflective tool for those working in ITE developed through a collaborative initiative by a group of university teacher education leaders committed to fostering inclusive practice.

The workshop will then use case studies of the challenges of navigating complex partnership based professional learning for beginning teachers with differing needs and the mentors and tutors who support them. Participants will be invited to reflect on how their own practices and resolve some of the challenges in this context, but also to recognise the increasing challenges from both growing needs for beginning teachers, and the resource pressures on university-based teacher education.

While the value of diversity in the teaching profession is widely acknowledged, the current workforce does not yet reflect the full breadth of society. Our shared vision is to build capacity across the sector to support beginning teachers from a wide range of backgrounds—particularly those with health conditions and/or who are neurodivergent—to thrive and remain in the profession.